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# **Chronicle of Events**

**January—June 1931**

# Chronicle of Events

January 1931

**Chief Events** :—Picketing continued to be the main Congress activity followed by arrests and convictions—"Independence Day" demonstrations and processions in Bombay and Calcutta in contravention of Police order dispersed by lathi charges—Execution of Sholapur convicts and demonstration of "Sholapur Day" in almost all the big cities—Premier's momentous declaration in the R. T. C.—Ban on Congress Working Committee withdrawn—Working Committee members released—Peace Negotiation begins.

**1st. Independence Day Anniversary in Bombay** :—Elaborate police arrangements were made all over the city to prevent the holding of meetings in different parts at mid-night under the auspices of the "War" Council and other allied associations with a view to celebrating the First Anniversary of the passing of the Independence Resolution by the Lahore Congress. A crowd of a few thousand strong collected at Choupathi and its approaches some time before mid-night last night. But shortly before the scheduled meeting hour the Police dispersed the crowd with lathi charges and completely cleared the Sands of the demonstrators, thus frustrating their attempt to hold the meeting. In other parts of the city the Police similarly dispersed Congress processions by lathi charges. But at some places they did not interfere with meetings. Shortly after 2 a. m. a crowd collected at Kalbadevi Road, and stoned the Police stationed nearby as a result of which 15 constables and 2 sergeants were injured. The Police thereupon, after warning, opened fire on the demonstrators. Twelve rounds were fired and nine persons were reported to have been injured. Crowds on the Princess Street were dispersed at about 3 a. m. by lathi charges by the Police, headed by a dozen officers. About sixty persons were injured and sent to hospital as a result of the lathi charges and ten of them were reported to be in a serious condition. The authorities of the Congress Hospitals stated that over 175 persons were injured, of whom 33 received serious injuries, including seven who had bullet wounds. Of the latter seven one was lying in a precarious condition.

**Mrs. Kamala Nehru**, wife of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. She was sentenced on the 3rd. to 6 months' S. I. in each of the two cases against her under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, for delivering speeches instigating non-payment of taxes.

**Dr. N. S. Hardikar** of Hindustani Seva Dal arrested at Hubli under section 17 (1) Criminal Law Amendment Act and brought down to Bombay to stand his trial. He was convicted and sentenced on the 10th. to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200, or in default one week's additional imprisonment, and nine months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200, or in default one week's additional imprisonment respectively, under Section 17 (1 and 2) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act for being a member and assisting the activities of an unlawful association and managing its affairs.

**4th. Death of Maulana Mahomed Ali** in London in the morning at 9-30 A. M. He worked till midnight revising his last appeal to the Hindus and Moslems to bury all differences and work for Indian Nationalism. All British Indian delegates to the Round Table Conference called at the hotel to pay last respects to a colleague whose death, all agreed, was a great loss to India.— There were numerous black flag processions in Calcutta on the next day, the news having spread

very rapidly. In the afternoon there was a huge congregation in the Maidan where prayers were said for the welfare of the departed soul.—Similar observances were held in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Rangoon and in other cities.

**5th. All night raid in Karachi :—**A Government Gazette Extraordinary declared sixteen Congress organisations as unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act in Sind including the Sind Provincial Congress Committee and notified the houses occupied by seven of them as notified areas under the Unlawful Association Ordinance. Empowered by the Government's declaration the Karachi police carried out an all-night raid on the premises occupied by the various Congress bodies. Three hundred policemen participated in it and, as the plans had been kept a secret, the local satyagrahis were astonished when, shortly after midnight, they were called upon to make a hurried exit. Congressmen went from place to place, seeking refuge, but as the raids were simultaneous they were forced to take shelter with friends in the neighbourhood. No arrests were made. The police carried away everything found in the various premises, including furniture, papers etc. and conveyed them to the police station in lorries after locking and sealing all Congress premises.

*Babu Mohanlal Saxena*, the President of the Lucknow Congress Committee when it was declared illegal, was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200 in default to one month more. *Babu Harprasad Saxena*, Vice-President, was awarded six months' rigorous.

**6th. Congress President Gaoled :—**Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Acting President of the Congress, was convicted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay under section 17 (1) and (2) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and sentenced to six months' and nine months' simple imprisonment respectively, the sentences running concurrently.

*Mr. Ramdas Gandhi*, son of Mahatma Gandhi sentenced by the Additional Magistrate, Surat, under Sections 107 I. P. C. and 47 Salt Act, to undergo six months' rigorous imprisonment.—*Mr. Mangaldas Kalindas Shaw* of the Rander Congress Committee sentenced to undergo three months' rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs. 50, in default to undergo further two weeks' imprisonment for inciting people not to pay land revenue.

**Arrests at Surat :—**Elaborate police arrangements were made to prevent the Flag Salutation at Castle Maidan which was to take place in celebration of the 'Gandhi Day'. Large crowds collected to witness the procession but it dispersed after Mrs. Jyotsna Shukla, leader, and 35 other ladies and 20 volunteers were arrested. A batch of Parsee volunteers was also arrested, total arrests being 77, of whom 41 were ladies. Of these arrested, 27 ladies and 12 men were released and the rest taken in custody.

**9th. 41 Houses Declared Unlawful in Tamluk :—**By an extraordinary Calcutta Gazette the Governor General-in-Council declared the Tamluk Civil Disobedience Committee and the Contai Civil Disobedience Committee both within the District of Midnapore to be unlawful associations under Sub-section (3) of section 1 of the Unlawful Association Ordinance 1930 (IX of 1930).—In the same connection 27 places in the Tamluk sub-division and 14 places in the Contai sub-division were specified as places which were used for the purposes of the said unlawful associations.

**10th. Mr. Satyamurthi convicted :—**Mr. Satyamurthi and eleven others including a woman and Mr. Chinnaswami Iyengar, Secretary, District Congress Committee, who were arrested the day before while picketing foreign cloth shops in Godown Street, Madras were convicted by the Second Presidency Magistrate on a charge of being members of an unlawful assembly with the common object of disobeying the Chief Presidency Magistrate's order under section 144 Cr. P. C. The order was promulgated on December 30 last prohibiting picketing in the city for a period of two months. The accused did not take part in the proceedings. The Magistrate after recording evidence sentenced Mr. Satyamurthi and nine others to six months' rigorous imprisonment each. The woman picket was sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment.

- 11th. *Lathi Charge at Karachi* :—Congress adherents attempted to hold a meeting on the Rambagh Recreation Ground, but were prevented by a strong force of police. Several then formed a procession, and in the Nanakwara Street, they were ordered to disperse. Mounted police and extra foot police were requisitioned and three lathi charges took place. Twenty women were arrested, including the new woman 'Dictator', who squatted on the ground and refused to disperse. The total number of injured was stated to be 150 of which fifty were seriously injured and sent to hospital. In all thirty-six arrests were made.
- 12th. *Sholapur Men Hanged* :—Mallappa Dhansheti, Shrikishen Sarda, Jaganath Shinde and Abdul Rasul Kurban Hussein, the four men who had been sentenced to death in connection with the Sholapur riot murder case, and whose appeals to the Privy Council were rejected, were hanged in the morning in the Yervada Jail, Poona.—Demonstrations against the hanging included a large silent bareheaded procession through the city of Poona, in contravention of the police orders, but the police did not interfere with it.—Demonstrations in Bombay continued spasmodically throughout the afternoon. Police parties stationed all along the road made several lathi charges on crowds which attempted to blockade the tram-track with big boulders. The Congress hospitals stated that 185 persons were admitted for treatment as a result of the lathi charges. 20,000 bareheaded mourners assembled on the Esplanade Maidan to record their protest against the execution. Several speakers addressed the meeting and pointed out that the executed men were believed to be innocent, and there was a grave miscarriage of justice. They condemned the Viceroy's refusal to commute their sentences despite appeals from all over India as flouting public opinion, and warned that the net result of this vindictiveness would be further intensification of boycott of British goods.
- 14th. *Sholapur Executions : Police Charge at Demonstrators* :—A serious disturbance was reported to have occurred at Dakor, Kaira district, as a result of the defiant attitude of certain processionists. Six different processions, including one composed entirely of women, which were taken out in connection with the Sholapur executions, were held up by the police. The processionists were asked to disperse but they refused and squatted on the road. At this the police who were about 100 strong were alleged to have opened fire without the orders of the magistrate. It was said that in all nine rounds were fired with the result that one young woman and one man received bullet wounds. At this stage firing was stopped and *lathis* were used to disperse the processionists. About 150 persons were injured as a result of the *lathi* charges who were removed to the hospital where they were detained for treatment.
- 15th. *Police firing at Jhalda* :—A Government communique stated: "A report has been received from the Deputy Commissioner of Maubhum District that a serious rioting occurred on the afternoon of the 15th January at Jhalda in connection with a mela which had been prohibited under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate and the police were assaulted and the police were obliged to open fire. Four rioters are reported to be dead and a number of persons on both sides was injured."
- 16th. *'Sholapur Day' in Bombay* :—Bombay observed a hartal in memory of Sholapur prisoners. In Kalbadevi, Girgaum, Sandhurst Road, Gamdevi, Grant Road and Byculla, shops did not open at all. There was no traffic, except for trams, and these too were running almost empty. Schools and colleges did not work, as students did not turn up. Volunteers picketed the High Court where a strong police force was posted. As crowds persisted in collecting near the High Court and in the Esplanade Maidan, the Police dispersed them repeatedly with *lathis*. Mr. D. S. Javalkar, President and four other members of the "War Council" were arrested. Final figures from the Congress hospitals showed that 261 persons were injured by the *lathi* charges, 55 seriously. In pursuance of the Congress Programme, the mill-workers of Parel tried to hold meetings. The police warned the organisers of the meeting that it was unlawful and would be dispersed. Thereupon, it was stated a section of the crowd stoned the police. One round was then fired into the crowd, which was completely cleared by the police. Three persons were injured by buck-shot.
- The *All-India Women's Conference* under the presidentship of Dr. Mrs. Muthulakshmi passed a resolution urging the Government of India and the local

Governments to enforce the provisions of the Sarda Act and requesting the Social Reform Associations to educate public opinion and persuade individuals to obey the law and report cases of violation.

17th. *Lord Irwin in his address before the Legislative Assembly* reviewed the events which happened in India in 1930 and particularly stressed on the Civil Disobedience movement which was regarded by His Excellency as a menace to the Government. Referring to Mahatma Gandhi the Viceroy said: "However mistaken any man may think him to be, and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy associated with his name, no one can fail to recognize the spiritual force which impels Mr. Gandhi to count that no sacrifice is too great in the cause, as he believes, of India that he loves, and I fancy that, though he on his side, too, thinks those who differ from him to be victims of a false philosophy, Mr. Gandhi would not be unwilling to say that men of my race, who are to-day responsible for the Government in India, were sincere in their attempt to serve her. It has been one of the tragedies of this time that, where the ultimate purposes have perhaps differed little, if at all, the methods employed by some should have been, as I conceive, far more calculated to impede than to assist the accomplishment of that largely common end. And, deeply as I crave to see the dawn of a happier day in India, I am bound, so long as the movement designed to undermine and sap the foundations of Government holds the front place in the programme of the great Congress organization, to resist it to the uttermost of my strength.

18th. *Sj. Subhas Bose arrested*:—On his way to Maldah from Berhampore Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose was served with an order under Section 144 Cr. P. O. at Amnura, a way-side station on the out-skirts of Maldah prohibiting him from entering the limits of the district. Sj. Bose disobeyed the order. He was tried on the spot and sentenced to seven days' simple imprisonment.

19th. *Press & Instigation Bills Postponed*:—In the Legislative Assembly Sir James Crerar announced the postponement of the Press Bill and the Unlawful Instigation Bill in view of the representations made to him from various sections of the House that the Premier was to make a momentous statement and that it was undesirable to take action at this critical juncture. The Government, however, reserved the liberty to proceed further with the bills while the Assembly was still sitting, or if an occasion should arise when this may be impracticable, to tender such advice to the Governor-General as the circumstances might appear to them to require.

*Momentous declaration of the Prime Minister* at the Round Table Conference especially regarding Dominion Status which was explicitly promised as a result of the present labours for setting a constitution. The Premier's manner was most conciliatory and friendly. His emphasis on equality of collaboration was especially appreciated.

20th. *Government defeat in Assembly*:—Government sustained a heavy defeat in the Assembly over the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act Supplementary Bill, which was sought to be rushed through by the Government. The motion for circulation was carried by 64 votes to 30. Sir Abdur Rahim, Maulvi Mahomed Yakub and Dr. Suhrawardy made a firm stand with the result that the Government secured only six Muslim elected votes, while seventeen Muslims went against the Government.

22nd. *Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas*, a prominent Congress' worker of Bombay, was arrested, under a warrant, from the Police Commissioner on a charge of sedition. He was sentenced to 9 months' rigorous imprisonment.

*Peate Negotiation begins*:—The following cablegram was received by Pandit Motilal Nehru from the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. M. R. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, after the Working Committee of the Congress had unanimously adopted a resolution on the present situation:—"Starting to-morrow. Meanwhile earnestly beg you to postpone decision till we meet." The Working Committee considered the cablegram and sent the following reply:—Your cable received after the Working Committee adopted unanimously a resolution on the situation. In deference to your wishes, we will not release it for



publication till we meet. Meanwhile, the Congress programme will continue to be followed."

- 23rd.** *The Bombay Indian Merchants' Chamber*, at its special meeting, passed the following resolution: In view of the prevailing circumstances and strong nationalist sentiment in support of the furtherance of national interests this Chamber is of opinion that the members of the Chamber in particular and Indian merchants in general should not place orders for foreign goods to avoid any loss resulting from their inability to market such goods. The second resolution, regretting the Committee's attitude to flout the general body's wish to boycott was withdrawn as the committee agreed to stand by the previous resolution of boycott of legislatures passed by the general body on May 25, last year.
- 24th.** *In the Chandpur Inspector Murder Case* Ramkrishna Biswas was sentenced to death and Kalipada Chakrabarty sentenced to transportation for life. One of the Commissioners, Rai Bahadur N. K. Bose, ex-Judge Calcutta High Court, differed and sentenced both the accused to transportation for life. He took into consideration the element of age which was considered by him as tender. Both the accused were found guilty of possessing explosive substances and unlawful arms, but no separate sentences were passed on those counts.
- 25th.** *Ban on Congress Working Committee withdrawn: the Viceroy's statement:*—Lord Irwin ordered the release of Mahatma Gandhi and other members of the Working Committee and cancelled the notification under the Criminal Law Amendment Act declaring the Committee an unlawful association. The following is the text of Viceroy's statement: 'In order to provide an opportunity for considering the statement made by the Premier on Jan. 19, the Government in consultation with the local Governments have thought it right that the Members of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress should have full liberty of discussing between themselves and with those who have acted as members of the committee since Jan. 1, 1930. In accordance with this decision and with this object and in order that there may be no legal bar to any meeting they may wish to hold, the notifications declaring the committee to be unlawful association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act will be withdrawn by all local Governments and actions will be taken for the release of Mr. Gandhi and others who are now members of the Working Committee or who have acted as such since Jan. 1, 1930. My Government will impose no conditions on those released because we feel that the best hope of restoration of peaceful conditions lies in discussions being conducted by those concerned under terms of unconditional liberty. Our action has been taken in pursuance of a sincere desire to assist the creation of such peaceable conditions as would enable the Government to implement the undertaking given by the Premier that if civil quiet is proclaimed and assured the Government would not be backward in response. I am content to trust those who will be affected by our decision to act in the same spirit as inspires it and I am confident that they will recognise the importance of assuring for these grave issues a calm and dispassionate examination.'
- The release of the following persons was ordered pursuant to the Viceroy's statement:—Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Mr. Siva Prasad Gupta, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveshar, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr. Satyapal, Mr. Hanumantha Rao Kaujalji, Sirdar Mangal Singh, Lala Dunichand, Dr. Ansari, Mr. Mathuradas Tricumji, Maulana Mufti Kifayatullah, Mr. Syed Abdulla Brelvi, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, Mr. Govind Kant Malaviya, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Sen Gupta and Mrs. Kamala Nehru.
- 26th.** *Riot in Begusarai:*—A Bihar Government communique stated that a serious riot was reported from Begusarai in north Monghyr. A mob of ten thousand persons attacked the police after the arrests of the leaders in the "Independence Day" procession. The Sub-Divisional Officer, two Sub-Inspectors and six constables received serious head injuries and twenty-six other police officers and men were also injured. The police opened fire and five rioters were killed and one dangerously injured. Seven rioters were slightly injured.

*Independence Day Celebration in Calcutta : Lathi charge by Police :—*Over fifty persons were injured as a result of lathi charge in connection with the Independence Day Celebration held at the Calcutta Maidan round the Ochterlony monument. Prominent among the injured were S<sub>j</sub>. Subhas Ch. Bose, Mayor of Calcutta and S<sub>j</sub>. Kshitish Prosad Chatterjee, Education officer of the Calcutta Corporation. About fifty ladies and some male volunteers were arrested. The ladies were subsequently released at about 8 P. M. from Lal Bazar.—At about 4-30 P. M. half-a-dozen ladies along with some of tender age hoisted the National Flag at the Ochterlony Monument. The ladies were hardly interfered with while the huge crowd that gathered round them at short and long radii were subjected to lathi charge by sergeants and dispersed. The original distributed crowd at the Ochterlony monument was sought to be joined by two processions, (1) the Mayor's procession and (2) the ladies' procession. The Mayor's procession was ceremonial, officials of the Corporation, the clerks and orderlies gave him a send off from the Mayor's room upto outside of the Corporation Buildings. With a brief reception amidst garlandings and the blowings of conch-shells at the Corporation Lawn the Mayor started amidst cries of "Bande Mataram" The Mayor's procession was dispersed at the front of the Whiteways just on the fringe of the Maidan where the Mayor was wounded and arrested. The ladies' procession in three batches was held up at about the Esplanade junction of the Tramways. One of the batches was arrested on the spot and led on the prison vans of which there were about a dozen. The other two batches who were joined subsequently by some volunteers were led along Central Avenue towards Bowbazar and arrested near Lal Bazar. The male volunteers accompanying them who grew by the time to a number of about 150 were dispersed by the Police near Lal Bazar.

**27th. Congress Organisations Banned :—**The Bengal War Council alternatively termed the Bengal Council of Action and the Bengal Congress Council of Action, the Nari Satyagraha Samiti, the Burrabazar Congress Committee and the Bengal Council of Civil Disobedience in the Presidency of Bengal were declared as unlawful associations.—Several houses in the Midnapore district were also declared as unlawful associations.

*S<sub>j</sub>. Subhas Chandra Bose* arrested while leading a procession to the Maidan in defiance of the Police Commissioner's order in celebration of the "Independence Day" was found guilty by the Magistrate under section 147, I. P. C. and sentenced to undergo six months' rigorous imprisonment. He was also found guilty under the other sections but no separate sentence was passed.

**30th. Burma ordinance promulgated :—**His Excellency the Viceroy promulgated Ordinance No. I of 1931 "The Burma Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance", applying to the whole of Burma. In the course of his statement His Excellency said :—It has been known to the Government for some years that there is a terrorist party in Burma which is closely associated with the terrorist movement in Bengal. There is also good ground for belief that it is privy to the rebellion in Tharrawaddy District, and that it was the intention of those responsible for that rebellion to organise risings in different parts of Burma with a view to overthrow the Government as established by law. I am satisfied that the terrorist movement in Burma is a menace to the peace of the Province and pending the passage of local legislation, that it is necessary to take immediate action in regard to it. I have accordingly promulgated an Ordinance. The powers conferred by this Ordinance will be used only against those in regard to whom there is reason to believe that they are Members of the Terrorist party in Burma, or are acting in furtherance of the terrorist movement.

## February, 1931.

**Chief Events :—**Passing away of Pt. Motilal Nehru at Lucknow—The Benares Communal Riot—The Gandhi-Irwin Peace Talks—Country-wide mercy memorials to the Viceroy to commute the death sentences on Bhagat Singh and others to one of transportation for life.

1st. *Enquiry into Police Conduct urged* :—Mahatma Gandhi in a press statement said that the members of the Working Committee were unanimously of the view that the movement could not be withdrawn or slackened unless a truce was declared. A mass movement like the one now going on could not be stopped suddenly and without a reasonable hope of final settlement. After mentioning certain incidents and urging an absolutely impartial enquiry into the charges against the police he said : 'I do not see how it is possible to conduct negotiations for peace with repression fouling the atmosphere hour after hour'.

3rd. Sir Hari Singh Gour's Civil Marriage Bill rejected by the Assembly.

4th. *Hindu-Moslem Riot in Rangoon* :—As a result of Hindu-Moslem clash in Rangoon, 21 persons were injured, four were Moslems and the rest Hindus, mostly Chettys.

5th. *Political Prisoners—Suggestion to the Viceroy* :—The debate in the Legislative Assembly on the resolution regarding political prisoners proved inconclusive and was adjourned *sine die* on the motion of Sir Hari Singh Gour. This was ascribed to a desire to avoid a division owing to the thinness of the non-official ranks. Mr. Abdullah Haroon proposed an amendment for the release of prisoners and withdrawal of the Ordinances after the Civil Disobedience Movement had been called off. Sir Abdur Rabim felt that the release of the rank and file was necessary when the leaders had been set free. Sir Hugh Cocks on behalf of the European group supported Mr. Haroon's amendment and remarked that the Government would make themselves the laughing stock of the world if they declared an amnesty before the Congress agreed to the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement. Sir George Rainy, Leader of the House, said that the present resolution of the Congress rather pointed to the impression that the Government was acting from weakness. While such an unjustifiable impression remained, a settlement was impossible. Mian Shah Nawaz, while opposing Mr. Haroon's amendment urged the Viceroy to summon Mahatma Gandhi and settle the matter. Maulavi Muhammed Yakub suggested a *via media* in the simultaneous withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement and the grant of amnesty and withdrawal of the repressive laws.

6th. *Passing away of Pt. Nehru* :—Pandit Motilal Nehru expired at 6-40 a. m. at Lucknow, where he had gone for X-ray treatment. In an exclusive statement to the "Liberty", Gandhiji said : "My position is worse than a widow's. By a faithful life, she can appropriate the merits of her husband. I can appropriate nothing. What I have lost through Motilalji's death is a loss for ever. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."—Calcutta citizens in their thousands assembled at the Sraddhananda Park to pay their tributes to the memory of the great Pandit. No speeches were made. It was a solemn scene to witness the vast gathering stand up and offer their prayers to the Almighty for the peace of the departed soul.—Under the auspices of the B. P. S. A. a mammoth meeting of the students of Calcutta was held at the Albert Hall and a resolution of condolence was adopted. Indian quarters of the city of Calcutta observed complete 'Hartal'. Schools, colleges and shops were closed and all sorts of business activities were completely stopped.

*Mass arrest in Ahmedabad* :—Over 900 persons were arrested in Ahmedabad in connection with the auction of country liquor shops. The arrested persons included ladies of the family of Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Sir Chinnubhai, prominent mill agents, but all of them were released after the auction sale was finished.

*R. T. C. Delegates' Manifesto* :—'The attainment by India of Dominion Status is no longer in dispute', observed 26 delegates who returned from the Round Table Conference to-day. They included the Maharajas of Bikaner and Alwar, Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Begum Shah Nawaz, Sir A. P. Patro and Sir Phiroze Sethna. They emphasised that English opinion had undergone a remarkable change in India's favour. It had been explicitly recognised that the task of governing India should in future be entrusted to an Indian executive responsible to the Indian legislature. On the question of safeguards, the manifesto said they would not affect the substance of the scheme which sought to transfer political power into Indian hands. They were only intended for the period of transition and were subject to further examination. As regards law and order, the

manifesto said the Governor-General would not have power to interfere with day-to-day administration and would step in only to secure peace in security when it would be seriously imperilled or when the interests of the minorities would be seriously endangered. The signatories expressed approval of the release of Congress leaders and hoped they would come forward to make solid contribution to the completion of the scheme. They further expressed the hope that a suitable atmosphere would be created for the consideration of the several questions by the release of all political prisoners.

9th. *Speaking at the annual general meeting of the European Association*, Calcutta, the retiring President, Mr. W. Travers said he wanted to make it perfectly clear that he did not intend to withdraw for one moment from the position he took up in criticising the "mistakes" of their delegates to the Round Table Conference. He was quite certain that, in future, responsibility in the centre in this country was going to do enormous harm to India and to the European community.

11th. *Govt. Defeat in Bengal Council*:—The Government suffered the first defeat of the session in the Bengal Legislative Council when by a majority of one vote a token grant moved by the Hon'ble Sir P. C. Mitter for expenditure during the current year on account of new jails in the presidency was rejected.

*In the course of the Presidential address at the fifth annual meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce*, Calcutta, Mr. Khaitan observed: "No constitution which does not guarantee a substantial measure of economic control, sufficient for the purpose of carrying out the programme of reforms indicated by Mahatma Gandhi's eleven points, will be acceptable to the Indian Mercantile Community. But, we quite clearly see that the Congress co-operation would be practically impossible without a complete cessation of repression, discharge of political prisoners and restoration of the pre-repression conditions."

*The Benares Communal Riot*:—A very serious communal riot occurred at Benares as a sequel to the shooting of a Muslim foreign cloth-dealer on the previous night. When the funeral procession of the deceased Muslim was being taken out on this day, the crowd following the procession looted Hindu shops on the way and attacked Hindu shop-keepers and others whom they came across on the road. A Hindu Mukhtar, who was going in his car, was also severely beaten. A few persons were thus severely wounded and Hindu shops in several localities were looted. After this there were stray assaults by each community on persons belonging to the other throughout the night. On the 12th. stray assaults continued as the result of which a Muslim boy of about 12 years was killed and about 70 persons were injured. Armed Police were called out to patrol the city. On the 13th., stray assaults and attacks on lonely passers-by continued. When the Muslims had congregated in the Gyanbapi mosque to say prayers a Hindu crowd also collected in the vicinity. The police arrived there and fired on the crowd with the result that one or two persons were killed. Sporadic attacks however continued. The police and military guarded important points in the city. There were no postal delivery and no newspapers were being distributed. In the evening a peaceful procession consisting of 300 persons, both Hindus and Muslims, started from Aurangabad to bring about reconciliation between the two communities. While nearing Victoria Park where the procession swelled to 1,000 by all sorts of people including hooligans joining it, it was alleged, it was charged by the policemen who came in two lorries from an opposite direction, notwithstanding the protestation of the processionists that it was a peaceful one. As a result of the police charge, it was reported, about 20 persons were injured. The total casualties, excluding the original murder, according to official version, was 77 wounded and two killed.

16th. *Picketing at Broach*:—At Broach vigorous picketing was organised when country liquor shops were auctioned. The police charged picketers with lathis and arrested a large number of pickets, men, women and children.

17th. *Gandhi-Irwin Talks*:—Mahatma Gandhi's talks with Lord Irwin on this day lasted for four hours. The way for the interview had been paved by the previous day's interview with the Viceroy which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and two of his London Conference colleagues had. This enabled both the Viceroy

and Gandhiji to proceed on a certain preliminary understanding of what would be each other's point of view. The talk was continued the next day but it was shorter. Then both agreed to suspend the talk for sometime so that the Viceroy might consult the Premier and the Secretary of State, and Gandhiji, the Congress leaders.

*Picketing in Bombay* :—Mass picketing by about 500 men volunteers and Deshsevikas was resorted to at the Collector's office in Bombay with a view to prevent country liquor shop licensees submitting their tenders for the new year.

18th. *Procession in Protest of Prisoners* :—About two hundred ladies, headed by Mrs. Maitra, took out a procession to go in front of the Council Chamber in Lucknow and to demonstrate to the members against the alleged ill-treatment of "C" Class political prisoners in the new jail at Lucknow. When the procession reached the junction of Hewett and Abbot Roads, a cordon of police, armed with regulation lathis, stopped them for about two hours till the negotiations between the Government and Congressmen were over. A settlement was at last reached that the processionists should not make a halt in front of the Council House for demonstration nor enter the Council, but should pass along and return by the same way. According to the undertaking, the processionists peacefully passed along the Council Chamber singing songs and shouting "Council Jhana Haram hai," and other slogans and returned.

19th. *Gandhi-Irwin Talks* :—Mahatma Gandhi was suddenly called to the "Viceroy's House" on this day and had half an hour's talk with the Viceroy. The Mahatma on his return from the "Viceroy's House," drove straight to Mr. Birla's house where he met Pandit Malaviya and the commercial magnates who had come to Delhi, and held a brief discussion with them. Soon after Mahatmaji returned to Dr. Ansari's place, and held consultations with Pandit Jawaharlal, Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, Mr. C. Rajagopalchari, Dr. Pattabhi Sitharamayya and Mr. Jammalal Bajaj. The following communique was issued from the Viceroy's House on the subject :—'His Excellency the Viceroy granted a further interview to Mr. Gandhi to-day. It is understood that various matters emerging from the discussions are now under examination and it is possible that some days may elapse before a further stage of discussions is reached.'

22nd. *Addressing a Meeting of the All-India Muslim League Mahatma Gandhi said* :—Brethren, I am a Bania, and there is no limit to my greed. It has always been my dream and heart's desire to speak not only for 21 crores, but for the thirty crores of India. My heart is however confident that God will grant me that position when I may speak for the whole of India; and if I may have to die striving for that ideal, I shall achieve the peace of my heart. I do not know what will be the result of my talks with H. E. the Viceroy. But if God wishes the Congress to participate in the Conference and if there is a settlement between the Government and the Congress, the question of Hindu Moslem unity will be one which will engage our first attention."

24th. *Gandhi-Irwin Talks* :—The Viceroy summoned to-day eight Round Table Conference delegates now in Delhi, namely, Sir T. B. Saprú, Mr. Sastri, Sir B. N. Mitra, Sir Abul Qayum, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Messrs. Jadhav, Ghuznavi and Jayakar and explained to them the purport of the Gandhi talks and the future line of action.—The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution giving Mahatma Gandhi unfettered authority to conclude a settlement with the Viceroy who was expected to summon Mahatma Gandhi shortly to resume the talks.

25th. *Public meeting in Calcutta under Sir P. C. Ray* adopted a resolution urging amnesty to political prisoners of all shades and commutation of death sentences with a view to creating a proper and peaceful atmosphere.

*Arrests at Surat and Broach* :—About 100 arrests were made at Castle Maidan, Surat as a sequel to an attempt made by the local Congressmen to hold a flag salutation.—At Broach a procession organised in connection with census boycott was dispersed by the police by a lathi charge. 150 'Vanaras' and 30 'Desh-Sevikas' were arrested.

**27th. Revolutionary Suspects' Battle with C. I. D.:**—In the morning Allahabad people were alarmed at the sound of shots in Alfred Park. There was a regular fusillade of bullets between the C. I. D. and some criminal suspects whom the police had been tracking. A special superintendent of C. I. D. police was behind one tree and a suspect behind another. Shots were exchanged to nearly half an hour from a distance of about 50 yards. The battle ended when one of the suspects fell down dead. The deceased was said to be Chunder Sekhar Azad, who was wanted for some alleged political offences. Mr. Nott-Bower and Inspector Bishe-sbar Singh of the C. I. D. were wounded, but not seriously. It appears that ammunition on both sides was exhausted and the police got a supply, but the suspects ran out and could not continue the fight. Another story was that the deceased finding his ammunition exhausted committed suicide.

**28th. Budget in the Assembly:**—Sir George Schuster, presented the budget for 1931-32 in the Assembly to-day. His speech showed that the transactions in 1930-31, according to the revised estimate, would result finally in a deficit of 13.56 crores as against the anticipated surplus in the budget of 86 lakhs. In 1931-32 the gap between revenue and expenditure was proposed to be converted into a surplus of 31 lakhs, by imposing new taxes. The military expenditure was to be cut by 1.75 crores and sundry economies effected in civil expenditure. To avoid deficit, the Finance Member proposed to increase customs duties on liquors, spices, sugar and silver and to increase tax on higher incomes.

**Meroy Memorial to Viceroy re. Bhagat Singh:**—A largely attended public meeting was held at Azad Maidan, Bombay, at which a number of speakers supported the proposed idea of sending a memorial to the Viceroy with a monster petition signed by over two lakhs of citizens requesting His Excellency to use his prerogative and commute the death sentences passed on Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, to one of transportation for life.—At a meeting at Ahmed-abad, a resolution was passed urging the Government not only to change its attitude towards political prisoners, but to commute the death sentences passed on Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, in order to strike confidence in Indians that Britain desired the political progress of India.

### March 1931.

**Chief Events:**—The Gandhi-Irwin Agreement : Cessation of hostilities—Red Flag Union's and Red Shirts' hostile greetings to the Mahatma—Execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev: Nationalist "walk out" in Assembly in protest—The Cawnpore Riots: Mr. Vidyarthi's tragic end—The Karachi Congress: Congress participation in Round Table Conference.

**3rd. Burma Governor on Safeguards:**—Addressing the annual meeting of the Burma Chamber of Commerce His Excellency the Governor recognised the need for safeguards on behalf of the British and Indian commercial communities in the new constitution, and added that the need was generally recognised. The Governor pointed out that after the acceptance of the principle of separation by the Round Table Conference, the Burma Sub-Committee, which was set up, expressed the opinion that the legitimate interests of the Indian and other minorities should be safeguarded.

**4th. The Gandhi-Irwin Agreement:**—According to the settlement arrived at consequent on the conversations between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy, the civil disobedience movement was to be discontinued and certain action taken by the Government of India and local Governments which included amnesty to persons

convicted of non-violent offences in connection with civil disobedience, withdrawal of Ordinances, restoration of confiscated, forfeited or attached properties except in certain circumstances, and administrative concession to make salt in certain areas. As regards constitutional questions, federation, Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as, for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations, are essential parts of the R. T. U. scheme to be further discussed. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution endorsing the terms of the agreement and issued instructions to all Congress committees to take immediate action in accordance with them. The Committee opined that on a strict fulfilment of obligations undertaken on behalf of the Congress, would depend the advance of India towards Purna Swaraj.

**6th. Ordinances Repealed :—**A Gazette of India Extraordinary issued an Ordinance which repealed the Unlawful Association Ordinance of 1930, the Indian Press and Unauthorised News Sheets and Newspaper Ordinance of 1930, and the Unlawful Instigation (Second) Ordinance of 1930.

**7th.** The Bengal Government withdrew with effect from this day notifications declaring various Congress Committees in Bengal unlawful.

**9th. Bengal Students' Conference :—**Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta in his address to the conference reminded students that if they could strengthen their own national organisation and develop an atmosphere of non-violence it would be possible for Mr. Gandhi to have even "violent" prisoners released in the course of a few days or weeks. As regards safeguards Mr. Sen Gupta said that the Congress did not and would not want reservation with regard to the Army and Finance and that any such demand would not be maintained.

**11th. A strong plea for communal amity** was made by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to a gathering of young students at the Arabic College, New Delhi. Referring to the Moslem cry for safeguards, Mrs. Naidu said it showed that Mussalmans were weak and afraid of other communities. This was an entirely erroneous idea. Mussalmans, with their culture and traditions, courage and virility, could never be weak. They should always strive to make India economically independent.

**12th. The Mahatma on Truce terms :—**Mahatma Gandhi addressing a largely attended public meeting at Borsad explained the truce terms, and said he had called this fight the final battle of his life. It was not yet fought to a finish. They could not ask for reparation. If they did so, the Government would not pay. The Government derived taxes from the poor, and it would pay from it.

*Sir F. Sykes* addressing the *Bombay Chamber of Commerce* expressed his sympathy with the members in respect of the difficult trading conditions. He proceeded : A settlement had been effected, and if it was to have a reasonable chance of proving satisfactory, the first essential was that both sides should let by-gones be by-gones.

**13th. Another Burma Ordinance :—**H. E. the Viceroy promulgated the Burma Rebellion (Trials) Ordinance. "The Ordinance empowers the local Government to appoint for any area to which the Ordinance extends, a special tribunal or tribunals. An appeal will lie to the High Court in case of all sentences of imprisonment which do not exceed five years.

**14th. Addressing a large public meeting at Karadi** Mahatma Gandhi said he was glad they continued their work, and made Gujrat known to the world after his arrest. Now they should apply themselves to the work that was to be prosecuted. Proceeding, Mahatma Gandhi said now they had not to practise Civil Disobedience of laws, but to do constructive work.

*The Viceroy on Truce Terms :—*Speaking at the State banquet at Jaipur, the Viceroy said : "It has seemed not many weeks ago that that work would

have to be pursued in an atmosphere overcharged with uncertainty and mistrust. I am happy to think that those mists have to a great extent been dispelled. I believe that if the spirit, which inspired my recent conversations with Mr. Gandhi can be maintained throughout the future constitutional discussions, it ought not to be impossible to set the seal upon a secure and durable understanding between India and Great Britain. We met with the single purpose, if it might be honourably accomplished, of re-establishing peace in India. I am confident that he will do everything in his power to give effect to those undertakings, which are recorded in the published statement”.

**16th. Red Flags' hostile greeting to Mahatma :—**Disorderly scenes marred the proceedings of a mammoth meeting in the mill area in Bombay which Mahatma Gandhi addressed. Long before the advertised time for the meeting, about 50 members of the Red Flag Union (Girni Kamgar Union) made a hostile demonstration. Mr. Nariman who presided called upon Mr. Ranadive, Red Flag Union leader, to address the meeting. Mr. Ranadive vehemently attacked the Congress and Mr. Gandhi and said that they had betrayed the workers especially as they had failed to effect the release of Meerut prisoners. Mr. Gandhi who was unmoved by the interruptions, addressed the meeting and said that he had never betrayed the workers in his life and he would never do so in future. He added that he had been working for the uplift of the workers even before the present labour leaders and communists were born. Alluding to the question of the non-release of Meerut prisoners, Mahatma Gandhi said that he would like the release of all political prisoners but he was sorry he could not make that a condition. He however assured the workers that he would not rest content till all political prisoners were released.

**23rd. Execution of Lahore Prisoners :—**Bhagat Singh's mercy petition to H. E. the Viceroy having been rejected, his father Kishen Singh, Rajguru's mother and the relations of Sukhdev were intimidated by the jail authorities to interview them for the last time in jail on this day. They were hanged at night and their bodies were cremated according to Sikh and Hindu rites on the banks of the Sutlej river and the remains thrown into the river.—Lahore observed a complete hartal. Bombay and Madras also observed hartal. In Calcutta, intense excitement prevailed and armed flying squads patrolled the city.

**Reflection on Chair's Conduct :—**Scenes of excitement characterised the session of the Assembly and the occasion was provided by Mr. Sahani's remarks, on the previous day, regarding the Chair's conduct. The President demanded that Mr. Sahani should ask for expunging those remarks. In spite of the whole house demanding the withdrawal of the remarks, Mr. Sahani maintained that his statement was not frivolous but added that he was prepared to apologise for the pain caused to the Chair and the House. Then the Leader of the House moved that the report of the objectionable remarks be expunged from the proceedings. The motion was put and carried.

**24th. Nationalist "Walk out".—**Soon after question-time in the Assembly, Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, leader of the Nationalist Party, made a statement condemning the action of the Government in having carried out the sentence of death passed on Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, the previous evening. He said that the Government had flouted public opinion and thereby had invited serious trouble to themselves. After the statement, the Nationalist members walked out in a body. Three Independents followed them. Sir Abdur Rahim and Sir Cowasji Jehangir left the Assembly hall later, when the Assembly proceeded with Postal rates. Within a few minutes the President adjourned the sitting for the day.

**Riots in Cawnpore.—**Riots broke out in Cawnpore on this day. Incendiarism, barbarous assaults on women, deliberate massacre of children and every conceivable horror was rampant. One of the most tragic events in connection with the riots was the death of Mr. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi, Editor of the "Pratap". Mr. Vidyarthi was killed on the 25th. March, in a thickly populated Mahomedan quarter, where he had gone alone, unprotected, to render relief to the wounded and pacify the mob. He saved the lives of about 140 Mahomedans,



including women and children. His body was identified on the 27th. and cremated. About 10,000 persons attended the funeral.

**25th. Red-Shirts' Hostile Greetings to Mahatma :—**"Red Shirts", black flags and shouts of "Leaders, Go Back" and "Down with the Truce" greeted Gandhiji as he alighted at Malir, thirteen miles off Karachi, on this day. As Gandhiji with Sardar Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal, Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Ansari drove to his camp the "Red Shirts" followed in a lorry with black flags flying and persisted in hostile demonstrations demanding "We want the murderer of Bhagat Singh", apparently referring to Gandhiji, until they were taken charge of by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who conferred with them. These hostile greetings however were drowned by the enthusiastic cheering all along the route as also in the Congress Grounds where crowds besieged Gandhiji's tent till late in the afternoon.

**New Income-tax Proposals : Viceroy Certifies Finance Bill :—**When the Assembly met on this day Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar moved an amendment for status quo in regard to the level of income-tax and super-tax. It was lost by 59 votes against 35. Then Sir Cowasji Jehangir brought amendments to reduce Income-tax and Super-tax rates. The amendment for reduction in Income-tax rate was carried while the other to reduce super-tax was negatived. When the Assembly met the next day the President communicated the Governor-General's message urging the Assembly to accept an amendment which would make a reduction of one crore only. Sir George Seuster then moved an amendment to the income-tax schedule which kept unaltered the rates proposed in the Bill for incomes of Rs. 15,000 and upwards and gave relief to the lower grades. As the Assembly refused to pass the Finance Bill in the recommended form, the Viceroy certified it.

**26th. Lord Irwin's Warning to Die-Hards :** Speaking at the farewell banquet given by the Chelmsford Club, Lord Irwin said that there were those in England who said 'let us have firm Government and get back rapidly to the good old days of paternal administration with populous markets reserved for British trade.' This diagnosis, he said, was superficial, distorted and wholly divorced from the reality of the Indian situation. No Englishman can, without being false to his own political history, and in recent years to his own pledges, take objection to pursuit by others of their own political liberty. He continued: "I would repeat what I have said more than once that an attempt to meet the case with rigid and unyielding opposition is merely to repeat the unintelligent mistake of King Canute." Such an attitude, he said, would destroy any hope of retaining a contented India within the Empire.

**27th. Mr. Subash Bose's Address at the Naujawan Conference :—**In the Naujawan Conference at Karachi Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, in his presidential address, referring to Bhagat Singh's execution asked of what use the truce terms were if the lives of such heroes could not be saved. Referring to the Gandhi-Irwin pact, he said that it was highly unsatisfactory and disappointing. The police enquiry, he said, should not have been given up. Picketing according to the truce terms was impossible to carry on and would be least productive, in his opinion. In conclusion he appealed to the audience for organisation of peasants and workers and pleaded for the abolition of caste system.

**29th. The Karachi Congress :—**The 45th session of the Indian National Congress assembled at Karachi on this day in an open air stadium. There were no less than 40,000 visitors. Punctually at 6 P. M. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, the President, arrived followed by a procession of volunteers. In the procession were Gandhiji, Mr. Subhas Bose and Khan Abdul Gaffur Khan (Frontier). The President and Gandhiji were greeted with a tremendous ovation. Mr. Vallabhbhai delivered his presidential address, after the welcome address by the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

**30th. Congress Participation in Round Table Conference :—**"I give no promise and no undertaking that the Congress delegation will bring complete independence but I pledge my word that they will not bring back greater bondage"—with

these words Mahatma Gandhi supported the resolution moved by Pandit Jawharlal Nehru endorsing the Gandhi-Irwin pact in the open session of the Congress on this day. The resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority. Gandhiji felt that there was nothing in the settlement of which either he or the members of the Working Committee could be ashamed of. The terms of the truce were perfectly honourable.

- 31st. Peasants' Party Conference :—**The Third All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference was held at Karachi with Comrade Daswandha Singh in the chair, when a number of resolutions were adopted. One resolution reiterated the goal of the party as the establishment of a proletariat dictatorship in India. The second resolution denounced the Congress for its counter-revolutionary and pro-imperialist propaganda. The third resolution condemned the Gandhi-Irwin agreement as a deliberate betrayal of the Indian struggle for complete independence. The conference also demanded the assessment of land revenue on the income-tax basis. Three more resolutions condemned Gandhiji for his "pro-bourgeoisie activities."

*Swaraj explained to the Masses : Declaration of Fundamental Rights :—* After heated debate extending over many hours the subjects committee of the Congress adopted a resolution, prepared by Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawharlal Nehru and redrafted in the select committee of the subjects committee, "explaining to the masses what Swaraj means." The resolution provided among other things for living wage for industrial workers, free primary education, adult suffrage, abolition of the salt duty, a progressive income-tax on agricultural income, reduction of military expenditure by one-half of the present scale, reduction in civil servants' salaries, substantial reduction of land revenues and agricultural rent and control by the State of key industries and mineral resources. In introducing the resolution to the subjects committee Mahatma said :—"We need not be afraid that the resolution might be the subject of complaint by the British people. We must be plain and frank and tell the world what exactly we want and tell the peasants what the Congress delegation to the Round Table Conference would strive for." Referring to the reduction of salaries he said India could not afford to pay salaries on the present scale.

## April 1931.

**Chief Events :—**Moslem animosity to Congress and civil war threat and talk of revenge in the All India Moslem Conference—The Muslim Nationalists' Conference : Separatist movement a negation of Nationalism : Sir Ali Imam on new political orientation—The central Sikh League : The Sikhs' Demands—District Magistrate of Midnapur shot at—Curfew order in Chittagong : Omnibus searches and arrests throughout.

- 1st. The Mahatma on Communal Problem :** Addressing the annual session of the Jamiatul-Ulema-i-Hind, Gandhiji condemned the communal riots in Agra, Cawnpore, etc., and said that if one learnt toleration such riots would become impossibilities. He appealed to the learned theologians of Islam to eradicate the poison of communalism from Mussalmans and teach them the doctrines of mutual goodwill and toleration. Gandhiji continued that Hindu-Moslem unity alone could achieve Swaraj for India and he was convinced that unless that problem was solved, it would be useless to go to the Round-Table Conference.

**5th. Attack on Congress and Civil War threat : Talk of Revenge in Moslem Conference :—**A good deal of heat and a spirit of revenge on the Hindus owing to communal riots were exhibited in the speeches delivered at the special session of the All-India Muslim Conference at Delhi with Mr. Shaukat Ali in the chair. A resolution deploring the recent riots declared the conviction of the Conference that the Congress had "cast off its sham non-violence in its dealing between the communities and the continuance of this attitude of the majority would lead to a Civil War." Mr. Shaukat Ali while deprecating heat said that "wherever the Muslims felt forced to fight they must not lay hands on women, children, old men or temples."

**6th. Foreign Relations Ordinance :—**H. E. the Viceroy and Governor-General promulgated the Foreign Relations Ordinance of 1931, which ran :—"Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report with intent to promote or which is likely to promote, or whereof the making, publishing or circulating, is likely to promote, unfriendly relations between His Majesty's Government and the Government of any foreign State, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine or with both."

**7th. British Views on Moslem Conference Resolutions :—**The All-India Moslem Conference resolutions pained and astonished British supporters of Indian national aspirations, who hoped that Mahatma Gandhiji's generous advances would disarm communal hostility and facilitate unity. The Diehards exploited the Mahomedan animosity as proving India's unfitness for self-rule and India's friends realised that the Moslems' implacable attitude so aggressively maintained would delay the realisation of the goal.—"The News Chronicle" said that the situation created by communal antagonism was very serious and must be fatal to the hope of a real settlement, but warned the mischief-makers, who dreamt exultantly that by exploiting the differences they could restore the old order, that they were woefully deceived.—"The Telegraph" said that but for the police and troops under British control India would have been in anarchy long since and this would happen on the removal of that control in deference to Congress politicians.

**I. L. P. and India :—**The attitude of the Independent Labour Party towards the problem of India was raised at the Party Conference at Scarborough by Mr. Southhall, who accused Mr. MacDonald of 'grovelling in dust to the graven image of British Imperialism'—Mr. Fenner Brockway said that Government and Parliament must go much further than they went at the Round Table Conference but he doubted greatly whether Parliament would go sufficiently far to meet India's demands. The Conference adopted a resolution supporting the demand for amnesty for all Indian prisoners and full self-Government of India.

**Indian Chambers' Federation :** Mahatma Gandhi opened in the old Assembly Chamber the fourth meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The hall and the galleries were full with a distinguished gathering. Among the visitors were Sir George Schuster, Sir B. N. Mitra, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoolah, Sir Wilberforce Barker, Sir Frank Noyce, Mr. Woodhead, Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Malaviya. In the course of his address, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the services by merchants for the Congress and appealed to the commercial classes to make further sacrifices and thus give such strength to the country that its movement for Swaraj will become irresistible.

**Midnapore District Magistrate shot at :—** Mr. James Peddie, District Magistrate, Midnapore who returned to town from a shooting excursion in the evening visited the educational exhibition in the local school premises at 7 p.m. when he was shot at inside the exhibition room. Three bullets struck his back, two his arms and one pierced the abdomen. On removal to hospital he was operated upon. His condition became serious the next morning and he expired on the evening of 8th April.

**8th. The Central Sikh League ; Sikhs' demands :—**The session of the Central Sikh League held its session at Amritsar under the presidency of Master Tara Singh,

who in his address, referred to the question of Sikh rights, saying that the Sikhs were opposed to communal representation or creating any communal majority. He reiterated the 17 demands of the Sikhs which opposed communal representation. In case communal representation was retained, Sikhs wanted 30 per cent representation in the Punjab Council and Services, 5 per cent in the Central Legislature, one Sikh Minister in the Central Cabinet, and adequate representation in the Army and on the Army Council. In case no agreement was reached it was suggested that the boundaries of the Punjab be altered by transferring the predominantly Mahomedan districts to the Frontier Province, with joint electorates in the new Province. If this too was not agreeable, the Punjab should be administered by the new Central Government till the communal tangle was settled.

**18th. Lord Willingdon Assumes Viceroyalty :—Lord Irwin's Farewell Speech :—**Lord Irwin bade adieu to India and Lord Willingdon assumed charge of the Viceroyalty amidst the boom of guns. At the Gateway of India Lord Irwin was presented with a farewell address by the Bombay Corporation. Referring to the constitutional settlement between India and Britain Lord Irwin, in course of his reply to the address, said :—"The only way of achieving the end is by a synthesis of the best statesmanship of the East and West, by the collaboration of the two partners working side by side, not in any huckstering spirit as to who would get the best of a bad bargain, not with a view to this or that individual, or this or that community gaining advantage or victory over a rival, but with the sole purpose of creating and perpetuating a prosperous, strong, contented India, embracing both British India and the States as an honoured member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Lord Irwin wished that in thought and faith, in word and wisdom, in deed and courage, in life and service India might be great.

**The Muslims' Demand: Sir Ali Imam on New Political Orientation :—**Presiding over the Nationalist Muslims' Conference at Lucknow Sir Ali Imam stressed on the necessity of *Joint Electorates* as, in his opinion, *Separate Electorates* was not only a negation of Indian Nationalism but also positively harmful to the Muslims themselves. Proceeding Sir Ali Imam said that Nationalism could never evolve from division and dissensions. The very notion of *Separate Electorates* was based upon the support, which could not be found in this country. This clearly meant the perpetuation of tutelage. Sir Ali advised the Muslims to insist upon *Joint Electorates* without any condition as in his opinion the demand for reservation of seats in the *Joint Electorates* meant to admit the presence of some extraneous authority. In conclusion Sir Ali Imam said : "In the future of India there will be no place for a Hindu Raj or a Muslim Raj. The sovereignty of the people of India will be broad based upon patriotism, unalloyed by taints of communalism."

**19th. All-India Liberal Federation Council—**The All-India Liberal Federation Council which met in Bombay passed eleven resolutions after a prolonged sitting. One resolution stated that the "safe-guards" enunciated at the Round Table Conference were not agreed to by their delegates. The Council expressed itself unanimously in favour of joint electorates. The Council strongly criticised the present financial policy of the Government. In regard to the army, the Council stressed that Indianisation should be automatic so that the present army might be replaced by an Indian Dominion Army in a limited period of time.

**Separate Electorate dangerous to Indian Nationalism: Muslims to continue to participate in struggle for independence :—**While moving the resolution regarding the method of representation to the legislatures in the Nationalist Moslem Conference at Lucknow Dr. Ansari said that India was at the first stage successful in the unparalleled non-violent struggle for freedom. But it was just the first stage and there was the danger that inner discord engineered by interested parties might deprive her of the fruits of victory. Nationalist Muslims had made and were making efforts to pave the way for a settlement conducive to the best interests of India and Muslims. Proceeding Dr. Ansari said that the anxiety to secure certain safe-guards and guarantees for Muslims in the future Constitution was genuine and so far as Nationalist Muslims were concerned they would press such genuine demands and secure their acceptance. But Nationalist Muslims

found it impossible to stand by the demand to separate electorates which they considered highly dangerous both to India and the Muslims. Another resolution calling upon the Muslims to join the Congress in large numbers and continue to participate in the national struggle for the attainment of Independence was also passed.

- 21st. *Curfew Order in Chittagong*:—Precautionary measures for public safety were taken by the authorities in Chittagong who acted such on information of possible revolutionary outbreak. Unlicensed meetings and processions were prohibited and a curfew order was enforced, people being allowed to pass with lanterns after 10 p.m. only in emergency cases. Temporary quarters were built in strategic points where military pickets were posted.
- 22nd. *Mechuabazar Bomb Case Judgment*.—Satyabrata Sen and eight other young Bengalis who were convicted by the Alipore Special Tribunal on the charge of possessing bombs and explosive substances in the Mechuabazar Bomb Case, were acquitted by a Special Bench of the Calcutta High Court. Their Lordships however upheld the conviction of Nirajan Sen Gupta and eight others in this connection, but reduced the sentence of Nirajan from ten years' transportation to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

*Congress Work in Tamil Nad*—Mr. C. Rajagopalchariar, in the course of an appeal to the public said:—"This period of truce should be a period of hard labour on behalf of the Congress. It should not by any means be taken by Congress workers as a holiday. If we wish to make Mahatmaji's voice at the coming Conference irresistible, we should strengthen the Congress organisations. If the Conference ends in a settlement, we have to organise the country so that the voice of democracy may prevail in the future work; if the Conference is not successful and we have to renew the fight, it is necessary that we should strengthen the Congress and make it a power in the land. I appeal to every adult in the Province to join the Congress as a member and make the nationalist army irresistible. I appeal that every one who can spare a Rupee for the Congress work of the year may contribute to the Rupee Fund. Swaraj will be erected on the strongest foundation if the work is based on the small but numerous contributions of the poor people."

*Dr. Ansari on Communal Problem*:—"Joint electorates and adult franchise would form the basis of discussion both with our own co-religionists as well as with the Hindus or Sikhs. Any constitution which does not contain a provision for these two factors, will be wholly unacceptable to the Nationalist Mussalmans of India", declared Dr. M. A. Ansari in an interview to the Associated Press. Asked as to how the communal question could be satisfactorily solved, Dr. Ansari said that a board of arbitration with full powers to the arbitrator to settle the question—such a settlement to be binding on their respective communities—would be the ideal way to solve the communal question.

- 23rd. *Peshawar Martyrs' Day observed in Bombay*:—A largely attended public meeting was held on Chonpathi sands in Bombay, "in memory of the Peshawar Martyrs." Sardar Jamait Singh of the Akali Dal presided. A number of speakers paid glowing tributes to the wonderful sacrifices and strict adherence to non-violence of the Pathans and exhorted the audience in their name at least to sink all their communal differences and be united. Mr. Abdul Rahim Cassim Mitha, ex-President, B. P. C. C. appealed to both Hindus and Muslims to keep the peace of the city during the Bakr-Id festival, and told them not to fall a prey to communal fanaticism.
- 24th. *Closer Union of East Africa*:—The Government of India published to-day their despatch to the Secretary of State dated the 24th November on the scheme of a closer union in East Africa in which they expressed opinion which was in substantial agreement with the views of His Majesty's Government, but suggested safeguards in the interests of the Indian community.
- 25th. *Omnibus Searches and Arrests at Chitagong: Precautionary Measures Against "Possible Serious Raid"*:—Simultaneous searches were made at many

places early this morning as a result of which 10 young men were arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Some live bullets were found on the person of one of the arrested men. Persons of all sorts and ages were being searched by the military officers posted at every street corner. Even the Public Prosecutor and other respectable persons were not exempted. Khan Bahadur Mokbul Hossain, Moulavi Jalaluddin Ahmed, Rai Bahadurs Satish Sen, Kamini Das and Upendra Roy met the Commanding Officer of the garrison at the Commissioner's House where it was stated that the apprehension of a grave situation due to the possibility of a raid of a serious nature necessitated taking of precautionary measures in the shape of employment of the military.

**26th. National Flag Day in Bombay** :—The National Flag Day was inaugurated in the morning in a spectacular way by Mrs. Naidu at the Bombay Congress House. Lady volunteers belonging to Desa Sevikas and Hindustani Seva Dal National Militia presented a guard of honour in the spacious compound of the Congress House.

**Mahatma Gandhi's Note to the Premier** :—Drastic cut in military expenditure, safeguards for State subjects, complete fiscal autonomy and scrutiny of public debt, according to the "Bombay Chronicle" formed the main conditions which Mahatma Gandhi insisted must be fulfilled before he decided to attend the Round Table Conference when it reassembled in London. These stipulations, it was stated, contained in an important despatch which Mahatma Gandhi handed over to Lord Irwin shortly before the latter's departure to London to be delivered to the British Cabinet.

**27th. All-India Medical Conference** :—The All-India Medical Conference, at its meeting in Poona, adopted several resolutions *inter alia* demanding an immediate cessation of the policy of reserving special posts for European members of the I.M.S. and also abandonment of the policy of importing foreign research experts. The Conference bitterly opposed the Round Table Conference proposal for recruiting European doctors for European community resident in India and also demanded that Government should take action for protecting Indian drug medicine trade against importation of foreign goods. Col. Bolanath, an important delegate demanded immediate cessation of St. John Ambulance Association work in India and strongly criticised Indian Red Cross organisation which he characterised as being in the hands of British officials.

**28th. Amritsar Bomb Case** :—The First Class Magistrate at Amritsar passed orders in the Amritsar Bomb case in which six persons stood charged under the Explosive Substances Act and the Indian Penal Code. Two accused were sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment each with fine of Rs. 200 or in default one year's further rigorous imprisonment. Four were acquitted.

**Mr. Baldwin on the Delhi Pact** :—Great harm would be done if the Irwin-Gandhi agreement was not scrupulously carried out, declared Mr. Baldwin, in a speech at a Conservative meeting at Liverpool. The economic unity of the Empire, for which they were all working, could not be complete unless the great Indian Empire was a partner in it.

**Mr. Benn on Implementing Delhi Pact**.—An appeal to release the Meerut and Garhwali Rifles prisoners was made in the Commons by Mr. Fenner Brockway, in reply to which Mr. Benn deplored that some phrases had been used by Mr. Brockway in the difficult situation in India which the Government were facing with real sympathy. Mr. Benn pointed out that these cases, as Mr. Brockway had admitted, did not come within the terms of the Irwin Gandhi Agreement. The Government were as earnest in trying to implement that Agreement as they were convinced that Mr. Gandhi and his friends were trying to implement it on their side.

**British Protest against Boycott of Lancashire Goods**.—A meeting of over 4,000 people, representing employers and operatives in the cotton industry in Blackburn district, protested against the economic policy of the Government of India and the boycotting and picketing policy directed against Lancashire goods

by the Congress party. Alderman J. H. Grey, Chairman of Cotton Employers' Association, Lancashire, declared that the result of Lord Irwin's policy had been calamitous for Lancashire. The system of political prohibition against Lancashire goods ought immediately to be removed. If not, he was convinced that there was nothing in front for Lancashire but ruin.

**29th. Lords debate on India :—**A short debate in the Lords revealed the growing Conservative and Liberal distrust of Government's alleged complacency in confronting the Indian situation. Lord Peel condemned the Government for not clearly defining British opposition against impossible Congress claims. His speech implied that all the main decisions of the Round Table were sacrosanct and unalterable. Lord Reading stressed the safeguards and reservations as indispensable and not open to any substantial modification. He protested against the Cawnpore scandal and generally associated the Liberal Party with criticisms of Government inaction. Both of them urged the importance of removing misconceptions in India regarding Britain's intentions with reference to the new constitution. Lord Snell's reply was only negatively satisfactory as not giving away anything secured for India by the Delhi Agreement. The Conservative members of both the Houses of Parliament threatened more definite opposition to Government's Indian policy as a result of alleged breaches of the Delhi Agreement by the Congress.

**Commoners' Assurance to Lancashire.**—Sixty Conservative peers and members of the House of Commons including Viscount Peel, Sir Samuel Hoare, Neville Chamberlain and other ex-Ministers, assembled in Commons and received a deputation from Lancashire regarding India and the cotton trade. A letter from Mr. Baldwin was read out, in which Mr. Baldwin stated "the Conservative Party must judge how far it is possible to achieve the Federal idea without surrendering any essential safeguards which have been clearly stated and which we consider fundamental to any future settlement. The party intends to use its fullest influence to support British traders and insist that in any settlement of the Indian situation there should be fundamental provision prohibiting unfair discrimination against British trade." Members of the deputation asked for the Conservative Party's assistance on the ground that British and Indian Governments had "failed to protect cotton industry."

## May 1931

**Chief Events :—**Provincial Political Conferences held throughout India  
 —All Bengal Women's Congress : Abolition of Sex Disqualification urged  
 —House of Commons Debate on India—Mr. Patel's warning to Britain.

**1st. Punitive Police for Chittagong :—**A Gazette Extraordinary declared 52 villages in Chittagong district as dangerous and disturbed area and announced the appointment of additional police force to be quartered in the said villages at the cost of the inhabitants thereof, subject to the orders which may be passed exempting any person or class or section of inhabitants.—The same Gazette declared all copies of the two sets of the picture of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, one containing words "Three victims of death" and the other portraying Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on triple gallows with nooses round necks and two European officers in uniform on either side as forfeited to His Majesty.

**All-Bengal Women's Congress : Abolition of Sex Disqualification urged :—**Equal partnership in the husband's income during wifehood and equal rights of inheritance

with the children in the husband's property after widowhood should be one of the fundamental rights of women—declared Sjkta. Sarala Devi Chaudhurani presiding at the first session of the All-Bengal Women's Congress at the Town Hall—and should be included in any constitution for India that might be agreed to by the Indian National Congress. Equal right of inheritance of the daughters and sisters with the sons and brothers in the property of the parents, brothers or sisters: No disability to attach to any woman by reason of sex in regard to public employment: Profligacy, prostitution, procuration and seduction to be equally punishable by law—these were some of the other items of the fundamental rights of women, as defined and explained by the President.

**2nd. U. P. Political Conference.**—Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, speaking at the U. P. Political Conference at Mirzapur referred to the present political situation and pointed out that the Hindu-Muslim disharmony was the greatest hindrance to political progress. "Establish relations, sympathies and friendliness between the two communities" said the Pandit, "and leave bigger issues to Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders." The Pandit was glad at the prospect of Muslims agreeing to joint electorate and declared separate electorates as striking at the very root of nationalism. The Pandit begged them to respect the truce and said that Mahatma Gandhi was straining every nerve to further promote peace and it behoved them to do their bit to co-operate with him.

**3rd. Kerala Provincial Conference.**—The Kerala Provincial Conference was held at Badagara under the Presidency of Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta who, in the course of his address, referred to the Delhi agreement and said that the changed outlook on the part of the Government was due to the sacrifices of millions of determined men and women. In conclusion, he appealed to the people to keep the powder dry. The nation, he said, could have no peace or rest till freedom was won and nothing short of complete independence would suffice.

**Kerala Students' Conference.**—The Kerala Students' Conference was held at Badagara under the presidency of Mr. K. F. Nariman. After the welcome address by Mr. Abdur Rahiman, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. Nariman delivered his presidential address, in which he appealed to the youth of the country to concentrate all their energy to the vital and all-absorbing issue, viz., the attainment of Purna Swaraj. Unless the youths of the country, he said, come forward and respond to the call of the Congress, the movement could not succeed. He then laid stress on the need for organisation and immediate steps to remove the retrograde steps of a pernicious system of education.

**Thrilling Encounter with Police in Lahore: Revolutionaries trapped in Garden.**—Acting upon an information given by a student of a Lahore College, police officials with sixty constables went to Salamar Garden, about four miles from Lahore, and took unawares two alleged absconders in the Lahore and Delhi Conspiracy Cases who were resting. The revolutionaries there, on whose head handsome rewards had been declared, immediately fired in self-defence and one of them, Jagadish, got killed. The second man Sukhdevraj who was said to have been seriously injured was arrested.

**5th. Archbishop's Sympathy with the Indian National Movement.**—A sympathetic reference to the national movement in India was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, presiding at the Church Missionary Society gathering at Albert Hall. He said that "previous impressions in Britain in that regard had been discarded and we now knew that the movement was passing through every region and class in India. Everyone now recognised that it was wrong to denounce or suspect and still more wrong to attempt to suppress the movement."

**Coorg Political Conference.**—Presiding over the Coorg Political Conference, at Mercara Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta said that the table of fundamental rights and the economic programme laid down by the Congress, were an effective answer to its critics and calumniators. He added that the Congress knew no distinction of birth, race, creed or caste and its doors were open to all. After referring at length to the problem of the minorities, Mr. Sen Gupta dwelt on the Moslem demands. He urged the Hindus and the Moslems to meet together in a spirit of friendliness



and of mutual appreciation of each other's needs and requirements and to evolve a common formula, which would give satisfaction to all communities, without prejudicially affecting the ideals of national freedom.

*Mr. Mody on Lancashire's attitude against Boycott.*—Criticising Lancashire's recent complaints against the continuance of Indian boycott of foreign cloth and breaches of the Irwin-Gandhi agreement on the part of the Congress, Mr. H. P. Mody, Chairman of the Millowners' Association, in the course of a statement to the press, said: "Lancashire seems to be in danger of losing her head even more than her trade. She is obviously under the impression that the moment Irwin-Gandhi truce was declared her order books should be filled up and her idle machinery start whirring again. Because this miracle has not happened, she made up her mind that the truce was not being honoured and the campaign for keeping her goods out of this country is still active. It does not seem to have occurred to her that a great economic upheaval cannot be set right over-night and that there is such thing as lack of purchasing power."

6th. *Karachi Muslims Favour joint Electorates.*—To counteract the propaganda for separate electorates, a largely attended meeting of Karachi Mahomedans was held under the presidentship of Maulana Mahomed Sidik, one of the Vice-Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress. Mr. Hafiz Nasir Ahmed, in the course of his speech, said that all Sind Muslims were agreeable to his Sind Pact which enunciated joint electorates, Sind separation, and weightage for minority. Even Haji Abdulla Haroon and Sheikh Abdul Majid had signed this pact. The President summing up said that joint electorate was a question of life and death. Hence there should be no ill-feeling in that respect, but compromise on essentials was impossible.

11th. *Mr. Benn on Picketing in India* :—Replying to a question in the House of Commons on the picketing method, Mr Benn said that the Government of India recently reported that the picketing was much reduced but there were signs of its revival in some places. Although complaints of objectionable methods were decreasing a few were still being received. With occasional and local exceptions picketing was unaggressive.

13th. *Remission of Land Revenue in U. P.*—A press communique issued by the U. P. Government stated that remission of revenue ordered by the Government aggregated nearly Rs. 61 lakhs which would involve reduction by landlords of rentals amounting to some Rs. 920 lakhs. Government recognised the very great difficulties both of tenants and landlords and by this measure desired to show their active sympathy and give all possible assistance towards making adjustments needed to meet the sudden and unprecedented fall in prices.

14th. *Simla's Welcome to Mahatma Gandhi* :—A public meeting was held on the Ridge in Simla to welcome Mahatma Gandhi. The entire Ridge was crowded and about ten thousand people including a very large number of women attended. Gandhiji arrived accompanied by Pandit Malaviya and Srimati Mirabai and was given a rousing reception amidst cries of "Inquilab Zindabad" and "Gandhiji-ki-jai." Addresses of welcome were presented on behalf of the Congress, Simla Trades Association and the citizens of Simla and by Dr. Nandlal Varma, on behalf of the Muslims of Simla. Mahatma Gandhi, in replying to the addresses, laid stress upon the necessity of observing the Gandhi-Irwin agreement. He pleaded for bringing about an understanding between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees, Christians and others so that they should unite in the demand for Swaraj. In conclusion, Gandhiji exhorted the audience to work for the spread of khaddar and boycott of liquor.

*Commons Debate on India.*—In the Commons debate on India Office Estimates, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, lamented that there was no evidence of an improvement and complained that the agreement, "if agreement it could be called" was not being carried out in the letter and certainly not in the spirit. Mr. Wedgwood Benn reminded the House that though distressed by

Lancashire's trouble the House had an equal responsibility for the welfare of the people of India. Mr. Benn pointed out that the boycott Clause of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement was two-sided. It not merely permitted the free sale of foreign goods but Government undertook to assist in encouraging Indian industry. Mr. Churchill maintained that the present policy was injurious to India and ruinous to Lancashire. He declared that whether boycott was economic or political, it should be proclaimed to be illegal. Sir Samuel Hoare warned India that it might be necessary to postpone the consideration of advance until an atmosphere of calmer commonsense, good faith and goodwill returned.

- 15th. *Lord Irwin on Safeguards.*—Lord Irwin made his first speech in London since his return from India, at a luncheon in honour of him and Lady Irwin given by the British India Union. Lord Irwin emphasised the force of the national feeling working in India and declared that advocates of the policy of strong hand were exponents of an Imperial philosophy which was out of date and out of harmony with the present-day facts. He emphasised that it was only possible to keep a willing and contented India within the Empire by agreement. Dealing with the constitutional safeguards, Lord Irwin expressed a strong opinion that Indian opinion was ready to agree to them provided it could be shown that they were first and last in India's interests. He believed that if Mr. Gandhi came to London he would strain every nerve to secure agreement on these and other matters to be discussed. Referring to discrimination against British goods as such, Lord Irwin said it was one of the matters he discussed with Mr. Gandhi when he left Bombay and on which Mr. Gandhi gave him most specific and precise assurance.
- 22nd. *Sir Chimanlal on Gandhiji's attitude to R. T. C.* :—Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, in an interview said :—'Mr. Gandhi's attitude towards R. T. C. has been undergoing constant changes, which is certainly disconcerting. At one time he said he would not go to the Conference unless the communal question was settled, and it would be humiliating for him and every other Indian to do so. In the statement which he has issued from Bardoli he has announced his readiness to go to London at short notice even if no communal settlement is reached. Curiously enough, however, he hedges round this declaration by some extraordinary condition. His first proviso is that there must be a satisfactory observance of the truce terms...Only the other day, Mr. Gandhi was satisfied that the Central Government were doing their best to implement the terms of the Delhi Pact. If that was so, why should he make his going to London conditional on every district officer carrying out the terms in every detail...Mr. Gandhi's second condition viz., that he will merely explain the Congress position, is extraordinary and inconsistent with the Delhi Pact, by which he has consented to participation in the Conference.
- 23rd. *Passing away of Sir Mohammad Ali Mohammad Khan* Khan Bahadur, Maharaja of Mahmudabad, one of the foremost nationalist Muslims of India. He took a prominent part in the boycott of the Simon Commission and was practically placed under personal restraint at his house in Lucknow and was not allowed to take part in the demonstrations. He lent his whole-hearted support to the Nehru Report, and was a staunch advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity.

- 25th. *Commander-in-chief on Indianisation of the Army* :—The Indian Sandhurst Committee held its first meeting in the Assembly Committee Room. Dealing with the question of Indianisation, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief said that "it was decided, after much discussion, that an experiment should be started in which eight units were ear-marked for Indianisation, consisting of infantry, cavalry and a pioneer battalion. Indianising of the Indian army by putting into units officers who in many cases did not belong to the same class as the men in the ranks was obviously an experiment. At present young Indian officers in the eight units scheme had seven years' service. That was obviously not long enough to tell whether they were going to be fit to administer and train a unit in peace and lead it in war; in seven more years they would have

had 14 years' service and by that time they would be able to give a definite opinion whether they were going to be a complete success or not. I would ask the committee, therefore, to concentrate particularly on the question of the supply of suitable candidates as this seems to me to be the crux of the whole problem."

**26th. Karnatak Provincial Conference:**—Amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, in the presence of a large gathering including many ladies, the sixth session of the Karnatak Provincial Conference commenced at Belgaum under the presidentship of Seth Jammalal Bajaj. A large number of delegates from different provinces and particularly all Karnatak leaders were present including Mrs. Kamaladevi. Messages wishing success to the Conference were received from Mahatma Gandhi, S. J. Vallabhbhai Patel and others.

**29th. Mr. Patel's Warning to Britain:**—Mr. V. J. Patel and Mr. Deep Narain Singh addressed a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at Essex Hall, London. Mr. Patel said that India was not in a mood to be a partner in the British Commonwealth. If a referendum was taken an overwhelming majority would vote against the British connection. The only question was whether they would part as friends or as enemies. Non-co-operation, if restarted, would mean intensified boycott of British goods and institutions and social boycott of every Englishman in India and then British trade would be gone for ever. He confessed he did not approve of the Delhi agreement, because it was not clearly laid down whose voice should ultimately prevail, but they must make the best of a bad bargain. Gandhiji would come with a mandate to accept nothing less than freedom with complete control over the Army and Foreign Affairs. He wished him every success but did not anticipate it. He ridiculed the federation as proposed in the Conference.

**30th. All-India Khilafat Conference:**—An emphatic reiteration of the Delhi All-India Moslem Conference demands as irreducible minimum was voiced at the All-India Khilafat Conference, which opened at Bombay under the presidency of Maulana Abdul Majid Badauni. The President, in the course of his address, expressed complete agreement of Moslems with the Delhi Conference resolutions and deprecated the "contemptuous way" whereby the Congress Hindu majority and even Mr. Gandhi had treated Moslem demands for safeguards and declared that they were therefore compelled to say they would not accept any constitution which did not safeguard Moslem rights. On the question of Separate Electorates also, he said that their declaration was final.

**Hindu-Muslim Fracas in Cawnpore:**—There was sudden clash between the Hindus and Muslims near the Moulganj cross-roads in Cawnpore city. The police had to open fire. Thirteen shots were fired, resulting in the death of one Muslim, one Hindu and injuries to 4 Hindus and 15 Muslims.

## June 1931

**2nd. All-India Muslim Volunteers' Conference:**—The first All-India Muslim Volunteers' Conference met in Bombay under the presidency of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy of Calcutta. In the course of the presidential remarks Mr. Suhrawardy entered a spirited defence of Muslim attitude as defined in the Delhi resolutions and asserted that the acceptance of these by other communities would result in a great united India marching forth irresistibly towards its high destiny. He deprecated the suspicion, distrust and hostility evinced by the Hindus and Muslims towards one another and said that Muslim demands were thoroughly reasonable and founded on practical statesmanship and commonsense.

The Conference then adopted resolutions *inter alia* expressing sorrow at the death of Moulana Mahomed Ali, and voicing its whole-hearted support to the demands put forward by the Delhi Conference and declaring that if these were not accepted, the Muslims were prepared to make every sacrifice to secure their acceptance.

**5th. Berar Provincial Conference :—**The Second Berar Provincial Conference began its session at Khamgaon under the presidentship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, President of the Indian National Congress. Over 500 delegates attended. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel removed some misunderstandings regarding the alleged breach of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on the side of the people, and stressed the importance of khadi as the greatest saviour of the poor and unemployed. Concluding he reminded the Conference of the pledge of truth and non-violence which was the basic principle of Swaraj.

**The Tamil Nadu Provincial Conference :—**The thirty-fourth session of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Conference commenced its session at Madura with a large attendance of delegates and visitors. Mr. N. M. R. Subbaramier, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates and visitors, after which Mr. S. Satyamurthi, the President, delivered his address. Resolutions were passed congratulating the people of Tamil Nadu for the part her sons and daughters played in the last campaign for Swaraj and recording the conference's appreciation of the sacrifices undertaken by the volunteers. Haji Mahomed Maulana moved a resolution reiterating full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Mr. K. Santanam moved that no constitution was acceptable without complete control over taxation and expenditure in all departments of State. A resolution, accepting the principle of generous concessions in regard to minorities, was put from the chair and carried. Another resolution demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners.

**6th. Curfew Order in Chittagong :—**The District Magistrate under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, directed all Hindu 'bhadralok' youths between the ages 16 and 25 residing or staying within the Chittagong Municipality, the Jetties and Pahartali, not to leave their houses between 7 p. m. and 5 a. m. from 7th June. The order added that the railway and port employees of the class affected whose work was between the prohibited hours should apply to the heads of their departments for passes. Other members of the public who required to leave their houses for immediate and urgent reasons should apply to the Kotwali. The orders had been passed for the immediate preservation of public tranquillity and the prevention of danger to human life and safety in view of the discovery of explosives buried in public places.

**7th. Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Delhi Agreement :—**The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce addressed the Government of India with regard to the interpretation given in some quarters to the terms of Irwin-Gandhi Agreement. During Gandhiji's visit to Simla they telegraphed to the Government suggesting that the Agreement itself left many loopholes to conduct boycott and picketing in a manner contrary to its spirit. In particular, they drew attention to the form of the covenant issued by the Foreign Piece-goods Boycott Congress Committee, upcountry, which in their opinion clearly ignored that spirit. The Committee stated that so far as Calcutta was concerned, picketing although objectionable had not, since it was resumed, been so far accompanied by open intimidation and restraint, but it was definitely interfering with the return to normal trading conditions.

**Frontier Gandhi's Appeal for Communal Amity :—**Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan addressed a largely attended public meeting in Bardoli, Mrs. Kasturbhai Gandhi presiding. Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan said that he had arrived to learn a lesson from the people of Bardoli. The non-violent struggle was not a new one. It was practised 1,400 years ago. They had forgotten it. Gandhiji taught them the method anew. Muslims said that the Congress was an organisation of the Hindus, but it strove for the liberation of the country. Muslims should therefore take part in Congress activities. The British had raised the Afghan bogey and said Afghans would invade India. Similarly, the British told Afghans that they would

be dominated by Hindus. The Afgans had replied that they would be slaves of the Hindus as they were slaves of the British. The Hindus were the elder brothers, the Muslims were the younger brothers. The elder brother should take care of the younger brother. The two brothers should march hand in hand towards the goal.

**8th. Mahatmaj's Reply to Sir C. Setalvad.**—Mahatma Gandhi, interviewed by the Associated Press regarding the statement of Sir Chimanlal Setalvad in connection with his attitude towards the Round Table Conference, said: "Whilst I am carrying on delicate negotiations, I may not be over-communicative, but I can make a general statement that I am not conscious of having done anything to endanger the Settlement or in contravention of it. Though under given circumstances I am anxious and willing to attend the Round Table Conference there is nothing in the settlement, so far as I can read it, to make it compulsory for the Congress to take part in the Round Table Conference; but that discussion of non-attendance has not arisen at all." Asked whether he would take part in the Round Table Conference or not, Mahatma Gandhi said: "If I succeed in attending the Round Table Conference I should put forth the Congress demands with all the zeal and power I may have and fully participate in the proceedings and not be a mere spectator at the Round Table Conference."

**13th. U. P. Europeans on Cawnpore Riots' Report.**—Strong dissatisfaction with the "weak and vacillating policy of the Government was expressed at a meeting of the Committee of the U. P. Branch of the European Association, held at Cawnpore when there was a discussion on the report of the Riots Inquiry Commission and the relative resolution of the local Government. The general opinion of the meeting was that it was impossible for the European community to accord any further support to Government unless more determined measures were immediately adopted by the Government to meet the growing forces of disorder which appeared to be rapidly undermining the peace of the country. The Committee, while recording its appreciation of the Report, passed unanimously the following resolution:—"The Committee considers that the report has not laid sufficient emphasis on the effect of the weak and irresolute policy pursued by the Government of India during the civil disobedience movement. They regard this lack of firmness as being primarily responsible for the recent outbreak, the development of the civil disobedience movement resulting in progressive weakening of respect for constituted authority."

**14th. Mysore Legislators Demand Representation in the R.T.C.**—The following appeal signed by more than 20 members of the Mysore Legislative Council was submitted to the Viceroy and the Congress Working Committee:—"We the non-official members of the Mysore Legislative Council, urge that the people of Indian States as distinguished from Princes should be given due and adequate representation in the deliberation and conferences to be held for settling the future constitution of India and are of opinion that any constitutional development of India without fully recognising the rights of Indian States people cannot serve to promote peace and harmony in the States and bring about the unity and progress of India."

**16th. Federation Menace to Indian States: Maharaja of Patiala Revolts Against F. S. C. Scheme**—"The Federal Scheme proposed by the Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference is fraught with the greatest dangers to the very existence of the Indian States"—This declaration was made by the Maharaja of Patiala in his note on the question of federation. The Maharaja believed that there was no trace of the existence of the federal spirit throughout India and if the Federal Scheme of the F. S. Committee was accepted, the smaller States of India were bound to suffer the fate of the smaller German principalities under the Confederation of 1915 and disappear from the map of India. The Maharaja suggested a union of the Indian States alone in direct relationship with the Crown by extending the scope of the present Chamber of Princes. To solve the difficulties of administration and policy he suggested enlargement of the present Standing

Committee which would confer with the permanent Standing Committee of both the Houses of the Federal Legislature of British India specially constituted for the purpose.

17th. *Indian Sandhurst Committee and the Question of Stipends.*—The Indian Sandhurst Committee was engaged with the question of scholarships and stipends, and it was finally agreed that parents should give a guarantee that their sons would serve for five years in the army after they receive their Commission, but if after receiving this cheap education, any particular candidate was desirous of backing out of his agreement, then he would have to pay the full cost of the education and not merely the fees.—It may be stated in this Connection that with a view to popularising the Indian Military College, fees had been fixed at Rs. 4,800, but that did not include the whole cost, so much so that a candidate in the event of his not fulfilling the guarantee, namely, serving five years after receiving the Commission, will have to pay to the Government very nearly Rs. 10,000 to cover full costs.

18th. *Why Mahatma Gandhi Agreed To Attend the R. T. Conference* :—Mahatma Gandhi in a signed article in "Young India" explained why he agreed to represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference as authorised by the Working Committee. "It is better to wait till the Congress has become equally popular with the other communities than to make an attempt to force Swaraj through highly artificial surroundings".—This argument was put forward by him against his going to the R. T. Conference before solution of the communal problem but his essentially democratic nature compelled him, in spite of his very strong objection, to submit to the Working Committee's decision. Mahatmaji then wrote :—"But having accepted the resolution of the Committee, I shall faithfully carry it out and work at the Conference with all possible zeal, if I am destined to attend it."

28th. *Patna Bomb outrage.*—A sensational bomb outrage occurred at 9 p.m. in Patna when a Sub-Inspector and a head-constable in Naya Tola, Pirbahore Police Station, were bombed. The Sub-Inspector died of injuries, and the head constable's condition became precarious. Two persons were arrested.

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# **INDIA IN HOME POLITY**

**January—June 1931**

# INDIA IN HOME POLITY

## INTRODUCTION

### I. GOD OF WAR AND PEACE

The year 1931 was ushered upon the Indian stage, like its precursor, appearing in a double role—a god of war and a god of peace. One of its hands was raised to strike and repress, and the other to soothe and confer a boon. But it stood and stalked the stage in a posture that revealed to those most vitally interested in the play the terrible aspect of the war-god rather than the benign aspect of the god of peace and conciliation. The fight going on in India was more colossally and engagingly real than the peace-parleys going on seven thousand miles away in London. The viceregal Ordinances in the full swing of their operation and the Congress reaction thereto, were a grim phenomenon, and like a dark thunder cloud it overcast the whole Indian sky, the silvery speeches made in the halls of the St. James' Palace hardly touching that sombre cloud with conspicuously bright silver linings. The sun of India's suffering cast in the obscurity of unreality the far-away nebulae of the Indian constitution then in the making in London.

### II. NEW YEAR'S DAY RUNG IN WITH BLOODSHED

Even the New Year's Day was rung in with bloodshed. The midnight Independence Day demonstrations in Bombay were sought to be suppressed with a very stern hand by the authorities. The lathi charges by the police were attended with heavy casualties. This one fact selected out of many might be taken as typical of what was happening, and an index of the ordeal through which the nation was passing. Some happenings are said to make certain buried greatnesses turn uncomfortably in their graves; but these were at least such as to make the "architects of India's destiny" assembled in London feel uneasy in their comfortable cushions in the St. James' Palace. Face is the index of character, they say; and acts tell us of the springs of action and what is called the inner working of the mind. It had been merely an intelligent anticipation of the coming event to predict from the material of current happenings, and from the nature of the reactions of the government to the actions of the Congress, that the Sapru-Jayakar negotiations in the Yervada Jail had been doomed to end in fiasco. It was then felt that the time for peace or even for truce was not yet. One might also wonder if the Indian "delegates" in London did not feel like holding their hands in dismay when on the first day of the year they read reports of demonstrations and lathi charges on the New Year's Day in India. We do not know if Dr. Sapru—who apparently acted as the captain of the Indian crew on some occasions in the last sitting of the Round Table Conference—had discussed the matter of this particular lathi charge with the British Premier or the Secretary of State for India in private, and if so, what the answer of the British statesmen was to the charge of unduly harsh counter-action



which the Indian leader might have laid at the door of the Indian Government. But one thing at least was clear. The working policy of the Indian Government was not calculated to make the difficult task of the R. T. C. easy.

### III. THE TASK OF R. T. C.

The task of the R. T. C. was difficult enough in all conscience apart from the circumstance of the government here or in England following an extra-vigorous policy in relation to the Civil Disobedience Movement. Those who are the accredited agents of their principals; who, accordingly, were in a position to "deliver the goods" had not been sent to London. One man in particular who could speak not only in the name of the Congress, but also in the name of the dumb Indian millions, was still in the Yervada Jail. In fact, the one party and the one organisation that was putting up a determined fight was neither directly nor indirectly represented in the London Conference. No member of the Conference by any stretch of meaning or convention could be looked upon as a spokesman of that powerful party or organisation. Dr. Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, and the late Maulana Mahomed Ali had indeed tried, without success, to act as mediators in the conflict; and they were not, or had ceased to be, Congressmen. They subscribed to other political gospels. They had proceeded to London to work at the problem of India's political advance according to their own best lights. The Congress party had seen them off, or seen their compatriots off, with black flags, and they were not there in London with the Congress tri-colour folded-up in their pockets to be displayed as soon as their credentials were challenged.

There were some, again, who not wearing the government badge on their hats, bore the government tattoo mark up their sleeves. In fact, an analysis of the composition of the R. T. C. would be a most entertaining study. Every such study has at least two sides. And we shall first study it as an ordinary politically-minded Indian now studies it.

### IV. THE R. T. C. COMPLEX

There were the representatives of the three British parties. This in itself meant an heterogeneous complex of ideas, outlooks and methods, if not also of interests. The Labour Party was in office, but not commanding an absolute majority in the House of Commons; it could hardly be said to be in power. The Liberal Party, emaciated though it was, was in the position of the key-party. The Conservative Party, always assured of its innate strength in conservative England, was the powerful opposition. Labour was green and inexperienced, whilst the Conservative Party was both tried and experienced. The country knew and in a manner trusted the Tories, as it had known and trusted the great Liberal Party before its dismemberment, but it hardly as yet knew and trusted Labour. Labour won at the polls not because the country had transferred its faith and allegiance to other gods and broken its old idols, but because it only wanted to see its old idols in new trappings. Like some of the continental countries, England had not yet developed a fancy for socialistic principles and methods,

but it wanted to eat its good old conservative cake with a vincer of socialistic ginger. That might give an edge to its taste and appetite for its own homely cake. Socialism in England—at least the official brand—was already too flat and vapid an article for consumption in Russia or even in some other continental countries. The principles that it stood for were perfectly sane and sober; yet when Labour at last found itself in office in England, it hardly felt itself in a position in which it could take courage in both hands, and apply its own principles, diluted as they were, to the solution of the various vital problems, domestic or foreign, which confronted it.

#### V. PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

One of its most airily vaunted principles related to the liberation of the subject peoples and self-determination. Labour since its infancy in England had been most vocal in its assertion of the fundamental right of races to live in self-determination. India, in which one-fifth of the whole human race lives in a condition by no means enviable, had not of course quite escaped Labour's attention. Labour had passed many pious resolutions affecting the destiny of this sub-merged continent. No official Labour leader had perhaps been more zealous a champion of Indian regeneration than the author of "The Awakening of India." And no other Labour Leader had worked more for the building of the Labour Party in England than he.

#### VI. LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE IN POLITICS

Responsibilities of office have no doubt a sobering effect on the ardour of the most zealous reformer. Practical politics demand caution and tact and moving along the line of least resistance. But such moving along the line of least resistance ought never to amount to sacrifice or surrender of the first principles of movement in public affairs which a party may have adopted for itself and intended to work for. Now suppose Labour had stood for the principle of self-determination for subject peoples. Suppose it had, for instance, declared that India must determine for herself what sort of constitution would be best for her, and what associations, political or economic, she would, if at all, like to retain or form with other nations, and the British Commonwealth of Nations in particular. If it had subscribed to this principle, it was because it had thought and believed that no nation, however enlightened and well-intentioned, should claim the right to dictate to another, however unfavourably situated, the law of its life; and that in the realm of practical politics also it is far wiser to leave a sister nation free to err and err again and then ultimately to find the right way and sure way than to hold that nation in leading strings and make it walk upon a path surveyed and chalked out for it by another. In the latter case, there is every likelihood of its losing the power of free movement itself—of its being reduced to an eternal cripple unable to move except upon crutches and in leading strings. There have been statesmen, mostly of the Tory brand, who have mocked at such statements, and have called them copy-book lessons of political philosophy. But to liberalism they have ever been the first articles of its political creed, while to socialism they have been the very vital breath of its nostrils.

## VII. LABOUR'S ACID TEST

The emasculation of India has been one crucial point. It is one of Labour's acid tests. The internal and external defence of India has been undertaken by Britain. This has of course meant peace and settled government of a sort. We have been taught in history that previously to the consolidation of British rule in India, India had been torn by factions and internal wars. That in that chronic state of disorder no orderly progress in any direction could be possible. One might concede all this without question, and yet ask—as India has now been asking—if the price which an emasculated and militarily helpless India has been made to pay for her security has not been so far out of proportion as to leave her a nation "found wanting" in respect of the capacity to defend herself without external help, borrowed or superimposed.

## VIII. HOW THE LOGIC OF INDIA'S DEPENDENCE WORKS

And the logic of India's military dependence works beautifully in a vicious circle. We cannot have security in India without military dependence, that is, British protection; and we cannot have independence so long as we must continue in this state of military dependence. Order and security first; progress and independence afterwards: thus is the road laid. But the point is—Can we jump from the first stage to the second? By what alchemy can the base metal of military dependence and general emasculation be transmuted into the pure gold of military preparedness and full-fledged manhood? Will British-garrisoned and British-policed India rise one fine morning to find herself a fully competent and qualified defender of her hearths and homes? India must be educated out of her military dependence; and to spread this process over an infinitely graduated scale of "Indianisation" is to prolong and aggravate the wasting disease and prostration, till it becomes past all remedy and redemption. Risks, even considerable risks, must, therefore, be taken in concerting and adopting measures for working up the genius and military fitness of India with utmost possible expedition. The risk of possible inefficiency and "deterioration of the British quality of the fighting machinery and material" need not seriously stand in the way for any great length of time. Both military possibilities and achievements of India are acknowledged to be great, and hardly less than those of any other country. India possesses to a prominent degree both the fighting talent and fighting stamina. The distinction between martial and non-martial races in India is a later and artificial creation which opportunity and training will conspire very soon to efface. The "intellectual and effeminate" peoples in India, for instance, will not lag behind, but will keep themselves fully abreast of others when they are once seriously-minded to buckle armour and "take the field." As regards efficiency, British quality and all the rest of it, we must remember that whilst India may be the brightest jewel in the British crown, she is India's all in all, and there is no abiding danger of India's own defence being jeopardised and India's own internal security being neglected by India's own national militia and police. It may be that India will be content with a considerably reduced army and navy and aircraft when she

in her freedom sheds all imperialistic ambitions and abjures all imperialistic designs. But that will be a positive relief to the starving millions of India groaning under the himalayan dead-weight of her present-day defence and security bills.

#### IX. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE: ANOTHER ACID TEST

And what is true of her military dependence is also true of her economic dependence. That is another acid test for Labour. The vaunted fiscal convention and fiscal autonomy of India have been a snare as well as a delusion. They have not stopped the heavy economic drain of India which has been bleeding her white. India has got the semblance of representative institutions, but she has hardly any control over taxation and money bills. The Crown Subjects—Defence, Public Administration and so forth—absorb the bulk of her funds, and funds must be found for them. The truly productive departments, such as industry and agriculture, and nation-building departments, such as education and sanitation, may be allowed to go lean. The cost of her administration is such as she can hardly afford—a circumstance that induced the Congress to lay down the 500 Rs. limit for Public Services in India. Besides, there is what is called the Home Charges in the shape of pensions and other remittances.

#### X. DOMINION STATUS IN PRACTICE

Apart from all this, India is no mistress of her Currency and Exchange policy. Economists have attempted to shew that the ratio has been so manipulated as to subserve British trading and other interests primarily, to the detriment of the more vital interests of the India's starving millions. The linking of the Indian rupee to the fluctuating British sterling which prevents the rupee from seeking and finding its natural and scientific level is amply indicative of the illusory character of India's fiscal autonomy which Mr. Wedgwood Benn tried to make so much capital of in auto-suggesting himself—for it deceived no body else—that India was already in the enjoyment of Dominion Status in practice. To try to prove that India stands to gain by this kind of fiscal convention and policy was an impossible jugglery even for financial experts briefed to argue into conviction Indian delegates in Whitehall. Last but not the least, there is the problem of Public Debts in India. The question has been asked—and most pertinently and justly asked one may think—What part of this heavy burden must be accepted as India's just and equitable financial obligation? It cannot be the whole, because the whole may not have been incurred for India's own purposes. In fact, it is a fit case for reference to an impartial tribunal. The Congress had, during the abortive Sapru-Jayakar negotiations, asked to have the whole issue examined. But Government was apparently not prepared to treat this as an open question. It was even said by some interested scare-mongers that the Congress wanted to repudiate the debts and financial obligations of India.

#### XI. THE ACID TESTS BRIEFLY STATED

The crucial point and the acid test is this: Is India free or not free to shape and pursue a fiscal policy suited to her own requirements—and particularly, to the needs of her starving millions? Does

any authority, not responsible to herself, exercise the power to certify a bill (e. g. a salt-tax) opposed by her elected representatives on its own responsibility, or turn down another which they may demand? The reserved subjects are so sacrosanct that you must not dream of touching them. As regards the rest, the power of Ordinance-making and certification is reserved in the hands of an agent whose principal is the British Parliament through Whitehall, and in no sense the Indian tax-payer. Financial stability and credit, like military security and internal peace, are surely assets which stand in no danger of being overlooked and neglected by a free India mistress in her own house. British property like British life has also nothing to fear in a liberated India. Only the real bar to Indian emancipation—foreign domination and exploitation in the vital matters—must cease. India has ever been generous as a host, and she can be trusted to be a true and faithful ally and comrade.

The acid test of Labour in office as regards Indian defence and fiscal policy was therefore this: Was Labour prepared to concede to India the right to undertake her own defence, even though there might possibly be some mistakes and a certain amount of disorder in the beginning, in recognition of the principle that the art of self-defence can only be learnt through actual trying in the teeth of repeated mistakes and failures; that it is responsibility alone that begets responsibility; that any arrangement with an outsider for the purposes of self-defence is derogatory to honour and self-respect, and as such is a cause of national demoralisation; and that "Ludianisation" through infinitesimal degrees is helping slow death and not helping speedy recovery? This from the point of view of defence. From the point of view of finance, Was Labour prepared to give a chance to India to prove that she could be both wise and just in her economic policy and adjustments independently of foreign dictation and guidance; that in making for her own financial security and prosperity, she would protect all reasonable foreign interests and respect all just foreign obligations? In either case, Labour would simply be carrying to India the right to control her own military and financial policy. To deny this is to deny the right of self-determination, and assert the doctrine of trusteeship, of the whiteman's burden, of mandate, and so forth which are the slogans and shibboleths of high imperialism. To make any compromise with imperialism is for socialism to commit suicide.

## XII. MIXING THE OPPOSITE

Tories like Mr Churchill who frankly recognise the essential incompatibility of the two outlooks, and members of the Left-wing Labour who also recognise the same, are perhaps more honest and clear-headed politicians than others, whether Tories or Labourites, who overlap and intermix the opposites and muddle the public issues. It is well that the Tories call the Labourites socialists, and the latter call the former imperialists. By such nomenclature, opposites or contraries are kept cleanly contrasted with each other, and are not viciously confounded together. Imperialism and socialism do stand for conflicting schemes and methods of human corporate existence; and however guardedly and cautiously socialism may make its first appearance in politics and social reconstruction, some form of mass revolution is bound to

be recognised as its logical outcome and destination. Capitalistic economics is but honest to frankly recognise this as its natural enemy. For this reason, there can hardly be a natural alliance between Toryism and Labour. A pact between the two is, therefore, looked upon with suspicion.

### XIII. LABOUR'S PACT

Now, Labour in office in England did enter into a pact of this kind in its essay to deal with the Indian problems. The acid tests to which it was subjected shewed not only its composite but also its compromised character. It had ceased to be in relation to the Indian problems what Labour ought to have been and what it had been expected it would prove itself to be. Both in relation to the question of defence and that of fiscal policy, Labour showed that it had turned down or kept in abeyance the principle of self-determination so far as India at least was concerned. It had accepted, surreptitiously if not openly, the doctrine of trusteeship and high imperial responsibilities. India was not yet prepared to shoulder her responsibilities. It could not see its way to authorize its agents in Simla to agree to the Congress demand for full responsible government at the centre having control over the army, finances and the public services. Briefly, it was not prepared to concede the substance of independence. It could not see its way to go beyond—substantially beyond—the frankly obstructive Simon Commission Report or the seemingly reassuring Government of India Despatch—a veritable mountain of angelic profession producing a little mouse of practical proposals of reform.

### XIV. LABOUR'S LOVE FOR "STRONG GOVERNMENT"

Not only so. Labour in office showed the same readiness to launch upon a policy of strong government and relentless repression as, for instance, the liberal statesmen John Morley and Samuel Montagu—the idols of the dreams of the moderate school of Indian politics—had done in their times. And yet as Mr. Wedgwood Benn repeatedly reminded us from his place in the House of Commons, British statesmen were not dealing with an ordinary kind of unrest and law-breaking in India. Possibly such speeches of the Secretary of State for India, and also, on some occasions, of the Viceroy Lord Irwin, were meant for "home" consumption—were, in fact, an answer to the Rothermeres and Churchills, who had been accusing the Indian government of want of backbone, and crying for more and ever more fire and brimstone, as if there were any lack or idling of these precious projectiles on the heights of Simla. Were not a whole dozen of Ordinances in extra-vigorous operation in India? Well, the Labour Secretary of State for India had declared on the floor of the House of Commons that the first duty of any government, Labour or otherwise, is to govern; and though perhaps this was said in a moment of irritation in reply to a rather uncomfortable home-thrust by a brother labour member belonging to the Left Wing, it was a perfectly valid and adequate description of the duty of government as conceived and carried into practice by the ministerial party. And if that was the case, the Opposition Benches might well rub their glasses and make sure that the socialists and not

they were really in office. The fact of the matter was that in the matter of the actual working of its Indian policy, Labour had only to be scratched to reveal the imperial British lion standing in a pose of unchallenged majestic defiance.

#### XV. THE INTENTIONS OF LABOUR IN REGARD TO INDIA

The pact came in where the intentions of Labour in regard to India were concerned. There, unfortunately, socialism with its insistence on the principle of self-determination, tied itself to imperialism with its insistence on high imperial mission. The latter is a believer in the cult of "rule of the fittest". Trusteeship and the whiteman's burden may of course be honestly believed in some cases, but in other cases, it is camouflage only. Now, Labour in entering into a pact or understanding with the Tories with reference to the Indian problem seemed to have surrendered its own principles. Its very position was now such that, *ipso facto*, it must array itself against and not back and forward the immediate fundamental Indian demand for Swaraj. It could not, for instance, be a party to the framing and setting up of an Indian constitution which gave us an immediate and effective control over our army and finances and public services. The conservative and liberal halter round the neck of Labour is tight enough to restrain it from taking any "unwarranted liberties" with the fundamental British securities. Labour is made safe for British interests and the British Empire by the weightage of conservative and liberal alliance.

#### XVI. THE MAINTENANCE OF BRITISH SECURITIES

And generally speaking, British conservatism and liberalism both stand pledged to the maintenance of the British securities as represented by the British Empire. British power and British prestige must continue practically undiminished throughout this vast organism of British interests, and particularly should they continue undiminished in that vital limb of the organism which is India. Everybody knows what the British Empire would be reduced to minus the Indian Dependency. No scheme seeking to alienate the Indian limb can be countenanced for one moment. Now, if Labour is to entrench itself into what can be agreed upon as the common ground between itself and the above position, then it must bind itself to do nothing that will seriously compromise or tend to compromise the above position. In other words, it must do nothing to imperil the security of India as the base-work and pillar of the British Empire. Egypt, Palestine, India—all these are, in one way or other, and in varying degrees, indispensable to the British Empire. One may be important for oil and as a set-off against Turkey, another for its strategic position as the key to the empires and markets of the East, and the third as the inexhausted reserve bank of the Empire in men and material. We may make a show of giving independence to a country if it proves troublesome, but it is no use promising the moon when it takes into its head to cry for it. Egypt was declared a sovereign state when it did cry for the moon, but the sovereign state has still to shy at the glitter of the British bayonet. India is promised Dominion Status, and we have been assured that we have for long been

in the enjoyment of this precious state in actuality without our suspecting it. It can hardly be a big jump from dominion status *de facto* to dominion status *de jure*. A short bill formally proclaiming and installing the dominion status, piloted through a perfectly pliant and agreeable House of Commons, is all that remains to be done. Labour had, apparently, auto-suggested itself into believing this.

#### XVII. THE ESSENCE OF CONGRESS DEMAND : THE TWO POINTS

What the Congress party wanted—what, in fact, the whole of nationalist India hoped for—was that British dictation and control as regards the vital affairs of national life must cease, if not forthwith, at least as speedily as the circumstances of the transference of power from the hands of one party to those of another would allow. This, as we saw before, was the substance of the late illustrious Motilalji's proposal for negotiation; and this was also the essence of the Congress demand. Labour must substantially accept this or reject this. And as it has before been said, it cannot substantially reject this consistently with the first articles of its creed as Labour. It is true of course that in any free constitution there must be certain constitutional checks and balances called safeguards and reservations. But the checks must not be such as to smother democracy itself. The people through their representatives must have substantial control over public affairs: this is the only test that applies. Your plan either does or does not satisfy this test. The question of extent or of degrees arises, no doubt. But there are two points which do not admit of any question, if there is to be real as distinguished from make-believe responsible government. First, the people must from the start have real control over what one may call the vital centres of the political organism. If they have it not and some other party has it, then, that other party may sit tight over it and never relinquish it except under the stress of a successful revolution. Popular control at the subordinate centres of government is no real control at all, and such control is not likely to evolve naturally into control over the higher and more vital centres. Not only so, such division of control is not helpful to the evolution of democratic institutions. By confining popular will and power to the subordinate and dependent centres of the body politic, you may perpetuate its dependence and subordination. This is how the nationalist mind of India argues.

#### XVIII. THE CHECKS AND BALANCES: WHAT THEY SHOULD BE

Hence, secondly, checks and balances in the constitution must not be in the nature of dams seeking to inhibit and obstruct the flow of popular will over the higher and more vital centres of the body politic. It must not be prevented from exercising its legitimate control over them. A guide or friend may shew it the lines of possible danger, and help it to rectify such mistakes into which it will fall in spite of its own best endeavours and the wisest counsels of its friend.



## INDIA IN HOME POLITY

### XIX. THE CASE OF INDIA

Now, India is not in the position of a child. Her traditions are great and her experience has been varied and wide. Still she requires and invites help. She must come abreast of the great modern democracies. Not only so, she must rise to a position where, in the light of her own noble culture and civilisation, she can discover new hopes for democracy, and give it a new inspiration. She needs help for rising to a position like this. It was hoped that Labour in England would be her friend and ally and no longer her dictator. But Labour in pact with the reactionary and imperialist parties, though proffering the hand of co-operation, did not altogether abdicate its dictatorship. The Morley-Minto reforms had never pretended to confer upon India self-government. Montagu-Chelmsford reforms pretended to do a bit, but that little bit, giving us dyarchy, was not blessed even by the moderate politicians who were its ministers in charge of the transferred subjects. By all independent politicians—no-changers or swarajists—it was considered retrograde and reactionary. The Simon Report and the Government of India Despatch were also so characterised. The Nehru Report, on the other hand, purported for a time to represent the advanced school of political thought and action in India. But the Congress outgrew even that Report.

### XX. THE CONGRESS AND THE BRITISHER

The Congress never required the Britisher to leave India. She values and even cherishes British assistance in the conduct of her own affairs. The British soldier, the British civilian or the British merchant need not retire. They are invited to stay on. But not as masters and exploiters. The British soldier, for example, must be content to serve under the National Government, which shall decide the military policy and not he. The same with the British civilian. Foreign domination and exploitation at the vital spots of the body politic is incompatible with Indian liberty and Indian self-respect. This, in substance, was the Congress position. The Tory school of thought in England, at least a powerful section of it, was frankly not prepared to release the grip of England upon Indian affairs. At any rate, not for some time to come. And, while in office, it had sent an all-white Commission to India to "trifle with" the Indian demand.

### XXI. CHANGE IN FORM AND METHOD ONLY

Labour made a change in form and method of course, but it was questioned if there was a corresponding change in spirit and purpose. It called a R. T. C. to London instead of sending a white or mixed commission to India. But the R. T. C. was, and has been, a deliberative body only, and not a constituent assembly empowered to frame a constitution for India. It has been said that the British Government will draw up its final proposals on the basis of an agreement reached in the Conference, and present them in the shape of a bill to the British Parliament. This may or may not be

tantamount to a denial of the right of self-determination to India. If the Labour Government had acceded to the Congress request to call the Conference for the purpose of framing forthwith a dominion constitution for India, that is to say, for deciding by negotiation the necessary adjustments for the speedy transference of authority from British hands to Indian hands, then, in the hypothesis of immediate dominion status for India being accepted by England as a settled question not further to be reopened, the passing of a necessary bill by the British Parliament might be regarded as more or less a formal affair not meaning anything like dictation or ordination by one party in relation to the other. But the Conference did not meet to frame a dominion constitution for India and settle the necessary adjustments. Nor did it meet to discuss and decide on the Simon Report or the India Government Despatch. It began on a perfectly clean slate in so far as the model of Indian constitution was concerned. A promiscuous mass of nebula gathered in the halls of the St. James' Palace, and uncertain "lights" were at work to compose and scan it into shape.

There might be nothing wrong in having to begin on a clean slate or a formless nebula, if the architects were agreed on a common object or design. But they were not agreed. And the constitution of the Conference was such that they never could agree. Lord Sankey and the British Premier might congratulate the Conference upon finding a basis of substantial agreement: but, probably, under each square inch of the agreed position there lurked hidden mines of misgivings and mistakings. Labour Government consistently refused to show its own hands. No body knew how far it was prepared to move. Lord Reading as the chief representative of the key party gave of course an inkling of the working of the liberal British mind. Mr. Jayakar found himself in high glee after the Reading plan had been broached in the Conference. But could even Dr. Sapru lay his hand on his bosom and say honestly that the noble Lord had given him a quarter loaf or even half loaf where he had asked for the full loaf? A hedged-round provincial autonomy with dyarchy at the centre, dependent upon a federal structure sought to be made safe by too many complicated checks and balances, express or implied, and where the Crown, through its own cabinet, would continue to hold the key-board of control over defence, financial policy, services, foreign relations, and so forth, was not the sort of palliative that could bring relief to any irritated part of even moderate India. We need not pause to examine the Reading plan and Sapru plan in detail. The one man who was in a position to deliver the goods was not there. And not only Dr. Moonji and Maulana Mahomed Ali, but practically all the Indian delegates knew or felt that they were only representing themselves. As Mahomed Ali said in the great and patriotic speech he made in the plenary session of the Conference,—his last will and testament,—the Conference was an "wonderful" Conference, and while he was representing no one but himself, he believed that he was not at any rate misrepresenting himself. He added that in politics the chances of one's misrepresenting oneself are very real and very great. Meanwhile, many people in India were wondering—How many of his compatriots in the Conference had selves of their own either to represent or to misrepresent?

## XXIII CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDE

Lord Peel and Sir Samuel Hoare, as representatives of the Conservative party, simply refused to commit themselves to any scheme of Indian advance until and unless they had the whole canvas spread before them, filled in and completed. They reserved judgment on the general plan in broad outlines placed before them. But they nevertheless made it perfectly clear along what lines they were prepared *not* to move. All the fundamental British interests in India must be safeguarded. Safeguard may be a nasty word for the Premier, but safeguard was the mantra of the Tory Party. There could be no mistaking about that. In fact, Sir Samuel Hoare's speech was characterised as "mischievous" by advanced Labour opinion in England, and Tory organs had been hard put to it to make a show of defence. But was there anything amiss with that attitude of the Tory leader? The non-committal attitude of Sir Samuel was perfectly in keeping with British Toryism. It does believe in the rule of one people by another; it does believe that such rule, of obvious advantage to the ruler, may also be of advantage to the ruled; and it does not feel called upon to withdraw its rule so long as it thinks that by such withdrawal the mutual advantage will be sacrificed. In assessing the mutual advantage, that is, of the ruler and the ruled, it frankly believes that no purely altruistic or philanthropic standard is applicable, and that while blindly selfish policy will not pay in the long run, the truly practicable policy is one that must be dictated by enlightened self-interest or prudence. Britain has, for instance, a mission, and a worthy mission, to fulfil in its Indian Empire; but Toryism does not pretend to think that this mission of Britain is purely a philanthropic or disinterested mission. It is certainly true that Britain stands to gain by holding her Indian dominion, and that she stands to lose by renouncing her hold upon it.

That rule, therefore, is the best from this point of view which has the clearest and strongest sanction of enlightened self-interest. No arrangement is worth while which does not conserve and safeguard the vital interests of the ruling country also. Indian interests and British interests should be made to go together. The question of security and safeguard is, therefore, a central issue with the characteristic Tory school of thought. If something has to be conceded to the ruled, that something can only be what prudence will be prepared to sanction. The Indian agitation, especially of the "subversive" kind, is beginning to cause a deal of trouble to the ruling country. Now, the course of action that naturally suggests itself to the average Tory mind is strong government and no encouragement being given to the "agitator". If he be treated with indulgence, he would be merely encouraged to pitch his demand higher and ever higher. Very soon you will find him making an impossible demand. Toryism has been consistent in its adherence to this principle. Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Peel were not false to this principle. Of course, Mr. Baldwin gave expression to some very fine sentiments in his Parliamentary speeches bearing upon India. No member outside the ranks of Independent Labour, and no government member with the possible exception of Mr. Wedgwood Benn, had uttered finer words. But there can be no mistaking about the gist and substance of those fine accents

uttered by an accomplished and tactful leader of a great party. Mr. Baldwin was not only doing his duty by his friend and late colleague Lord Irwin; he was facing elements of insurgence inside his own party headed by Mr. Churchill. These elements, aided and abetted by some retired Anglo-Indians and other English die-hards, had been too frankly proclaiming their imperialistic obligations, and too insistently demanding the head of Mahatma Gandhi on a charger, to be of any use in delicate diplomatic negotiations with India. It was not that Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Churchill were poles asunder as regards their political creed and principles with reference to India. It was simply that Mr. Baldwin was tackling some inconvenient elements of his own party. While the texts of the gospel of British Toryism are the same, there possibly have been some little variations in the practical interpretation of those texts with reference to actual cases. In fact, while Toryism is distinguished as a species by a distinctive colour of its own, it may be possible to tell at least three shades of colour in its reaction to the Indian situation. The first was that represented by the official leader of the party himself—non-committal but beginning to be sensitive to, if not appreciative of, the realities of the Indian situation. Secondly, we had the shade represented by Lord Peel and Sir Samuel Hoare—non-committal, reserved, suspicious, wary. Thirdly, we had the shade represented by Mr. Churchill, Lord Llyod and others—frankly hostile and aggressive, and refusing to move from the old order of bureaucratic absolutism in India. All these could, however, be reduced to a common base: they were fractions having a common denominator.

#### XXIV. COMMON DENOMINATOR

Now, Labour, in entering into an alliance with these, had necessarily to accept the common denominator too. Labour might have been a species distinct from Toryism or Liberalism, judged by certain criteria of domestic or European politics, but with reference to India, what was it? Different species, as biologists tell us, do not cross, and if they do, they remain barren. Well, the very assertion that India must be treated as above party politics, that with reference to India all parties can co-operate, proves that they are but varieties of one species in relation to India. The parties did as a matter of fact cross in the R. T. C., and it was expected that they would produce something. Let us wait and see.

#### XXV. RESULT OF THE CROSSING

As the result of the crossing, Labour already found itself transformed beyond recognition as regards its professed ideals and methods. It carried on as strong a Government in India by means of Ordinances and deportations without trial and general repression as would delight the heart of any hide-bound Tory statesman or any sun-dried Indian bureaucrat. In fact, the Indian "die-hard" bureaucrat was practically allowed the full length of his tether in dealing with the Indian unrest. The fine speeches of Mr. Wedgwood Benn illustrated by the wholesale lathi charges and so forth in India, seemed to throw a luried

light on the whole affair. It seemed like Simla dictating to Whitehall, and not taking its orders from it. Pending constitution-making, King's Government must be carried on, and it could, in the face of the openly disruptive forces, be carried in one way only. As Lord Irwin—"the friend of India"—said, Government was justified in employing every weapon in its armoury when it was threatened at its very base. And it did employ every weapon in its armoury, all the fine traditions and professions of Labour notwithstanding.

#### XXVI. THE LABOUR MIND IN RELATION ON INDIA

But let us not look at the outer picture, though that is emphatically relevant to an essay to read the inner working of the mind. It was an index, if not an exact likeness, of the Labour mind in relation to the Indian question. But suppose for one moment we cast our gaze across the seas, and peep into the conclaves of the Labour Cabinet. Was the heart of Labour throbbing all sound there without a false tremor? Labour politicians in office have now and again protested the sincerity of their intention with regard to India. The Premier in particular has asked us to be 'honest', and have a sense of realities. He has also referred to the inherent difficulties of the Indian problem, and, therefore, of constitution-making. He has also more than once reminded us of the necessity of making such a constitution as will work.

All this, on the face of it, is a perfectly reasonable position. But one must go deeper to be in touch with realities. The form is sometimes so deceptive and misleading! Granted that the intentions of Labour Government with regard to India were sincere,—though Mahatma Gandhi himself on a later occasion challenged (so it was reported) the *bona fides* of the British Government when they were reported to have closed their offer with the grant of immediate provincial autonomy, reserving the question of responsibility at the centre for future consideration. But waving all that, one would ask—What were those intentions about which the authorities were so loud in protesting their sincerity? No body yet knew what their own intentions were, though Lord Reading made certain tentative proposals in respect of which, however, the Conservative members could not see their way to adopt other than a sceptical and non-committal attitude.

#### XXVII. THE JANUARY DECLARATION

It is true that on the 19th. of January the Premier made his "momentous announcement" in the R. T. C., in anticipation of which, and in order to create the necessary peaceful atmosphere for which, Sir John Crerar, the Indian Home Member, had withdrawn the two repressive bills (relating to Press and Unlawful Instigation) that had recently been introduced in the Assembly with a message full of threat and admonition by the Viceroy. That momentous speech by the Premier was not hailed with anything like enthusiasm in any quarter of nationalist India. Words—Words—Words—this is how the utterance was generally assessed in India. It did not make one definite proposal relating to any question of vital importance. The Conference had not said the last word—so said the Premier. But the preliminary words that it

did say, did not clarify a single important issue. No one had demanded or expected anything like a completed picture, but still all had hoped that much of the mist would rise as the result of the plain talks of the British and Indian delegates across the table, and show with reliable certainty the position of one party in relation to that of the other. In other words, both sides of the game would place all their important cards on the table. But did they do anything of the kind? In spite of fluent protests of sincerity and mutual adaptability, they seemed to many to play a game of hide and seek.

### XXVIII. THE INDIAN DELEGATES

It is doubtful if the Indian "delegates" had all placed their real cards on the table. They hardly felt themselves in a position to do so. They found themselves in a narrow steep gorge where they could hardly feel themselves masters of their own movement. On the one hand, they felt the hard, massive rock of the Indian determination to be free represented by the Congress; and the key to the Indian position was in the hands of a frail prisoner, clad in loin cloth, shut up in the Yervada Jail. They themselves had no power to move or negotiate that rock. On the other hand, they felt likewise the equally hard rock of British determination not to part lightly and injudiciously with any vital part of the authority it exercises over India. There were some in the Conference who would care to place the communal interests above the interests of the nation as a whole. They would not care to wait for a free India to make the necessary communal adjustments. A free India would mean to them an India not only ruled but tyrannised over by the majority. Communal adjustments were, therefore, a condition precedent to their co-operating in any scheme of responsible national government in India. Either Jinnah's fourteen points or none of any responsible constitution devoid of British control—these were the only possible alternatives present in their thoughts. The Premier would, of course, most obligingly offer to stand aside in any effort made by the Indians themselves to make up their communal differences. But Communalists alone had been invited to the London Conference. And those who had invited them knew that they were communalists. Yet it was known that there were others in the various communities of India who were not communalists but were nationalists.

Then there were other delegates who, while volunteering to join with British India in a federal constitution, would claim an weightage or representation beyond their actual weight and yet would not care to submit to any obligation to have their treaties readjusted with reference to the new order about to dawn in India, or to have the new order extended or introduced into their own dominions.

Lastly, there were still others who believed in the possibility of getting at their destination through quarter-way and half-way houses. They are believers in evolution and not revolution. They are content to have a lift given to them now and then, and find themselves, each time, at a "progressive" stage, where they will wait, holding their souls in patience, till the time comes for the next lift. There may be some little difference amongst the votaries of this school as regards the number of the stages

required to pass through before the goal is reached, and the length of the periods of waiting on the road. But they are all agreed about this—agitate for the whole and get what you can. Work with whatever you get and agitate for more. This is Indian "Liberalism." If some of them made high-pitched demands in the Conference, and affected a mood of sticking to them whatever the consequences might be, it was because they felt that their demands, however high, could never be higher than the Congress demand for independence, for which an "active" section of the nation had been putting up a most determined fight. In fact, they felt that, though not of the Congress, they were being solidly and powerfully backed by the Congress, in making their demand high. The Congress was then the sun risen on the horizon, and to shine and attract notice for the "nominees" of government was to catch and reflect as much light of the Congress as possible. For, presumably, many of them had small lights of their own: they could shine bright only in reflected lights. The Congress fight going on India braced many of them up to sing in heroic verses. They could make their demand at the counter for delivery of the goods, because they thought that price was being paid for them in ample, sterling cash in India. But not being the actual fighters, or not being authorized to speak for the actual fighters, they could never feel certain of their position. They could never be sure that the Congress would be able to exert pressure enough to bend the back of the mighty British Government, and make it accede to its full demand. Not being in the fighting line, they never knew the fighting strength of the Congress. The Congress might collapse at any moment under the tremendous pressure of the government, or it might successfully withstand it and ultimately win. There was as yet no sure indication of what was going to happen. How far were the belligerents really prepared to go? A third party, not necessarily sitting on the fence, but interested in the game, always finds itself in a position of uncertainty, and consequent vacillation, while it is watching the game. It never knows the mind of either party, and can never foretell its fortune. It was no wonder, therefore, that many of the Indian delegates made exemplary speeches in the plenary session of the Conference, but their actual performances did not always appear to have been to the tune of their heroics. Some of them, if not most of them, found themselves diminished enough in the various sub-committees deliberating behind the purda, to slide snugly into the robes of small, one need not say timid, politicians.

#### XXIX. NOT CLEAR IN THEIR MINDS OR TACTICS. THE FEELER.

We need not pursue the subject further, but it can hardly be questioned that neither the British Government nor the Indian delegates were clear in their minds or in their tactics. The fight was still going on in full vigour, and the R. T. C. was probably meant simply as a feeler. The feeler served two purposes. It showed that even the Princes and British Indian delegates, moderate in their bent and outlook though they were, could not wholly shut their eyes to the realities of the Indian situation. The Premier wanted them to look at certain realities—the communal clashes, minorities, and so forth; but they could not altogether refrain from looking at other realities also—the

grim reality of the effort being made in India—shewing the determination of the nation to achieve freedom. All of them had, therefore, demanded responsible government to be realized as soon as possible. The other purpose served by the R. T. C. was the practically unanimous attitude of the British parties with regard to the *kind* of concession they were prepared to make to the Indian demand. There might be uncertainty about other things, but none about the kind or nature of Britain's present offer to India. Immediate and full-fledged responsible government or dominion status was out of the question; there must be stages of transition which could not forthwith be indicated and defined in the constitution to be presently framed; that is to say, no time limit could be laid for India reaching her journey's end. The given constitution might not grow and expand into an ampler and ampler form of responsible government by any automatic device; but that each future stage of progress would have to be determined by further consultation and deliberation, and presumably, by means of a bill passed through the Parliament. A previous Declaration of Parliament had stated in so many words that the British Parliament and none other would be the sole judge of the time and rate of each future advance. The Report did say of course that there would be a constitutional stock-taking in India after ten years; and the Tory government in power redeemed that pledge by sending out to India an all-white Commission. There was, however, no undertaking in the pledge that future enquiries in India would be made for the sole purpose of determining what further advance should be made in the matter of responsible government. India is like a child in her political traditions, and must be taught the lesson of democracy. Her task-master could, and should, begin with the rudiments of the western art of government only. No risk and no false step must be taken. In brief, England was merely *experimenting* with democratic institutions in India. And whether to proceed or go back would depend upon the success or otherwise of the experiment. And who was to judge that the experiment was succeeding or failing? The British Parliament. Had not Britain undertaken a high imperial mission to fulfil in India? Had it not been to lift India out of morass and slough of medievalism in which she had been wallowing for long centuries? Suppose she had been; but like Japan, China, Turkey and other countries of the "backward, unprogressive" East, could she have not risen out of the morass if left to herself?

### XXX. THE BRITISH MIND IN WORK IN RELATION TO INDIA.

Whatever the true answer might be, this, in fact, was the British mind when making the Declaration in relation to India after the conclusion of the War. And this, substantially, continued to be the British mind in the year 1930-31. No body knew how long further it would continue. All the British parties were agreed that India could be given self-government with only adequate checks and safeguards; and that also in reasonably cautious and safe instalments. The British anxiety, as to the future relation of Britain to India, was peeping out of the haze of words which was the momentous utterance of the Premier on the 19th of January. He professed, as we have seen, the sincerity of his intentions in regard to India—a sincerity which, as we have seen also, must have been not a reassuring kind of



sincerity in so far as the aspirations of nationalist India were concerned. The Indian Delegates, on the other hand, could not be sure of themselves, because they could not be sure either of the attitude of the Congress or of the attitude of the British Government; because there was no knowing as yet as to the final issue of the struggle going on in India, and the final accommodation of Britain to India. Maulana Mahomed Ali and some other delegates had indeed asked the British Government to lay their cards on the table as Mahatmaji did on a later occasion. Mahomed Ali, for instance, had asked for a charter of freedom; for, he was not prepared to go back to a slave country with a "slave charter" in his pocket. Such a charter would not brace him up to face the situation in his mother country. Representatives of communities, such as they were, did not feel that they could adjust themselves to one another, unless they knew to what and under what conditions they must adjust themselves. They were naturally eager, therefore, to know the government mind.

### XXXI. GOVERNMENT NOT KNOWING ITS OWN MIND.

But the Government itself hardly knew its own mind. It was decided on the general principle that the British must insist on stages and safeguards in having to accede to the demand made by India. And Lord Peel certainly did not stand alone when he threatened to withdraw from the Conference if it should refuse to discuss and provide adequate safeguards. He was more outspoken perhaps than others, but he was, nevertheless, typical. As regards the matter of stages, euphemistically called period of transition, there was also consensus of opinion. But the British politicians were not in a position to say when challenged—"these must be the stages or this the duration of the period of transition; and these must be the minimum safeguards to begin with." As a party to a determined fight still going on, they could hardly be expected to be ready with a cut and dried formula of peace-making. Such a formula can be thought of when the fight has been very nearly fought to a finish—when one party has fully measured his sword with the other party. Each may have certain preconceived ideas or plans of its own; but these have got to be constantly modified with reference to the stress of new facts and coming events. The Premier was, therefore, quite right when he told the world that the First Conference called to London was but preliminary and preparatory, leading to a final and more representative Conference to be called later. He had, of course, the possible Congress representation in mind. But he did little, if anything, in the speech referred to, to make that representation possible. He was not prepared to proclaim an armistice or general amnesty as long as the party of Civil Disobedience continued to be up in arms against authority. That is, the "rebels" must first lay down their arms, and then they could be called in for consultation. It is the familiar attitude of the Powers that be everywhere. Moreover, the Premier in that momentous speech had not deigned to unbuckle his armour. He was in a fighting mood both as regards the civil resisters in India and the extreme Left Wingers of his own party, who had been perpetually heckling and worrying him. This is what he said in that speech: "But do believe me, my Indian friends, Left-Wing, Centre, or Right, I am one of those who believe that he who

stirs enmity between peoples is not going to advance liberty in the world: he who spreads suspicion, he who makes co-operation impossible, is not one of those agents for good that the world in its present distracted frame of mind is so much in need of." Excellent sentiment excellently expressed. But who was he that was stirring enmity, spreading suspicion and making co-operation impossible? Mahatma Gandhi? Had not Mahatma Gandhi tried every possible avenue of co-operation before turning out a "seditious fakir and rebel"? Had there been in living memory a person more a co-operator by temperament, more charitable to his enemies, if indeed he had real enemies, than he? What does the nationalist mind of India think? The British Government should know this. The Indian National Congress, after passing more than a quarter of a century in making more or less futile appeals to the British sense of justice and fairplay for the redressment of the many wrongs that India has been heir to, was forced under sheer pressure of events to launch upon a policy of non-cooperation in the earlier twenties of the present century; and history has not yet forgotten the course of events leading to the adoption of that policy. Nor has history forgotten the circumstances under which the Gandhi-Irwin December talks in 1929 had failed and Civil Disobedience was started. Had not Gandhiji actually "gone upon his knees" to crave the requisite gesture from the British Government that the matter of the granting of immediate dominion status to India would be taken up in right earnest by them? Had the Viceroy even cared to reply (except formally and curtly) to the historic document that Gandhiji had sent to his Excellency prior to his march to Dandi? Was not that document conceived in the noblest of purposes and full of sweetest reasonableness? This, in substance, was the nationalist view. But to a section of the official mind he was then perhaps more a fanatic and visionary than a practical politician to take serious notice of. Subsequent developments, however, showed what a colossally dynamic agent for mass awakening in India the little seditious Fakir was.

### XXXII. THE ONE FACT TO BE FACED

We need not go into recent history, and turn up the graves of the "fatal" events. In peace let them rest. The one fact to be squarely faced was this: India was demanding her very birth-right; she certainly meant no ill to anybody—much less to the Englishman with whom, culturally and otherwise, she has been associated for well nigh a couple of centuries. Though foreign rule may not have proved an unmixed blessing, yet she feels that she must remain grateful for whatever of value she has gained through such association. In winning and consolidating her freedom, she requires and would welcome the helpful co-operation of her former ruler. But she was determined not to allow either past traditions or former associations to stand in the way of her self-realization as an emancipated India. And while other nations, in their fight for freedom, had chosen the path of violence and hate, she chose the path of non-violence and suffering. She thought she could win her point by making the heart of the ruler change in response to her elementary and just demands.

## XXXIII. ON THE BRINK OF A DOWNWARD GRADIENT

Of course, in a vast country like India, some part of national effort was almost sure to drift into the dark channels of violence ; and as the ex-President Patel had expressed his fear, it might be that India was just on the brink of the downward gradient of a violent revolution, and that Mahatma Gandhi was the one force holding her back from a career down that bloody incline. Many already have been deeds of violence, and it does sometimes look like the red and erratic curve of violence steadily rising to lurid prominence in India. This is unfortunate, taking all things into consideration. Elsewhere we tried to briefly set out the equation of the curve—the factors which have contributed to it. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the non-violent experiment on a national scale was tried in India, and the net results seemed to many to justify the hope of its organisers that by this one weapon India would be able not only to achieve her own ends, but to clear a path for distracted humanity in the wilderness of distrust and confusion in which it now finds itself almost lost. History had yet to pronounce this hope a delusion. But there were some British statesmen who, though they seemed to have done little more than to have played with the question of world disarmament and international peace, and who had endorsed the pursuit of an unimaginative policy in dealing with a deep but substantially non-violent Indian unrest, turned round, almost as accusing and wrathful angels, to Mahatma Gandhi himself across the seas. Many honestly believed and wanted the world to believe that India senselessly and needlessly turned to give battle to a party which was quite open and amenable to reasoned argument and peaceful negotiation.

## XXXIV. THE EXTENT OF RESPONSE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Suppose they were right ; but what, in fact, was the extent to which the British Government found itself prepared to go even after the country had undergone so much suffering ? Conditions favourable to peaceful settlement did not seem to be much in evidence. Even while the Premier was getting ready with his momentous declaration, four Sholapur prisoners were hanged on the 12th., in disregard of the numerous petitions for mercy that had been made on their behalf from many parts of India. Those petitions had not prayed that the guilty should go scot free, but only that their death sentence should be changed into one for transportation. But Government thought fit to allow the law to take its course. The moment, however, was unfortunate—just when the London Conference was nearing the end of its deliberations and the Premier was about to make his pronouncement. It seemed as if the clouds were going to thicken and not clear up. Sinister influences might or might not have been at work to mar or delay settlement. It was unfortunate again, however, that hanging came in just on the eve of another great effort—we mean the effort to be made by Mahatma Gandhi to win the Karachi Congress over to the side of the Pact he had made with Lord Irwin. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukdev were hanged on the eve of the Karachi Congress in disregard not only of the almost universal prayer for mercy (for commutation of the death sentence), but also, as it appeared, in spite of the best endeavours of Mahatmaji himself to

save their lives. The Pact had not been very favourably received in the country, particularly in view of the fact that the pact had not been followed by general amnesty which all had hoped for in its train. Only the Working Committee members had been released to begin with, and the Government were letting out the non-violent prisoners by dribbles—a fact that, in the eyes of Congressmen, not only lacked grace, but, in many instances, involved breaches of the terms of the Pact itself. The Bengal detenus and the Meerut prisoners were not to be released. Rebounding on such a frame of the national mind, the Bhagat Singh hanging sent such a wave of feeling throughout the length and breadth of the country, that it seemed as if the provisional truce made by Mahatmaji with Government were in utter jeopardy, and there were no chance of the Pact being favourably received and ratified by the Congress. The event undoubtedly meant an accession of strength to the party believing in violent revolution. The youth of India, that Mr. MacDonald had expected in his January Declaration to turn to constructive work and make for peace, was so deeply perturbed by the Bhagat Singh affair—that a section of it was in no mood for listening to counsels of peace and conciliation, but was, in some instances, frankly militant against the General himself in high command. It was not that the creed of the youth of India generally was or is violence. But the fact remains that the hot blood of youth is susceptible especially to the germs of violence if these should happen to be in the air. And the Bhagat Singh affair helped, directly and indirectly, to spread infection. It brought a comparatively normal affair into all-India prominence and celebrity, setting the crown of martyrdom on the heads of those that were executed. Even the Congress had to pass a resolution referring to the misguided selflessness of the sufferers, though, of course, it strongly condemned the crime itself and the cult and method of violence. Without such a resolution from the Congress rostrum,—so the Congress thought,—the youth of the nation could hardly be appeased, and veered round to the view-point and programme of the Congress. In fact, it had been gravely feared that the Congress would be shipwrecked on the rock of that unfortunate event. The innate commonsense of the nation, its appreciation of the tremendous importance of the momentous issues hanging in the balance, and above all, the enormous personal influence of Mahatmaji, contributed to the averting of the disaster. The event and its aftermath were such as to make one fear that by that one bomb-shell the Congress—the one powerful political organisation in India—would be broken to pieces, and the political influence of Mahatma Gandhi—having such magnetic hold over the imagination and feelings of three hundred millions of his fellow countrymen—would be shattered. Fortunately, such fears were belied, and the Left-wingers were induced to join the Centre and the Right to make an united front, and a solid phalanx of Indian determination for winning freedom by concerted action in accordance with the non-violent creed of the Congress.

### XXXV. THE OFFICIAL APOLOGIA.

The Government spokesmen simply said that they had thought fit to

let the law take its course, and that they had not infringed any of the terms of the Pact in doing what they had done. No, they had not, according to the letter of the pact. But should they not have looked deeper into it—deeper than they appeared to have done? What could the pact be worth, if the necessary peaceful atmosphere for the working of it did not exist, or were not created, and if the temper of the nation were worked up into such heat that the Congress could not and dare not ratify the Pact? It is no use making a pact, and then to create difficult conditions for it. The event undoubtedly made the task of Mahatmaji still more difficult. It had been difficult already in view of the unsatisfactory nature of some of the terms of the Pact, and owing to the failure of the Government to follow up their gesture of goodwill by the declaration of general amnesty, or at any rate, by an order to release the Meerut prisoners undergoing a protracted trial, and the unfortunate Bengal detenus clapped into prison on police suspicion.

### XXXVI. THE PSYCHOLOGY AND LOGIC OF OFFICIALDOM

We shall not try to look into the inner working of the official mind. It has a psychology of its own. And also its own logic. It does sometimes actions, unnecessary and unreasonable to lay intelligence, for "grave reasons of state." Possibly, having made the Pact with the Congress, "the one potential and active political factor", and released some of its prominent leaders, it felt that it had conceded too much or just enough to an agitation seeking to undermine authority itself; now it must not only say "thus far and no farther," but apply the brake and tighten the screw. Because the Pact had been made, authority had not ceased to be itself; and it was not going to bend its back before any and every surge of popular clamour and *abdār*. To do so is to weaken authority itself, the very foundation upon which the structure of every ordered Government rests. When time comes, Government will hand over to Indians the key to the structure of Indian Government, with its foundations firm and intact. Only such a structure will be a legacy worthy of Britain to leave for India, and worthy of India to receive from Britain.

We shall refrain from making any comments. There is undoubtedly something to be urged for the Government side of the case. The fact, however, should never be forgotten that India was grimly in earnest to get into her birth-right possession; and that she could be trusted to take care enough to see that the foundations were firm and strong enough to support the structure. For, will not that structure be her own abode in life and in death? If the roofs should come down in a crash, who will perish or suffer more than she?

Not only in respect of the authority of law, but in all other vital matters, it is India's own primary concern to arrange and implement dependable and durable insurances for all her vital possessions. Defence, foreign relations, financial credit and stability, "the moral credit" on which the Premier preached his sermon, internal order and tranquillity, adjustment of minority interests,—are not all these India's own first and primary concerns, not liable to be wilfully jeopardised or lightly neglected by her?

## XXXVII. NO SIGN OF "WEAKENING"

We have above a glimpse of the situation in India—though the Bhagat Singh incident was a later affair—just before the Premier's Declaration in January. Repression was going as strong as ever. As the darkest hour of the night is nearest the dawn, so the bitterest aspects of a fight may be expected just before the peace feelers and parleys. Each side gathers itself up, so to say, for dealing a blow that will tell most—in the coming peace negotiations. For, it is strength that tells not only in war but also in peace. An opponent that should shew signs of softening and weakening in the last phase of the fight, might be lightly dismissed when time came for settling accounts with him. Now, whatever the causes and reasons might have been, it was a fact that the Government had shewn no sign of softening and weakening before the Premier's declaration of policy. And not even after that. We referred before to the Sholapur executions. We might have also referred to the very severe police reactions in connection with the hartals and demonstrations in Bombay following close upon these executions, in which three hundred persons were reported to have received more or less serious injuries. Police "offensive" against Congress organisations—most of which had been declared unlawful—continued unabated. We need not pile up instances of which there was no dearth. The official figures of casualties on the side of the people were themselves sufficiently telling. On the 26th of January, Sir James Crerar, replying to questions put by Ranga Iyer and Gayaprasad Singh, informed the House that up till the end of July last (1930), more than 50,000 persons had been convicted for satyagraha, 101 persons had been killed and 497 wounded. The rates were certainly maintained after that date.

## XXXVIII. GRIPPING REALITIES

Such, in fine, was the situation in India when the Premier declared the intentions of the British Government in regard to India. He advised the delegates to grip certain realities; but the delegates might as well have asked him to do likewise. That a very considerable section of the Indian people had been very much in earnest about Indian emancipation; this was the sole reality that counted. Everything else was immaterial. And British rulers in India or British statesmen in England should never have permitted themselves to forget to take adequate and timely note of this. Mr. Churchill and others of his way of thinking could never bring themselves to believe that the material reality of the Indian situation was just this and no less than this. Failing to realise this, they thought that only a few hard blows consistently and timely dealt would knock the bottom out of Indian resistance to constituted authority, and keep the empire safe for generations of Britishers. They persistently accused the Indian government at home pursuing a policy of defeatism. These men were in the dark of medieval ignorance about the present vital tendencies in Eastern lands and peoples, and if ignorance was bliss with them, it was not likely that the Indian agitation would shake them up from their blissful self-complacency. Other revolutions in other countries, bloody though these had been, had not disturbed their bliss. Nothing could

shake their faith in the efficacy of strong measures. But while these men were in the dark, others in a more responsible position were in the twilight of uncertainty and vacillation.

### XXXIX. TWILIGHT OF UNCERTAINTY AND VACILLATION

The British Premier, Mr. Macdonald, did not yet seem to have gripped the vital reality of the Indian situation. If he had fully and clearly seen the reality, he would have hesitated to come forward with proposals, how ever tentative, which adumbrated an Indian constitution, "with sweeping reservations and illusory powers," as he did, according to Congress stock-taking, in his January Declaration. No body would think of V. J. Patel as an irresponsible politician. He made a statement on that Declaration from his sick bed in Bombay. After making a fairly just and correct appraisal of the assets and liabilities of the Indian situation, this is what he says: "The offer contained in the Prime Minister's statement is an offer of shadow and not of substance, and is bound to unify the Congress ranks. The triple reservations (army, foreign affairs and finance) agreed upon are so wide and are of so sweeping a character as to swamp all elements of responsibility." He then proceeded to add that a dominion status without control over Fiscal Policy and Military Policy is a contradiction in terms. And the last words of the statement said what others had also been saying: "If that Declaration were to stand as the last word on the side of the British Government on the Indian question, and not meant simply as a feeler, the struggle must go on. To make it the last word, would be to refuse to face the realities of the Indian situation."

No body yet knew whether it was meant to be the last word or the first or the middle. The Government might or might not have been bargaining or canvassing for their commodities. But India as represented by the Congress was, at any rate, in no mood for haggling and bargaining. It would be satisfied with nothing less than the substance of freedom. Half measures in conciliation (of which conciliation-cum-repression is a most edifying variety) or in reform would never satisfy it.

### XL. SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW

Let us, therefore, for one moment, look at the proposals as the nationatists, generally, looked at them. It was evident to them that in the outline scheme adumbrated by the Prime Minister, the reservations were the substance, while the powers conceded to the representatives of the people were the shadow. One had not to read between the lines to perceive this. Provincial Autonomy is to be granted; but of what sort? Ministers will be in charge of the subjects, and there will be their joint responsibility to the Legislature. This sounds very well. But the Governor will be given such reserve powers that the existing autocratic basis of administration will practically remain in tact. The Governor is to see to it that the constitution works smoothly and orderedly and solvently. He will have such statutory powers as he will require to implement his decisions with a view to discharging the fundamental obligations thus laid on him. The King in England of course holds many inherent powers; but those powers are almost never exer-

cised. British democracy has developed certain powerful sanctions and created certain inviolable traditions, which preclude the possibility of any autocratic powers being exercised by any single person or group of persons. The King, for instance, can act only through his ministers, who are formally chosen by him, but are, in fact, the responsible servants of the people. The analogy of old democratic countries as regards reserve powers, residual powers, and so forth, vested in the governors or presidents or ministers, and so forth, is not an appropriate analogy in India. India cannot as yet think in terms of England, America or France. She is just emerging out of an "irresponsible" system of administration. There is, therefore, need here for extra caution so far as the new rights and privileges of the people are concerned. If anything require to be safeguarded more than any other thing, it is these rights. People will commit mistakes, but it is only through mistakes that they will learn the lesson of rectitude. To continue the overlordship of the governor or some such agent not responsible to the legislature, is to perpetuate the conditions under which they have not learned, and are never likely to learn, the fundamental lessons of responsibility.

#### XLI. TRIPLE OVERLORDSHIP

And in the proposed order, the overlordship would appear to be a triple one. First, there was the governor not responsible to the provincial legislature holding wide reserve powers. Secondly, there was the Central Government which would supervise the affairs of, that is, control, the provinces. Not only in federal matters, but, ultimately, in the domestic matters of the provinces also. And the supreme overlordship would be that of the British Parliament. Provincial autonomy would thus only be "glorified local self-government" as Mahatmaji said on a later occasion. It is not the case of autonomous provincial units freely associating by means of a convention, independently of the British Parliament, to form a federal union, to which certain of their original powers are delegated, but all residual powers remaining with them. In a case like this, the provincial units are in the position of principals, and the federal government in that of their agent in respect of certain common interests. You invert this natural order if you contemplate an essentially autocratic government at the centre, and allow it to lord it over the provincial units forming the federation. As regards the substantially irresponsible character of the central government, the Report or the Declaration left no manner of doubt. Defence and foreign relations were to be frankly reserved. Guarantees to the services must not be disturbed. The Governor-General shall be the final authority as regards public tranquility and adjustment of the interests of the minorities. There would be financial autonomy with this vital reservation, viz, the Public Debts would remain sacrosanct, and Currency and Exchange policy must be such as to receive the seal and imprimatur of the Governor-General. All this because the moral credit and financial stability of India were at stake. Adequate provision must, of course, be made for the financing of the reserved subjects—the most important of which is Defence. That is to say, Army would continue to have—the Indian Sandhurst and "Indianisation" being still in a nebulous and tentative stage—its full lion's bite of Indian revenue. It was generally thought that under such financial arrangement, the new



constitution could hardly be in a position to carry through any comprehensive plan of nation-building aiming at mass uplift and emancipation. We need not make any remark on the nebulous proposal of an Indian Reserve Bank.

#### XLII. CONSTITUTION THAT WILL WORK

The Premier wanted to give us a constitution that would work. But could it possibly work? Was any constitution likely to work which did not secure substantial support of Nationalist India or of the Congress for the matter of that? And was it likely that after courting so much suffering and making such sacrifices, the Congress would give its consent to any scheme of government which, in its opinion, did not confer upon India the substance of independence? Was it possible to work successfully any constitution ignoring the Congress and other progressive nationalist parties? Many people asked this, and waited for an answer.

#### XLIII. THE THREE ILLUSIONS

The fact of the matter is that the British Government was, as we have said, groping in the twilight of uncertainty and mental confusion. They were clear about one thing: British interests in the new Indian Dispensation must as far as possible be safeguarded. But how far—they could never be sure. But they should beware of three illusions: first, that the Indian unrest was superficial and restricted, and could, therefore, be dealt with by strong government on the one hand, and doles and sops of reform on the other. Secondly, that any measures that undermined people's allegiance and alienated their co-operation, or tended to do this, could make for strong or even workable government. India might or might not have been conquered by the sword. But it is absolutely certain that it is not being held by the sword alone or mainly. The basis of the whole structure has not been fear of British might principally, but faith in British justice and good-will, and co-operation ensured by and upon such faith. Whatever undermines this, undermines British Raj. Thirdly, that British interests have any chance of being safe in an India simmering in discontent—non-co-operating and boycotting, for example—under a system of unsympathetic and unimaginative policy. These are the three fatal illusions. Many British statesmen still seem to be labouring under all these illusions. They yet fail to bring themselves to realize that British interests are safest in an India that has been fully trusted and made contented.

#### XLIV. NOT WHOLLY IN THE DARK

Yet the British statesmen were not all of them wholly in the dark. During one of the lengthy debates in the House of Commons on matters Indian, the Premier, the Secretary of State for India, and also Mr. Baldwin made some remarkable speeches, which indicated that they knew the consequences of following an unimaginative and unresponsive policy in regard to India. Either proceed with reform or march with British bayonets from one end to the other of the Indian continent—these alternatives seemed to have already presented themselves to the

mind of the Premier, and also, those of some other statesmen. Either military autocracy or responsible government. And the Colossus of military autocracy was beginning to show its feet of clay. They seemed to be so mindful of the reality when replying to the Churchill gang!

#### XLV. RELEASE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

On the 25th January, the Viceroy made an important statement ordering the release of Mahatma Gandhi and of all members of the Working Committee who still were or had before been in membership since the 1st of January 1930. The ban on the C. W. C. was also removed. The Viceroy was content to trust that "those who will be affected by our decision will act in the same spirit as inspires it." Mahatmaji was released at 11 o'clock on the 26th. On that very day, the Independence Day demonstrations in Calcutta were given a demonstration of "firmness", and the President of B. P. C. C.—Subhas Chandra—was arrested. So the god of peace and the god of war were still acting in concert!

We have lingered long enough perhaps on the subject of the R. T. C. A great deal of confusion of thought requires to be moved on both sides in connection with that affair. We have tried to remove it a little. The key point of the Prime Minister's declaration of policy was perhaps the formula that safeguards in the Indian constitution should be in the interests of India. The period of transition leading ultimately to full responsibility—was a phrase which nationalist India did not set much store by. It might be the expression of a merely pious wish on the part of certain Englishmen leading nowhere perhaps. Even the phrase, "in the interests of India," may not be absolutely beyond cavil and question. There are, for instance, many Britishers who think or affect to think that it is in the interest of India to be garrisoned, and to continue to be garrisoned, by British soldiers, and administered, and to continue to be administered, by British civilians. However that be, this phrase seemed to keep the door slightly open for negotiation with the Congress.

#### XLVI. "PECULIAR DIFFICULTIES"

There is another point to which we must allude for a moment before passing to take up the thread of narrative. British statesmen have invariably laid stress on the peculiar difficulties of the Indian case. Emasculation and lack of military training, communal and other differences, administrative inexperience, mass ignorance and political backwardness—these are some of India's peculiar and formidable difficulties. But Indians have often asked:—Are not some of them creations of the administrative system itself under which India has been living? That after nearly two centuries of British rule India still finds herself labouring under some of these disqualifications reflects no great credit on the policy that had been allowed to work here. And, so it has been argued, India will never get rid of her disqualifications by continuing under a form of administration which created, or at least helped the creation and continuance of the disqualifications. India hopes that the New Dispensation will be such as to help her out of the "vicious circle" of her difficulties and disqualifications.

## XLVII. CONGRESS LEADERS IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION

Now, let us return to the narrative. Mahatmaji and some of the Congress leaders found themselves in an uncomfortable position after their release. Most of their comrades in arms—the great bulk of the satyagrahi prisoners—were not yet released. And they could not think of peace so long as their comrades were not set free. Moreover, the policy of repression was still going on, though Mahatmaji had declared himself as hungering for peace, and the Head of the Indian government had also made a peace gesture, and was, presumably, in a peace mind. But the brake had not yet been applied to the steam roller, or perhaps it could not yet be applied. The momentum was yet perhaps too great. So we find that in the first week of February, the Congress Working Committee under the lead of Mahatma and Motilalji—who was still living, though on the verge of death—resolved to carry on the struggle in view of the policy of repression still followed by the Government. Mass movement could not be called off till truce was declared—this was their decision. Plans were also laid for holding the next session of the Congress. “In view of the abnormal times”, the ordinary machinery for the election of the President was suspended, and the Bardoli Sardar Patel was declared President. No worthier selection could have been made.

Meanwhile, the affairs at Borsad—to name a specific case—were reported to have been so unfortunate that there were mammoth women demonstrations in Bombay in indignation and protest. This event was important as showing that elements were still at work to mar the prospects of truce, even after the Prime Minister had declared his policy, and the Viceroy had made what, presumably, must have been a genuine and sincere peace gesture.

## XLVIII. MOTILALJI PASSES AWAY

On the 6th at 6-40 A. M. passed away that towering figure and masterful leader of India—Motilalji. If Mahatmaji has been called the spirit and soul of the Nationalist Movement, Motilalji must be called the heart and the brain of the Movement. The loss sustained by the nation just when it paused for a moment at the parting of the ways—one pointing to further struggle, and the other to truce, and possibly, to peace at last, can never be repaired. For many months the Punditji had borne on his own unaided shoulders—while practically all his comrades had been clapped into what they called the “House of the Free”—the entire burden of the duties of the Congress General Staff. And he had been ailing and dying by inches already when he had been in the Naini Jail and borne a chief share of the abortive peace labours. But he had the will to live, and he lived to see the breaking dawn of the success of the Congress cause for which no one had sacrificed and toiled more than he.

## XLIX. MAHATMAJI WAITS FOR THE R. T. C. MEMBERS. THE PACT.

Some of the prominent R.T.C. members had wired from abroad requesting the Congress leaders to suspend judgment pending talks and discussions with them on the results of the R. T. C. Mahatmaji did wait for

them. For a week moderate influences at Ananda Bhavan tried their level best to soften and knead the attitude of the Congress leaders to the requisite degree of plasticity. Sapru, Jayakar, Shastri—all excelled themselves in the art of pleading and persuasion. But the wide cleavage between the R. T. C. view point and that of the Congress could not easily be narrowed or cemented. Meanwhile, Gandhiji had been in correspondence with the Viceroy, but the result was disappointing. It was at last arranged that Gandhiji and Lord Irwin should talk the matter over between them, and on the 17th Gandhiji left for Delhi in response to an invitation from the Viceroy. Then began a most delicate, anxious and momentous negotiation between the two personages, during the course of which the Working Committee of the Congress had to be summoned to Delhi to be in constant touch with the developments, to receive Mahatmaji's reports and advise him upon the points of reference. Lord Irwin, too, had to hold constant consultations with his Executive Council and with Whitehall. Conversations, always anxious and sometimes nearing the critical point, would sometimes continue far into the night. The negotiation threatened to founder on the question of police excesses mainly, but it was ultimately saved; and on the 4th of March, the Agreement was signed. Under its terms, Civil Disobedience was to be called off. The Government would release the non-violent political prisoners, or those convicted of merely technical violence. The Ordinances would be withdrawn. There were also several other clauses relating to the right to manufacture salt, right of peaceful picketing, and so forth. But we need not deal with them. The Pact was received with very mixed feelings in the country. Not many seemed to be satisfied with it. The Nawajawan Sabha called it a "betrayal"; Puudit Jawaharlal was rather despondent over it, and he asked, as many others asked with him—Was it peace or truce only? It was by many accepted as truce only. Some prominent politicians of Bengal preferred to reserve judgment. There was no mistaking, however, the solid and almost united phalanx of allegiance to the Supreme Congress Command. As soldiers all must obey the General: that was the slogan. About the middle of March, the British Parliament debated on the new situation created by the Pact, and a general support of the policy of the Government making the Pact was the drift and outcome of the debate, in course of which, some remarkably sensible speeches were made by Mr. Baldwin and others.

#### L. SOME DARK HAPPENINGS

While preparations were being rushed through for the Karachi Congress, there were some very dark happenings to cast their ominous gloom on the mind of the nation. We referred before to the Bhagat Singh incident. The other incident—even more ominous than the first—was the happening of very severe communal riots. The one at Cawnpore eclipsed in magnitude and ferocity all others of its kind. The tragic and heroic death of Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi during rescue work in the Cawnpore riot was, however, a silver lining to the dark and menacing cloud of communal brutality which darkened and disfigured the serene and spacious sky of India.

#### LI. KARACHI CONGRESS

We shall not say anything in particular about the Karachi Congress

itself, though the importance of this great event, and the issues it raised or involved, overshadowed the importance of all other events. The Congress re-affirmed the Independence Resolution of Lahore, and hammered it into a shape definite enough to be a plank for future Congress position, whether in peace or "in war". If, for instance, it was decided to send Gandhiji as Congress representative to treat with the British Government, he might proceed to London with the Congress Resolution in his "pocket". The most notable achievement of the Congress was the new orientation it was able to give to the import and implications of Swaraj by its Declaration of what were called the Fundamental Rights. By such declaration, Swaraj was meant as a Swaraj for the masses. There was a growing party wedded to socialistic principles and methods, professing to be a party for the uplift and enfranchisement of the peasants and labourers. Now, Congress tried to accommodate itself to this rising school of thought, without, however, declaring itself a socialistic organisation. This it did consistently with the scheme of its constitution as a national organisation of India, in which all communities and all shades of opinion, falling under a general category—the Creed of the Congress—are represented. The Congress did not want to break away from the capitalist and other proprietary classes, but it felt that it must declare itself for the poor millions who constitute 95 p. c. of the Indian population. There was also a youthful party in the Congress to which non-violence was policy rather than creed. This party was, moreover, uncompromising in its attitude in relation to Complete Independence. It was felt that it might prove fatal to the Congress to force this vital section of the youth of India into hostility. For, by such action, the cleavage already existing between a non-violent and a violent India would be widened and deepened so as to engulf the strength and solidarity of united national effort, if not also the efficacy of the principle of non-violent suffering, which the Congress stood for and set so much store by. Elements, which are not in faith non-violent, would, nevertheless, fall in with the general forces of the Congress organisation, if they could be roped in and harnessed to its services; they might also be open to persuasion and ultimate conversion to the Congress Creed. Their want of faith in the efficacy of non-violence and voluntary suffering might be replaced by faith by the magnetism as well as success of the momentous Gandhi experiment then being made in India. To leave them an outcast and untouchable class outside the Congress pandal, would be to vivisect the patriotism of India into two mutually destructive elements. This, perhaps, was the Congress position.

### LII. CONGRESS—A TRIUMPH FOR GANDHIJI

The Congress was, undoubtedly, a triumph for the personality of Mahatma Gandhi also. No other leader could have veered round and converged all the unreconciled, and apparently irreconcilable, elements of thought and sentiment into one definite focus of national policy. The Congress ratified the Pact. An Working Committee was constituted after Mahatmaji's choice. He had been the elected General in the great offensive; and he was made the sole peace-maker after the truce. On April 3, the Congress Executive formally invested Mahatmaji

with his *sanad* to act as the sole plenipotentiary. That, it was thought, would be the quickest and best way of setting about the business. Gandhiji would, however, submit all his plans before the W. C. for previous sanction, as he had done during the course of the Pact negotiations.

#### LIII. TASK BEFORE GANDHIJI—TWOFOLD

The task before Gandhiji was primarily twofold. To ensure a rigid observance of the Truce terms both by the government and by the people. This, as the sequel showed, was far easier said than done. Secondly, to solve, or make an herculean effort to solve, the chief outstanding difficulties which continued to operate as a bar sinister to any effective advance of the Indian cause. We mean the difficulties connected with the question of minorities—Mussalmans, Sikhs, Depressed Classes, and last but not the least, the Native States. No body would for one moment pretend that difficulties did not lie in the spheres indicated. But, as we pointed out before, difficulties were enormously stressed upon and accentuated, and made to loom larger and more formidable than they were in fact. One need not suggest that this was done intentionally by interested parties. It can never be wise to stress the self-seeking springs of man, especially when interests common to all must be steadily kept in view. Once talk of special privileges and reserved rights, and you will have always to continue in that strain. It is elementary human nature. The dark and diabolical communal happenings in India are the *effects* and not *causes* of the communal emphasis. We have them because we have stressed their springs, and created conditions for their spread in endemic or epidemic forms. Other countries have had their internal differences and troubles; but this has nowhere been a reason sufficient for stopping or slackening the fight for common emancipation. On the other hand, the existence of such clash of interests tending to keep a house always divided against itself, and, therefore, weak, has been the most vital reason why the movement for general emancipation should require to be speeded up.

#### LIV. CONSULTATIONS WITH MOSLEM LEADERS

Many anxious consultations were held with the Moslem leaders swearing by the fourteen "commandments" of Jinnah to reach a basis of settlement. And it must be noted that Moslem opinion itself was not undivided. The communal leaders could not, of course, be brushed aside as of little consequence. In the absence of anything like a referendum, it was impossible to say, however, to what extent the opinion of these leaders reflected the general sense of the great Mahommeden community of India. But, on the other hand, it could not be doubted that there were in Moslem India more things than were dreamt of in the philosophy of Maulana Shaukat Ali. In the first place, in the N. W. Frontier Province there was, apparently, a very considerable mass of active and solid support for the Congress scheme of adult suffrage and joint electorates for all. Secondly, amongst the political jail-goers during the last Movement, several thousands were Mussalmans; and the number of Mussalman "nationalists" was not inconsiderable. Thirdly, amongst the leaders of the movement also there

were many Mussalmans, who certainly were men of position and influence in their community. In fact, an influential party of nationalist Moslems was gradually forming in India, which might, it was thought, in the fulness of time, dominate the vast bulk of Indian Mohammedan opinion. It was the rising power which was certainly not going to pursue a defeatist policy. Dr. Ansari was the leader of this rising party "with a future". While the communalist leaders were meeting to concert their plans of special electorates, majority in Bengal and the Punjab, weightage in the minority provinces, 33 p. c. in the Central Legislature, and so on, the nationalist Moslem leaders were also up and doing. The Conference held at Lucknow—the original one and not the counter-blast—about the middle of April showed the other side of the shield that had been presented at Delhi. It is true that Gandhiji spoke of a certain blank cheque being given to the Moslems, if they should present to him an united demand. But such presentation was, from the very nature of the case, improbable. Gandhiji also made another vital proviso, viz., that any concession made to the Moslem demand must not involve perpetrating an injustice to any other minority. Nevertheless, the Hindu Mahasabha was much perturbed by the offer of Gandhiji. We need not trace more in detail the chequered career of the Hindu-Moslem entente-making which, unfortunately, did not come to fruition. It was openly hinted in some of the Indian papers that sinister influences, official and non-official, were at work to prevent the making of a settlement except on a communal basis. But no special importance should, we think, be attached to this.

#### LV. OTHER CONSULTATIONS

Meanwhile, consultations were also being held between Gandhiji and the members of the Lord Willingdon's Government and many of the members of the Federal Structure Committee. Anxious and delicate were also these consultations. It was impossible for the Congress agent to participate in the R. T. C. unless its basis were broadened, and many questions which were supposed to have been settled were reopened. In other words, no useful purpose would be served by Gandhiji's going to London, if the last R. T. C. had spoken the last word on some of the fundamental Indian issues. Were the proposals flexible, or were they rigid? Were the fundamental issues to be opened *de novo*?

If the answer was in the affirmative, Gandhiji was prepared to participate in the second R. T. C. If, however, the conveners of the R. T. C. still only kept an open mind, and were open to conviction as to the justice of the Congress demand, he might see his way to attend the Conference for the purpose of presenting the Congress case, though he might not otherwise participate. Even absence of communal settlement might be no absolute bar in the way.

#### LVI. A REAL BAR

But another matter threatened to be a real bar in the way—the Government failing, in the judgment of the Congress, to observe on their side the terms of the Agreement. On the 10th of June we find the Congress Working Committee reviewing the whole situation with reference to this question, and holding that the Government had failed to observe truce, and that in view of this,

there could be no participation in the Conference. The C. W. C. discussed also plans of communal settlement, and the Gandhi formula relating thereto. The Moslem leaders including Dr. Ansari were also busy threshing out the communal question, but Dr. Ansari's liberal offer was rejected, and the united Moslem talks ended in a deadlock.

The situation was critical like this, and the good offices of the friends of Indian unity and peace were all about to be nullified, when the new Viceroy made an important speech, in which he expressed the hope that he might go down to history as the first constitutional Governor-General of India. He said that to call the present Agreement truce would be to keep alive the war mind; that it should rather be called peace to induce the peace mind. That at any rate was the drift of what he said. All this was well said. But how far was the British Government prepared to "implement" without delay the wish or aspiration of the Viceroy that he would like to be the first constitutional Governor-General of India? That was *the* question.

#### LVI. CONCLUSION

Now, we must conclude. We have, in the main, discussed principles and policies, and have not lingered over facts and incidents. To many incidents of importance—such as the Burma Rebellion, operation of the Bengal Ordinance, and so on, we have not adverted at all. They were important events in many ways nevertheless. Our criticism of the intentions and policies of British statesmen might have appeared one-sided. But we did not mean to be uncharitable. We proposed to look at things from the standpoint and with the eyes of Nationalist India. Because we thought it important that the other side also should look at things from that standpoint. Nationalist India is a vital part of India, and the India that politically counts vastly more than any other India; but that it is not the whole of India, or the India that *alone* counts. The continent of India is yet spacious enough for *pro*-nationalist, *anti*-nationalist, and politically amorphous and *neutral* India. Our outlook must, therefore, be sufficiently broad, synthetic and generous. All who do not worship in the same temple, are not heretics, and should not be consigned to perdition. There may be lights other than those one may act in accordance with—lights possibly as true as his.

The same may be true of the British Government also. They may be acting according to different lights, which all may not appreciate as being true. But who can be absolutely sure that they are, and must be, false? Their intentions had certainly seemed to many in India of an undependable nature owing to a complex variety of conditions, Indian and extra-Indian. But it might well be that the Labour Government meant to do as much as possible its duty by India—the duty as conceived by it. Possibly, it found itself, in the *ensemble* of Indian conditions (official and unofficial) and that of the conditions at home, in a position in which it could move with its Indian plans with great difficulty; and might have been forced to sanction repression to tackle some factors which could not have been otherwise tackled, and follow a cautiously gradual policy of conciliation to cope with some others which obstructed or tended to



obstruct advance. And so long as a system of Government subsisted, it had necessarily to adopt but one attitude in regard to civil resistance and other subversive movements. This is true. "We have tried to do the best of a bad job"—this might have been their plea. Many would, however, maintain that only pursuit of a frankly courageous and trusting and sympathetic policy in regard to India should *pay*, and not that of any unimaginative hesitating and two-sided policy. (*Specially contributed by Prof. Pramathanath Mukhopadhyaya.*)

## The Gandhi-Irwin Agreement

The following is the text of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement issued from New Delhi under the signature of Mr. H. W. Emerson, Secretary to the Government of India on the 5th. March 1931 :—

1. Consequent on the conversation that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued, and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and local Governments.

2. As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part ; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence ; external affairs ; the position of minorities ; the financial credit of India ; and the discharge of obligations.

3. In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of January 19, 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.

4. The settlement relates to activities directly connected with civil disobedience movement.

5. Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by Government. The effective discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued and, in particular, the following :—

- (1) The organised defiance of the provisions of any law.
- (2) The movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues.
- (3) The publication of news-sheets in support of the civil disobedience movement.
- (4) Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

6. As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved, firstly, the character of the boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. But the boycott of non-Indian goods (except of cloth which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the civil disobedience movement chiefly, if not exclusively, against British goods, and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organised for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which the settlement is intended to secure. It is, therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement, the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

7. In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods, or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing, except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

8. Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police, and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In present circumstances Government see great difficulty in this and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and countercharges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

9. The action that Government will take on the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs.

10. Ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement will be withdrawn.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

11. Notification declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn, provided that the notifications were made in connection with the civil disobedience movement.

The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of this provision.

12. (i) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with the civil disobedience movement and relate to offences which do not involve violence other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) The same principle will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(iii) Where a local Government has moved any Court or has initiated proceedings under the Legal Practitioner's Act in regard to the conduct of legal practitioners in connection with the civil disobedience movement, it will make application to the Court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings, provided that the alleged conduct of the persons concerned does not relate to violence or incitement to violence.

(iv) Prosecutions, if any, against soldiers and police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

13. (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence, not involving violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted, or if a prosecution relating to an offence of this character is pending against such a prisoner, it will be withdrawn.

(iii) Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders—in the very few cases that have occurred—will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

14. Fines which have not been realised will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, and the security has not been realised, it will be similarly remitted.

Fines which have been realised and securities forfeited and realised under any law will not be returned.

15. Additional police imposed in connection with the civil disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money, not in excess of the actual cost, that has been realised, but they will remit any sum that has not been realised.

16. (a) Movable property, which is not an illegal possession, and which has been seized in connection with the civil disobedience movement, under the Ordinances or the provisions of the Criminal Law, will be returned, if it is still in the possession of Government.

(b) Movable property, forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay, genuinely require time for the purpose, and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Compensation will not be given for deterioration.

(d) Where movable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed of by Government, compensation will not be given and the sale proceeds will not be returned, except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which the property may have been sold.

(e) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.

17. (a) Immovable property of which possession has been taken under Ordinance IX of 1930 will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

(b) Land and other immovable property in the possession of Government, which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned unless the Collector of the district has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulter, while willing to pay, genuinely requires time for the purpose, and if necessary the revenues will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Where immovable property has been sold to third parties, the transaction must be regarded as final, so far as Government are concerned.

*Note.*—Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that according to his information and belief some, at least, of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government on the information before them cannot accept this contention.

(d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

18. Government believe that there have been made very few cases in which the realization of dues has not been made in accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature, and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

19. Where the posts rendered vacant by resignations have been permanently filled, Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the reappointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

20. Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the salt administration, nor are they able, in the present financial conditions of the country, to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts.

For the sake however of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions, on lines already prevailing in certain places, in order to permit local residents in villages, immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages, but not for sale to, or trading with, individuals living outside them.

21. In the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order.

## The Viceroy on the Political Situation

### Lord Irwin's Farewell Speech

"The more successful Great Britain can be in finding a solution of the political problem the more will she be doing for the benefit of the British trade" remarked H. E. Lord Irwin in a most striking speech he made at the Maiden's Hotel, New Delhi on the 26th. March 1931, when the Chelmsford Club entertained their Excellencies the Viceroy and Lady Irwin to a farewell banquet. Lord Irwin dealt very frankly with all the topical questions of safeguard and the communal problem. In the course of his speech His Excellency said:—

"Sir B. L. Mitter had referred to the task of a Viceroy. This, in the main, was to attempt to secure smooth running for the coach laden with relations between India and Great Britain. It was the duty of a Viceroy to see that both the British and Indian horse pulled with and not against one another. Time and again in the last two or three years, when there seemed a fair chance of getting nearer to this smooth and even pulling by the two horses, the chance has been wrecked either in India or in England." The Viceroy continued: Three years ago, the appointment of the Simon Commission caused grave misunderstanding with much consequent damage to British Indian relations. Again, a year and a half ago, when the Viceroy made his November declaration, the general note of British criticism was that any one who talked about Dominion Status in connection with India must be mentally affected, and that the idea was almost too fantastic to merit serious discussion (Applause). What wonder then that Indian feeling was offended, and a real chance of approach was thrown away. Lastly, Civil Disobedience had puzzled, baffled and annoyed average opinion in Great Britain. The Viceroy said that, in order to avoid these recurring misunderstandings they must diagnose the problem aright. He said:

There are those in England who say 'Let us only have firm Government, and get back as rapidly as we shall to the good old days of paternal administration with populous markets reserved for British trade. The diagnosis, I believe, to be essentially superficial, distorted and wholly divorced from the reality of the Indian situation (Applause).

#### SUPPORT FOR SWADESHI

"Indian self-consciousness is finding expression in two fields, firstly in the natural demand for political control by Indians of their own affairs, and the economic development of India's resources for India's good. I would say one thing about each of these aspects in a single movement. No Englishman can, without being false to his own political history and in recent years to his own pledges can take objection to pursuit by others of their own political liberty, nor have I ever been able to appreciate the attitude of those who might be the first in Great Britain, particularly to the Conservative party, to exhort their countrymen only to buy British goods, and yet would regard a movement for encouragement of Swadeshi industry in India as something reprehensible, and almost, if not quite, disloyal. (Applause). It is also well to remember that trade will only flourish when it reposes on a voluntary and mutually beneficial basis, and that the more successful Great Britain can be in finding a solution of the political side of the problem, the more will she be doing, by restoration of general friendly conditions, for the benefit of British trade (Applause).

"It follows that just as any diagnosis is different from that other which I sketched just now, so I would consider that a different treatment was required in so far as the present movement involves any of the forces that we call nationalism. I would

repeat what I have said more than once that an attempt to meet the case with rigid and unyielding opposition is merely to repeat the unintelligent mistake of King Canute (Applause). It behoves us to seek another and a better way and that has surely been the way of the Round Table Conference.

#### THE DELHI AGREEMENT

"No one hopes more earnestly than His Majesty's Government that the work of the Conference be brought to an early successful issue. What can we say of the auguries for this happening? It is not possible for the sea to become immediately calm. The spirit of the agreement the Govt. will do everything to implement. Mr. Gandhi, I know, will do the same, and I would trust that in all quarters a real attempt may be made to judge the present situation not in any grudging spirit, appropriate to the atmosphere of an uncertain and manouevring truce, but rather with the intention, that each and every one of us, in our spheres of influence, may do everything in our power that may assist the conversion of the present cessation of civil strife into a permanent and enduring peace (Applause).

#### QUESTION OF "SAFEGUARDS"

The Viceroy next referred to the question of safeguards. He confessed he had never been able to appreciate the distinction sought to be drawn between the interests of India and the interests of Great Britain for it would be contrary to all nature if the long relationship between the two had not been to create a community and not divergence of interests. Defence, for example, was a vital interest of the first magnitude; the communal difficulty was a prime Indian interest. But Great Britain before handing over power must satisfy herself that in the new dispensation the just rights of minorities will not be imperilled. (Applause).

"Again, as regards assurance to British traders against unfair discrimination, I say", Lord Irwin continued, "that Indian leaders themselves should volunteer the assurance of fair treatment in order to attract capital for the country's development and for raising India's credit in the world on which development would depend the raising of the standard of her people's life. So with Finance, the Indian opinion is surely not less anxious than any opinion in Great Britain to see ample security provided where necessary for the good of India. In the sphere of credit and finance, those who would suggest an alternative to the scheme of the Round Table Conference, would have to convince His Majesty's Government that these would be equally effective for the purpose above described.

#### PLEA FOR COMMUNAL UNITY

The Viceroy continuing observed: "It is not perhaps in this constitutional field that the gravest of India's difficulties will be found to lie. Nearly five years ago, speaking to this club, I made an earnest appeal for religious and communal peace. That appeal, with the news of Cawnpore still staring us in the face, I repeat to-day. Governments can here do comparatively little to remove the causes. They can not change a people's soul. Communities themselves must learn toleration and restraint. No message could so cheer my heart before or after. I leave India as the news that a real settlement of the Hindu Muslim differences had been effected (Applause.)

#### THE LAHORE EXECUTIONS

"Everybody should do what they could to assist the restoration of calmer atmosphere, and it is in this respect I have been told that I and the Government of India have made Mr. Gandhi's task far harder by failure to commute the sentences recently passed upon Bhagat Singh and his companions. I take full responsibility for the decision at which the Government arrived. (Applause.) As I listened the other day to Mr. Gandhi putting the case for commutation forcibly before me, I reflected first of what significance it surely was that the apostle of non-violence should so earnestly be pleading the cause of the devotees of a creed so fundamentally opposite to his own, but I should regard it as wholly wrong to allow my judgment on these matters to be influenced or deflected by purely political considerations. I could imagine no case in which under the law penalty had been more directly deserved. I have seen it suggested in the Press, that it was highly undesirable that the execution should take place on the eve of the Congress meeting at Karachi. I am quite prepared to think that it would have made the immediate

atmosphere at Karachi easier, but only at the cost of enabling Congressmen all over the country to declare with justice that it had been treated by the Viceroy and the Government with complete lack of candour. (Applause).

#### WARNING AGAINST "DEFEATISM"

Finally, the Viceroy referred to defeatist charges levelled these days. He asked : Who to-day are the real defeatists, those who face fact with honesty and the future with hope and meet the difficulties with a single desire to overcome them, or those who deceive themselves with the belief that they are living in the India of ten or twenty years ago, and who would have us employ methods and yield ourselves victims to a mentality which must destroy irrevocably any hope of retaining a contented India within the Empire? (Applause.) Whatever may happen to others let us at least not lose our faith. We shall have disappointments. We shall have to face failure, but my faith in British statesmanship, goodwill and my faith in the patriotism and good sense of India are both too great to permit me to join the ranks of those who would say that India is a lost Dominion of the Crown. (Applause).

The Viceroy said that he took leave of India with real regret at this critical period in her history, but that regret was diminished by the reflection that he was being succeeded by one in whom India would find a very sincere friend and very wise counsellor. "For myself I can only say that I have done my best, that I shall carry away with me from India a real affection for her people, and gratitude for the many kindnesses that Lady Irwin and I have so constantly received at their hands, and that wherever I am, I shall always welcome any opportunity that may present itself of continuing to serve her to the best of my ability and powers. (Prolonged applause).

## Lord Willingdon's First Political Speech

The following is the full text of the H. E. the Viceroy's speech delivered at the Chelmsford Club, Simla on the 27th June 1931 :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : Let me thank you at once most gratefully for the cordial manner in which you have received the toast of the health of my wife and myself and let me thank you too, Sir, for the charming and most graceful remarks you have made in commending this toast for the acceptance of this distinguished gathering and I wish further to thank you particularly for the invitation to this dinner to-night and for allowing me this opportunity of giving my first impressions of the situation since my arrival in India. There are some who may think that I am here to-night to deliver myself of a political pronouncement. If so, they are doomed to disappointment, for, I think, you will agree that any Viceroy, however long his experience may have been of India in the past, would be rash indeed if he made any political pronouncement after a short two months' life in his new duties. So, Sir, my purpose to-night is as I say to give my impressions of the situation, the impressions of one who, I think, is almost qualified to call himself an old *koi hai* on his return to India after seven years' absence in other parts of the British Empire and my first impression must be of course that brilliant ceremonial at Bombay when the new Viceroy lands at the Apollo Bunder and meets that great gathering of princes and distinguished citizens from all over India who are gathered within the gateway of India to welcome him on his arrival. But I assure you that the ceremonial to my wife and myself was less of a ceremonial to us both than a reunion with many old friends who showed us the same cordial friendship and kindness which I have always found in this country and which I assure you warmed our hearts at the outset of our undertaking our new responsibilities. I shall say nothing of the delightful day that we spent revising old haunts and seeing many old friends in Bombay beyond making this one remark that I was delighted to find the Willingdon Sports Club flourishing exceedingly. I pass over

to our short visit to Delhi and our stay at Dehra Dun only stating the fact that at the latter place we took the opportunity of seeing some very fine Government institutions and that we found the people and the climate disputed to give us a very warm welcome.

Let me come at once to the impressions I have received since first I arrived at our headquarters station in Simla and here again let me say that I am grateful indeed for the cordiality of the reception we received on our arrival, but I assure you that my approach to Simla brought back to my mind many recollections of years gone by when I used to be summoned to this hill top by either Lord Hardinge, Lord Chelmsford or Lord Reading and I remember that I used to approach it with feelings of apprehension and anxiety, for I was only a provincial Governor and here I knew the seats of the mighty were to be found, and now the wheel of fate has ordained that I am to be the leader of the mighty myself. Well, Sir, I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to accommodate myself to my new responsibilities and should like at once to acknowledge the generous friendship and support that I have already received from all my colleagues who share with me the responsibility for the peaceful and orderly administration of the country and I rejoice to feel that I am again closely associated with many members of those great services who have done in the past and are still doing such splendid and devoted work for the progress and development of India and I must add that this old *kot has* can't resist a feeling of pride in the thought that he has had something to do in starting on useful and brilliant careers in this country several of the gentlemen who are sitting round this table to-night.

#### SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION.

There is another impression which has been vividly forced upon me during the few short weeks that I have been engaged in my duties as Viceroy. I am quite clear that the work that the Viceroy has to do is much too heavy for a gentleman of my mature years and I venture to hope that all those concerned when they get over to London in the near future will hurry on towards the completion of their labours in regard to the constitutional reforms so that my life may more closely approximate to the four happy years I spent in Canada as a constitutional Governor-General and in order that I may shortly be relieved of many of my administrative duties. I think it is true to say that I have arrived in India at a time of intense interest and considerable anxiety, at a time when it requires steady and stout hearts to surmount the difficulties that lie before us, but this is no time for depression or pessimism, for difficulties are made to be overcome. It is a time surely when all ought to get together and work together in a spirit of co-operation, goodwill and mutual confidence until the clouds of our difficulties are all swept away and the sun of peace and progress is again shining on this fair country.

The economic, and in consequence, the financial situation are causing us much anxiety and concern and I am often told and it gives little consolation that we are in the fashion and that this depression is world wide in its character. For, I think, that the present conditions hit particularly hard a country like this which depends so largely for its prosperity and its revenues on the prices of all its agricultural resources. We must all surely sympathise very deeply with the trials of that vast mass of our population who are chiefly engaged in the industry of agriculture and I am very glad to see that the provincial Governments are fully alive to their responsibilities and are doing everything in their power and will continue to do so to relieve the difficulties of the situation. But I am fortunate to-night in being able to give you more than a mere general assurance on these matters, for I can call your attention to some very important things which have happened in the last days or even hours which have opened the way to a new vista of hope in the economic sphere.

The first and foremost I must allude to the statement made yesterday in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister who, I believe, is recognised by the parties in this country as a true friend of India and who could hardly have given a more solid proof of his friendship than he has done in this statement.

#### R. T. O. AND THE SETTLEMENT

The first of these was the settlement made between my predecessor Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi, the leader of the Congress party on March 5 last. The second

was the necessity for the early consideration of the further activities of the Round Table Conference whose preliminary discussions had concluded in London a few months before I arrived in India. With regard to the first of these matters, I would only say that I have taken over the duty of implementing this agreement and with the help of local Governments shall endeavour with absolute sincerity to see that its terms are carried out and I am glad to be able to say with complete confidence that from a conversation I have had with Mr. Gandhi I know that he is equally sincere in his desire to carry out its terms on his side. But in this connection, I feel bound to make this one observation. I have often seen in the press statements and speeches made by certain individuals who express the view that this agreement is no agreement for peace but merely for a truce in order to give time for preparation for further agitation. I wish to say quite frankly that I do not think that this is a fair way of carrying out this agreement which was honourably entered into between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi.

His Majesty's Government, by their generous promise to support India financially in this time when the combination of constitutional uncertainties with the economic crisis has made the position so difficult, have given practical proof of their desire to help India and to create conditions which will make it possible to launch the new constitution with real hopes of success; but they have done more than this, for they have, I hope, helped to create confidence the beneficial effects of which will be immediately felt, both by the general public and by the Government in their power to deal with the present situation. In short, I regard this generous gesture by his Majesty's Government as an event of the greatest value to all classes in India in this critical time.

Turning from this I must refer to another way in which His Majesty's Government have in the last days given us practical relief in ready response to the lead given by Mr. Hoover. They have extended to the Dominions and to India the benefit of the suspension of war payment and we shall, therefore, be relieved partly during the current financial year and partly during next year of a total burden of £8,36,000. As against this we shall ourselves forego for the time our share of reparation payments which for the same period are estimated at £227,000. The net relief to India is, therefore, just over £8,000,000. Lastly, I am sure you would wish me to express India's keen appreciation of that splendid declaration of the President of the United States to which I have already referred for making an offer which displays a desire for international co-operation which I feel is an example to us all. I think it is no exaggeration to say that the combination of these three events may be taken to alter the whole economic outlook. Great difficulties indeed remain and these must be tackled in a spirit of self-sacrifice and unflinching effort, but beyond these difficulties we can now see the dawn of a new hope for better times.

#### POLITICAL SITUATION

Let me now turn for a moment to say a word on the political situation as I found it when first I arrived in this country. I mean to say nothing of the past beyond this that I know it has been a period of great trouble and difficulty, a time of great strain and stress on all those who are responsible for the administration. I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and admiration of the work so ably and so loyally performed by all the great public services of India and I am particularly glad to make a special reference to those two services whose primary duty it is to maintain the peace and obedience to the law of the land. I refer, of course, to the army and police. I am glad to be able to express to officers and men of both those services my keen appreciation of the loyalty, the steadiness and self-restraint with which they have carried out their duties in times of extreme anxiety and on occasions often of great provocation and to assure them that they have earned and are still earning the gratitude and admiration for their fine service of all peace-loving citizens of India. Now, Sir, my purpose to-night is to apply myself to the political situation at the present juncture and it seems to me that there are two very important political questions which were much in the public mind when I arrived.

#### R. T. C. AND THE SETTLEMENT

The first of these was the settlement made between my predecessor Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi, the leader of the Congress party, on March 5 last. The second was the necessity for the early consideration of the further activities of the Round Table Conference whose preliminary discussions had concluded in London a few



months before I arrived in India. With regard to the first of these matters I would only say that I have taken over the duty of implementing this agreement and with the help of local Governments shall endeavour with absolute sincerity to see that its terms are carried out and I am glad to be able to say with complete confidence that from a conversation I have had with Mr. Gandhi I know that he is equally sincere in his desire to carry out its terms on his side. But in this connection I feel bound to make this one observation. I have often seen in the press statements and speeches made by certain individuals who express the view that this agreement is no agreement for peace but merely for a truce in order to give time for preparation for further agitation. I wish to say quite frankly that I do not think that this is a fair way of carrying out this agreement which was honourably entered into between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi.

I stand for peace not for a truce and appeal to all who have at heart the best interests of the country to do the same, for I am convinced of this that it is only through peace that we can secure the economic and political future of India and surely the purpose of this settlement is to get rid of strife and agitation and to secure co-operation and good-will in order to create an atmosphere particularly at this time which will be helpful in every way for the purpose of working out the future constitutional advance.

And this brings me to the second matter which engaged my attention directly I arrived here, namely, the necessity for settling as soon as possible the date for the further discussions of the Round Table Conference. As you all are aware, after some negotiations His Majesty's Government informed us that they were prepared to restart the discussions on June 29, but it was found that both in India and in England there were considerable difficulties in accepting this date and finally after some further negotiation the date has been fixed for Sept. 5 to resume the discussions in London. Personally I could have wished that we could have started earlier, but it was clearly inconvenient to many representatives of important interests and I hope the date now fixed will be found generally acceptable, at least it will give time for all those concerned to make further preparations before they meet again in London and I profoundly hope that all important interests will be present at the Round Table Conference when it resumes in a few weeks what, I hope, will be the final stages of its work and I wish to appeal to all people in this country, both official and non-official, whatever their race, caste or creed, to help me to carry out the terms of this settlement in order that we may secure the best possible atmosphere in which to continue efforts towards the solution of controversies still unsettled and to carry forward the discussions of constitutional reform. I appeal, too, to my fellow countrymen at home to realise all the difficulties that confront us here, to treat the situation in India as an important empire problem and not to allow it to become a matter of local party political concern and last but by no means least, I appeal to the press from whom I have always received the most fair and generous treatment during a long public service in the past to give me their powerful support towards the attainment of these great ends. There is one further impression which I must say a word about and which has forced itself on my mind during the few weeks that I have lived here. I can not help feeling that there seems around me an atmosphere of depression and of pessimism. There even seems doubts and misgivings in the minds of some regarding the maintenance of the British connection in India. With regard to the depression and pessimism I would only reiterate what I have already said that when difficulties are before us it is no time for repression, but we must all pull together to get through and for myself I refuse to share these doubts with regard to the British connection or look to the future other than with confidence, for I am convinced that the over-whelming majority of the princes and peoples of India want the British connection to remain. It is perfectly true that the character of the administration of this country will be different in the future to what it has been in the past, for we are all working rapidly towards the time when Indians will take over the administration of their own affairs, to the time when they will become absolutely equal partners with the other Dominions under the Crown. But I am confident that that administration when it comes in the future as in the past will be under the flag of the British Empire, and surely too when it comes it will be for us British the culminating point in the greatest peace of empire service that the world has ever known and, if I am right in what I have said, they will come nearer the vision I have always had before me, the ideal for which I have always worked during long years of public service—a great commonwealth of nations

consisting of great countries spread all over the world, grown up and developed to their full strength, freely and justly administered by the citizens of their own particular country, comprising many different races, colours and creeds, bound together by one common tie of loyalty to our King-Emperor King George and by the example of their administration, exercising an overpowering influence in securing peace and good-will among the nations of the world, and so I say again to you to-night, as I said in London a few weeks before I left for India, I go forward to my labours with faith, hope and optimism—faith, complete faith in a great Providence who 'shapes our ends rough-hew them as we will'. 'I hope that the same Providence give us all that Christian spirit, and I use the word 'Christian' in its widest and most catholic sense, to work together in mutual confidence and good-will for the benefit and welfare of this great country. Optimism, that before my term of office is over I may be much more nearly a constitutional Governor-General and that this great country before long may once again be on its way to assured and increasing prosperity."

## The Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee Report

### The U. P. Government's Resolution

The U. P. Government issued the following order on the Cawnpore Riots Enquiry report on the 8th. June 1931 :-

The Governor-in-Council is indebted to the Commission for their careful and balanced statement of the conditions precedent to the rioting at Cawnpore and for their dispassionate review of the measures taken to suppress it. Their narrative of the events makes it unnecessary to deal here with the actual incidents of the outbreak and the Governor-in-Council can proceed at once to state his own conclusions on the views expressed by them as to the causes which led to such an unusual and deplorable exhibition of communal violence and the action of the authorities on whom lay the duty of suppression of it.

Those who make an unbiassed study of the conditions prevailing in Cawnpore at the time of the outbreak will have little difficulty in accepting the view of the Commission that the explanation of the embitterment of feeling between the two communities, which was responsible for the severity of the outbreak, is to be found in the course taken by the civil disobedience movement. In the words of the Commission, the movement had openly aimed at paralyzing the Government, but it had come to be regarded in Cawnpore (more definitely perhaps than in any other city of the province) as a Hindu movement with Muslims actively or passively in opposition. It is not, however, sufficient merely to recognise this fact. Judgment on the predisposing causes of the outbreak cannot be complete without some reference to the question whether the action taken in Cawnpore to combat the civil disobedience movement, as distinguished from that taken elsewhere was such as in itself to reduce respect for order and to produce an atmosphere favourable to an outbreak of violence.

Looking at the peculiar circumstance of Cawnpore which are strikingly different from those, for instance, of Allahabad and Lucknow, the Governor in Council must now admit that he might with advantage have had firmer and more consistent recourse to the penal and preventive sections of the ordinary law during the earlier day of the agitation. That is a matter of policy for which the responsibility lies on the Government and not on the local authorities. At a later stage of the agitation the various Ordinances dealing with Civil Disobedience were fully utilised and some 1400 persons were convicted of offences arising under them. As a consequence in the period immediately preceding the Delhi agreement outward respect for law seemed to have been re-established in the city but the general course of events during the period of the agitation and the cessation of all police action which followed the

conclusion of the agreement must have conduced to create a dangerous mentality among many of the more turbulent and criminal elements of the city.

#### ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE HARTAL

There can be no hesitation in accepting the view of the Commission that the outbreak was directly due to the attempt to enforce a hartal in connection with the execution of Bhagat Singh. The attitude of the Congress Committee generally and the action of some of its prominent men during the actual disturbances acquit it of any deliberate intention of causing a communal outbreak. The Local Government desire to take this occasion to associate themselves with the tribute paid to Mr. Vidyarthi in particular for the efforts made by him to prevent violence in the course of which he sacrificed his own life. But the attempt made to enforce a hartal on Muslims already excited by a knowledge of what had happened at Mirzapur, Benares, and Agra was clearly the direct cause of the outbreak.

There is one further matter to which it is necessary to allude before dealing with the findings on the adequacy of the steps taken by the local authorities to quell the outbreak. They remark on the insufficiency of the police force in Cawnpore in normal times. They show that in 1928, the Inspector-General asked for a considerable increase in force to meet the growth in the population of the city and further expenditure on the buildings in order to provide for more suitable distribution of the force. The province has, for some years, been working under severe financial restrictions and the local Government, though recognising the need for adding to the Cawnpore establishment, felt at the time obliged to postpone this item. Steps will now be taken to repair the deficiency. At the same time, it must be remarked that, (as the Commission recognise) no large city can be staffed in such a way as to ensure immediate suppression of an abnormal outbreak such as the one that occurred in Cawnpore. It will always be necessary, in such circumstances to call in reinforcements from the central police reserves or from the neighbouring districts.

#### DISTRICT MAGISTRATE'S ERRORS OF JUDGMENT

In commenting on the action taken by the authorities responsible for dealing with the riots, it was inevitable that the Commission should attach the first importance to the part played by the District Magistrate. They hold that in the dispositions made by him during the first stage of the trouble he acted with care and foresight. They feel, however, that in the stage immediately following, namely, in the course of the afternoon, and the evening of the 24th March, he committed errors both in judgment and action. The Governor-in-Council considers that in weighing the facts given by the Commission which bear on the action of the District Magistrate, at the time he left the city (Meston Road area), full account should be taken of Mr. Sale's own explanation as given in his evidence. He clearly did not, in the light of what he had seen and heard up to that time, take a serious view of the situation. There were complaints of assaults from both sides, but he did not think that there was any immediate prospect of a severe communal fighting. It is also necessary to state that the evidence points to the fact that no serious attack on Meston Road temple, still less any actual burning of it, had started when he was near the spot. The burning of the Chauk mosque apparently took place later still.

It is proper to state these facts in justice to the District Magistrate. As the events showed his judgment of the situation was at fault, but in leaving the spot to draw up and issue a curfew order, there was on his part no idea of shirking his duty. His mistake lay in his failure to make a prompt and correct appreciation of the position. He failed also in realising the necessity of that active personal handling of measures for suppressing disorder, which is incumbent on a District Magistrate during emergencies of this nature. His personal control of the operations on the spot was the more essential, as the Superintendent of Police (Mr. Rogers) was a comparatively junior officer, who had only taken charge four days before, with an Assistant Superintendent who had only arrived in the city on the 16th March. His failure to appreciate the situation is further evidenced by the fact that he did not, until the morning of 25th March, ask the Government for further assistance both, in troops and police, the need of which the position of affairs on the evening of the 24th should have clearly demonstrated to him. Throughout the course of rioting he constantly visited the city and remained in close touch with the civil and military authorities actually engaged in the work of suppression. But he would have been better advised, had he neglected all other duties, in order to take personal

charge of the operations within the city itself. Had he done so, he would have inspired greater confidence not only among the two communities involved in the actual disorder, but also among Europeans who showed considerable alarm at the spread of violence in the factory area.

The Governor-in-council recorded these conclusions with greater reluctance because Mr. Sale is an officer whose career has been characterised by conscientious and devoted charge of his duties and by proofs of a temperament which has secured for him much friendship and goodwill among the people of the districts wherein he has served. While making full allowance for the heavy strain to which he had been subjected by the course of agitation in the district, which even in normal times is a onerous charge, the Governor-in-council feels that it will not be possible to expect that measure of confidence which is essential to the restoration of peace between the communities in Cawnpore if Mr. Sale remains in charge of the district.

#### CONDUCT OF THE POLICE

There is no reason to hold that the Superintendent of Police, Mr. Rogers displayed any want of activity in dealing with the riots. If his effort appear to have lacked effectiveness, the adequate explanation lies in the fact, for which he in no way responsible, that he was entirely without experience of the city and the men under his orders. The Deputy Superintendent in charge of the city Khan Bahadur Sayed Ghulam Hassan, is an officer with an excellent record in the past. The Governor-in Council does not consider that he showed the leadership which was to be expected of an officer of his position and knowledge of local conditions, but it is noted here that he has lately been obliged to take leave for medical reasons.

It remains to deal with the findings of fact recorded by the Commission which support the allegations that, in specified cases, the subordinate officers of police were guilty of lack of initiative and the constables of apathy or positive dereliction of duty. The Governor-in-Council is not in entire agreement with certain observations of the Commission, as for instance, the possibility of warning crowds that would be fired on, for the circumstances seem to have made this unusually difficult, a remark which applies equally to the difficulty of pressing home lathi charges. Again, the loss of touch with the Muhalla police was certainly due in part to the unsuitable placing of police stations and lack of outposts. The Governor-in-Council also doubts whether it would, in the circumstances with which the police were faced during the evening of the 24th March, have been possible to effect precautionary arrests of bad characters. The precedent of the 1927 riots has been quoted, but not only was the outbreak then on a different scale but the arrests on that occasion seem to have been made after the first outbreak of rioting had stopped. By the evening of the 25th, when the arrests became possible, bad characters had taken warning and disappeared from their homes.

As regards firing on crowds, the report of the Commission itself explains the difficulty arising from the rapid disappearance of rioters when the police approached. It may be noted that the police actually opened fire on thirteen occasions, four of these instances being by standing pickets, but so far as is known only two persons were killed by it.

Nevertheless, taking into consideration the whole of the facts, the Governor-in-Council is obliged to agree that there seems no sufficient explanation of the facts, that in certain typical cases, in particular such as burning of the temple in Meston Road or of the Bazaza Mosque, no effective action was taken in spite of the presence of bodies of police in the vicinity. There is again evidence that individual constables or bodies of constables failed in their duty to attack or apprehend rioters or to keep to custody those handed over to them. It would be necessary for the Local Government to undertake at once a departmental enquiry in order to assess the responsibility of any individual subordinate concerned in the incidents to which the Commission refer. The Governor-in-Council believes however that his position will be fully appreciated when in announcing this decision he states, at the same time, his conviction that if the evidence taken by the Commission has revealed that individual members of the police force at Cawnpore were guilty of dereliction of duty, this is no indication of the impaired morale in the United Provinces' force as a whole. Throughout a long period of most exceptional strain, it has maintained its loyalty, its sense of duty and high standard of conduct. In the recent communal disturbances, such as those which occurred at Benares or at Agra, its action was effective and decisive. The events which occurred in Cawnpore itself during the recent Muhurram celebrations show that it has not lost the capacity for prompt and effective action.

## "EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES"

It has been suggested that the policy adopted by the Government in the face of an agitation advocating disobedience of law, and the final issue of the agitation in an agreement of which the first result was the general release of prisoners must have impaired the mentality of the police force to such an extent as to render it reluctant to face its duties even in the face of severe communal disorder. The Governor-in-Council declines to believe that this can be true. He will certainly not accept the incidents of Cawnpore in March last as evidence of its truth, for he regards the circumstances as in every way exceptional. The police establishment there had to face a sudden communal outbreak of unexampled ferocity at a moment when its attention had been primarily directed to the possibility of a demonstration against the Government. Its strength was inadequate and its disposition unsuitable, a fact for which the Government had admitted its own responsibility. It unfortunately lost initial control of the situation, and forces were at once let loose which, for the moment, overwhelmed it. There need be no desire to palliate any proved dereliction of duty, but those who are best acquainted with the composition and character of the force will be least disposed to draw conclusions unfavourable to it as a whole, if in these circumstances individual subordinates or some of the rank and file failed in their standard of duty.

## ASSISTANCE OF THE MILITARY

The Commission describe, in some detail, the very valuable help given by the military authorities during the course of disorder, and the Governor-in-Council desires to recognise the ready support given to the local Government by the District Commander and the action taken by the officer-in-command of the troops at Cawnpore throughout the period of the disturbances. The report of the Commission refers to the change in the disposition of the troops on the morning of the 25th March which, in their opinion, involved consequences which if unforeseen at the time were undoubtedly serious in result. The concentration at the District Board Offices was obviously based entirely on considerations of a military nature. It also refers to the fact that there were in the initial stages of the operations somewhat divergent views as to the most appropriate method of utilising the military forces available. The Governor-in-Council strongly deprecates any tendency to exaggerate the fact that divergent views existed, and he certainly does not wish to qualify on that account his acknowledgment of the value of the assistance rendered by the Officer Commanding and the troops under his charge. Moreover, it is clear that the difference of views caused no personal friction between the two authorities. If there is any inference to be drawn from these incidents, it is only that it is necessary to agree in advance, and maintain up-to-date schemes for dealing with communal as well as other disturbances. Measures to ensure this are now being taken by the local Government in consultation with the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command.

## The Report

The Commission's report is divided into three heads namely : (1) predisposing causes ; (2) immediate causes ; (3) course of the out-break and measures taken to meet it. It covers thirty-one printed foolscap pages excluding the appendices.

The Commission trace the incidents till rioting had spread all over Cawnpore. The agent provocateur theory advanced by some witnesses that a C. I. D. officer got himself chased by a Hindu crowd and caused trouble is rejected without hesitation as evidence supporting the story was vague and meagre. The Commission express the opinion that although the first impression was that it was an anti-British or anti-Government movement as a British Civil Surgeon and a English lady were among the first to be assaulted, that does not seem to have been the case. These attacks were merely part of the strict enforcement of a hartal according to which no one was to be permitted to proceed otherwise than on foot.

Coming to the actual outbreak the Commission refer to the doings of the Vanar Sena in enforcing a hartal, laying their finger on what is described as the crucial

phase between 4 o'clock and 6 o'clock on 24th March evening, when within a few hours of the outbreak, the temple on Meston Road and Chauk Bazar mosque were burnt. In this connection the Commission state: It is common opinion and the District Magistrate (Mr. J. F. Sale) has told us so himself, that it was the news of the burning of the temple and mosque that caused that sudden fury of passion which swept the riot out of control and carried it with unprecedented spell to the farthest quarters of the City. Again, it was the failure to deal with the situation on Meston Road during this period and particularly the burning of the temple and mosque that led to the fury and rapid spread of the trouble into the adjacent Mohallas.

The Commission state: It appears to us that the Magistrate was fatally slow in appreciating the seriousness of the situation. The temple in Meston Road has a history behind it. This very spot where the temple and Machi Bazar mosque stand facing each other was the scene of a serious riot in 1913. Muslims and Hindus both had special memories and antagonisms connected with these shrines. The District Magistrate knew this. He was not far from the spot. It was no time for him to turn aside and leave it.

The Commission hold that the Government of the United Provinces acted promptly as soon as they were informed of the insufficiency of the force in Cawnpore. They think that the police rightly concentrated on the Meston Road instead of at the Kotwali, thereby averting a pitched battle between the communities. They recognised that there were many among the police who were on duty for over thirty hours and it was difficult to distinguish shirkers from the work-weary, though the failure of some brought blame on all.

Referring to the Honorary Magistrates and leading non-officials, the report says that their high civic position entails special responsibilities on such occasions, and any one only occupying such a position should have come forward to exercise his influence. In this there was a conspicuous failure.

The following are further details of the report:—It, with a brief sketch regarding Bhagat Singh explaining why the hartal on the occasion of his execution which excited strong feelings among the parties covering a wide range of political thought—contained special elements of danger. As soon as the execution of Bhagat Singh became known in Cawnpore on the 24th. March, the Town Congress Committee immediately called for a hartal and a procession at 3 in the afternoon. In the course of the hartal, Hindus and Muslims came to blows. This developed into a riot of unprecedented violence and peculiar ferocity, which spread with unexpected rapidity through the whole of the city and even beyond it. Murders, arson, and looting were widespread for three days. The loss of life and property was great. The death roll was probably between 400 to 500. A large number of temples and mosques were desecrated, burnt or destroyed. A very large number of houses were burnt and pillaged.

The Commission proceed to state that with the exception of local Congress Committee (which declined to give permission to its Vice-President to give evidence on the ground that the officials had refused to give evidence before the enquiry on behalf of the Congress) all bodies and individuals invited by the Commission to cooperate did so.

#### "PREDISPOSING CAUSES OF RIOTING"

Under the heading "Predisposing Causes" the Commission deal with phases of Mr. Gandhi's movement in Cawnpore with its attendant features, hartals, picketing, etc. Tanzeem movement, the Muslim attitude vis-a-viz the "national movement," the peculiar inflammable elements in Cawnpore population, and the repressions of the communal outbreaks in mofussil towns such as, Agra, Mirzapur and Benares.

The Commission point out that the hartals which were mostly Congress affairs affected two communities most seriously. The Muslims came to look on the Congress organisation as practically a purely Hindu body and the estrangement between the communities was accentuated by the course taken by the movement. The two communities came more definitely face to face with each other than ever before. The Congress Hindus were irritated with Muslims and Hindu traders in Cawnpore were jealous of Muslims. People were exasperated with what a witness described as the "Tyranny of the Congress". Many independent witnesses opined that the Civil Disobedience movement resulted in a weakening of authority and respect for law and

order. We do not attach much importance to this in itself as the cause of the outbreak. Its effect in Cawnpore was probably indirect.

'It is in the increasing embitterment of the feeling between the two communities that the cause of the outbreak has to be sought, and the cause of that increased embitterment is to be found in the course taken by the movement'.

With reference to the Tanzeem movement the report says "One remarkable thing is that so far as we could ascertain, no leading Muslims belonged at any time to Tanzeem. But the Commission feel that Tanzeem had its effect in stiffening the determination of the Muslims and that its importance should not be ignored."

Under the heading "Immediate Causes" the calling and enforcement of a hartal is dealt with. The Cawnpore Committee did not see that it would result in a communal outbreak. There was nothing so hurtful to the cause they had at heart as communal trouble at that time. They may therefore be discharged of any culpable responsibility for the immediate outbreak. It must have been present to their mind that a hartal in memory of Bhagat Singh would particularly stir the imagination of the younger people and boys and youngmen would see that the hartal in honour of their own hero Bhagat Singh would be strictly complete and in this lies the explanation of the immediate cause of the outbreak.

The course of events and the measures taken to meet the outbreak are dealt with under the next head covering by far the greater portion of the report.

It is recorded that when the execution of Bhagat Singh was decided upon, information was passed on to the district magistrates from everywhere. Mr. Sale informed the Officer Commanding and asked the troops to be kept in readiness against any emergency. Important links in the confusing chain of events are mentioned, starting with the "Vanar Sena" activities, the trouble on Meston Road, the plundering of a Muslim bookshop and the attack on Chauk Bazar Mosque, the fighting near Moulganj Cross Roads and the arrival of Mr. Sale and the Superintendent of Police Mr. Rogers, at about 3 p. m. on Meston Road. Mr. Sale held a conference there with his officers including two Deputy Magistrates when it was decided that the police could do without military aid, but that it was essential to issue an order under Section 144 Cr. P. C. About 3-30 p. m. the District Magistrate accompanied by a few Hindus and some Muslims left the scene to issue the order. The Commission mention that both the Meston Road Temple and the Chauk Bazar Mosque were set on fire at about 4 p. m., and the situation definitely grew worse. Shortly before 5 it was decided that the situation was beyond civil control and military aid was asked for.

This is described as the crucial stage of the trouble and finds prominent mention in the Commission's remarks regarding the measures taken to meet the outbreak. This a grave situation. Neither the District Magistrate nor his experienced City Magistrate was in the city in those critical hours from 4 o'clock till six. The Commission thinks it unfortunate that Mr. Sale, while going to his office, should have gone through some side-lanes instead of returning by the main direct route up through Meston Road, where the temple was burning.

#### POLICE INDIFFERENCE AND INACTIVITY

The Commission, proceeding, state: "Every class of witnesses before us who gave expression otherwise to the widely different points of view agreed in this one respect that the police showed indifference and inactivity in dealing with the various incidents in riot. These witnesses include European businessmen, Muslims and Hindus of all shades of opinion, military officers, the Secretary of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the Indian Christian community and even Indian officials. It is impossible to ignore such unanimity of evidence. They have given a number of instances and, though some of them are capable of explanation, yet there is no doubt in our mind that during the first three days of the riot, the police did not show that activity in the discharge of their duties which was expected of them. In coming to this conclusion, we have in mind a number of cases which do not admit of any doubt, e. g., those in Parmat, Gwaltoll, Sadar Bazaar, Sabhimandi, and Patkapur. In contrast to the instances recorded, we see what effective action was possible from the success attained by Mr. Onkar Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, who was sent to Sisamau on receipt of trouble in that quarter and who by prompt action quelled the disturbance and effected over fifty arrests in a short time.

## CANPORE RIOTS ENQUIRY COMMITTEE REPORT

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### WATCH AND WARD STAFF'S FAILURE

On the subject of the Watch and Ward staff's failure the Commission state: "On the morning of the 25th there were terrible atrocities committed in Bengalee Mohalla at a comparatively short distance from Meston Road Headquarters. No information seems to have reached the police, though news was received by Mr. Vidyarthi in time to enable him to rescue a number of Muslims in the locality. We have only given this as an instance, but the same applies to the whole of the beat police. It appears to us that these constables were not going on their beats. The authorities were relying on this force for their information, but they ought to have realised by the noon of the 25th that their beat police were not doing their duty and they ought to have taken some immediate steps to improve their sources of information. The handicap thus caused to Mr. Rogers and his assistant, Mr. Seward, who were quite new to Cawnpore, is recognised. The Commission state that there may be some truth too in the theory advanced by some witnesses that the police had grown so accustomed to non-interference during the civil disobedience movement that they had neither the wish nor the will to intervene. Now they were not themselves the attacked party, and so to interfere as little as possible may have seemed to any of them to be the line of least resistance and danger. Whatever may be the true cause of the inactivity, we consider that, had the District Magistrate realised the effect his presence in the city was bound to produce, it would have gone some way towards countering it. Importance is attached to the part played by the military but regarding the principle of "concentration" on which the military insisted the Commission state: "We think an occasion when the rigidity of the principle can and should be relaxed is a communal riot."

### TRIBUTE TO MR. VIDYARTHI

Regarding the late Mr. Vidyarthi, the Commission state: "Whatever may be said regarding the causes of the out-break, Mr. Vidyarthi deserves the highest praise for his selfless devotion during the riots and the fearless manner in which he met death, succouring the distressed. This was in keeping with his known character."

A tribute is also paid to the fire brigade and the U. P. Kirana Seva Samiti who have added to their reputation by their tireless and often dangerous work. They removed dead bodies without thought for themselves and helped the wounded. Their social service was of the greatest value and the Honorary Secretary, Mr. Bhasin, deserves high commendation for the excellence of his organisation.



# The Salter Committee Report

## On India's Material Development

The earliest establishment of central and provincial advisory economic councils representative of unofficial institutions, working through specialised sub-committees, and adapted to administrative divisions and areas of a vast agricultural country like India, is what is recommended by Sir Arthur Salter, Director of the Economic and Financial Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, whose report to the Government of India was published from Simla on the 9th June 1931.

Sir Arthur was assisted in his task by Mr. A. E. Falkin who is also a member of the League Secretariat and their visit was brief.

### INTERNATIONAL POSITION

Referring to the special conditions and needs of India, Sir Arthur Salter observes that India is at once one of the greatest of agricultural countries and also, by international recognition as expressed through the League of Nations, one of the eight principal industrial countries of the world. But her industries, while already important enough to secure her this position, are at present small in comparison with her agriculture and small also in relation to the future extension which they are no doubt destined to achieve.

### CANADA THE MODEL

The development which India contemplates, may be presumed to be in the direction in which Canada has already made such progress, that of an improvement in the technique of economical, agricultural production, combined with the simultaneous enlargement of industrial and commercial activity. In this development it may be anticipated that, as in other countries and probably more than in most, the active assistance and guidance of the Government and official machinery will be utilised.

The Government should have for its guidance the benefit of the best expert opinion, both as to the direction in which assistance should be given and as to its form and method.

The second point is that those interests which may be adversely affected by any proposal may have as effective a means of expressing their views as are possessed by those whom the proposal may directly benefit. It is, for example, as we shall see later, of absolutely vital importance that a due balance shall be preserved in any organisation between those who represent the interests of agriculture on the one hand, and industries on the other. In spite of her industrial achievements and ambitions, India is predominantly an agricultural country. The great bulk of her population depend for their living directly upon the produce of the soil and would be adversely affected by any policy which was injurious and unjust to agricultural interests.

### A QUINTUPLE PROBLEM

Another obvious comment is that the need for co-ordination of policy in India is greater than in countries with a centralised government and difficulties of securing it are also greater. Instead of co-ordination between different departments of a single administration, India needs co-ordination, (a) between the departments of the central Government, (b) between those of each provincial Government, (c) between the centre and the provinces, (d) between the provinces themselves, and (e) between British India and the States. It is a quintuple, not a single problem.

Regarding the main purposes and fundamental conception of any scheme suited to the special conditions of India, Sir Arthur observes, what is required is the association not only of expert opinion but of representative opinion—opinion which is representative of every main sphere of organised economic life of the country.

## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

India obviously has before her a period in which both political and economic problems will be of great difficulty and complexity and in which she will, therefore, need to call upon all her potential resources in wisdom and experience. At a time when economic questions are urgent, Ministers and Legislatures are bound to be preoccupied to an exceptional degree with political problems and considerations. In these circumstances, it is an advantage that much of the practical experience of the country in the economic questions, is already embodied in a form which enables it to find collective expression in such institutions as Chambers of Commerce with very varying degrees of completeness. There are also in other spheres of economic activity and expert knowledge central institutions which might enable collective opinions to be expressed or representative persons to be nominated.

## CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES

The balance of opinion is struck in favour of committees predominantly unofficial in character, but members of Government might well attend the committees, both central and provincial, and present statements or make explanations. Secretaries of permanent offices could be drawn from Government service. The scheme as generally accepted could be put into operation by those who hold office under new constitution, unless its earlier creation is welcomed by public opinion.

## CENTRAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Sir Arthur Salter next outlines the composition of the central economic advisory council with a tenure of three to five years, located at a central place like Delhi but meeting sometimes in commercial central centres.

## COMPOSITION

It is to consist of persons representing the following types of economic experience, interest or research :—

(a) Agriculture, banking and finance, (from each main category of banks), commerce, consumers, co-operative organisation, economists, industry, labour organisation, members of the Legislature, officials, railways and communications :

(b) Representatives of the provincial councils and representatives of the Indian States :

(c) Representatives (one each) from such national bodies as the Indian Cotton Committee, the Tariff Board, the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, the Jute Committee, and the Reserve Bank when created.

Sir Arthur Salter suggests the appointment of a paid whole time chairman, and as for the vice-chairman he must be able to devote a considerable part of his time to the work of the council.

## SUBJECTS

Examples of the kind of subjects on which this council would give advice are, establishment of land mortgage bank system, the desirability of creating a tobacco monopoly, extension of hydro-electric powers, a general control scheme for jute, marketing problems in many aspects (distributive organisation for several classes of commodities, grading systems, the extension of warehouses, both in connection with marketing and as a basis of the issue of warehouse certificates as part of the credit system of the country) and the condition of certain industries *e. g.* the match industry.

## WIDER PROBLEMS

Finally two possible instances of problems requiring investigation of a more extended and somewhat different kind may be mentioned :—

First, that of drawing up in main the outline of a general plan of India's economic and industrial development in the next few decades, as some guide to the direction of State policy ; and second that of foreseeing measures required to prevent or mitigate some of the disastrous social consequences in housing and health conditions, etc.) that have often resulted from rapid industrialisation and which may without deliberate preventive measures, assume a particularly serious form in view of the existing eastern conditions as to standards of living, etc.

Each of these last two examples also illustrates the necessity of associating with the specialised committees appointed by the council, specialists drawn from outside

the membership of the council itself (*a. g.*) experts in town planning, housing, health and education). Some of the above subjects might perhaps be initiated by a provincial council or several provincial councils in combination, specially interested in them.

#### PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Regarding the provincial councils, the report suggests the composition to be on the same principles as the central council but different in the following respects while the qualifications of members should be generally the same: (agriculture, banking and finance, commerce, consumers, co-operative organisation, economists, industry, labour organisation, members of the legislature, officials, railways and communications.)

(a) In some instances some of these qualifications may not be needed *a. g.* there may be no co-operative organisations in the province.

(b) the balance would naturally vary with the economic structure of the province (jute being *a. g.* of specific importance to Bengal, cotton to Bombay etc, and in some cases agriculture being overwhelmingly more important than industry.

(c) There would be of course no representatives of other provinces or of the states or of all India committee. Provincial councils would, therefore, be much smaller, averaging perhaps 20 as compared with 50.

(d) Provincial councils would meet more frequently, in some instances perhaps once in a quarter, others once a month. Nearly all their members would usually be resident in or reasonably near the capital of the province, so that little expense or loss of time in travelling would be involved.

Among such subjects may be suggested again purely as examples, the following: possibilities of developing subsidiary cottage industries (and also perhaps subsidiary agricultural production) in order to occupy the spare time and supplement the resources of the agricultural worker, the extent to which intensification of cultivation is profitable and possible marketing systems and methods.

#### LINK WITH GENEVA

As regards the main produce and imports of provinces, etc., the report suggests the desirability of establishing a link between the League of Nations and the new advisory councils in India by securing a representative member, perhaps the chairman of the central council being appointed a member of the League's Economic Consultative Committee, which meets annually at Geneva.

Concluding Sir Arthur Salter says that serious attention to the advice of the Indian councils would be imperative and where it was not adopted at least an adequate public explanation of the reasons for rejecting it would be expected. Moreover, as members would draw their authority from a different source than the general electorate and as their tenure of office would not coincide with that of the legislatures and the Governments, the new system would be favourable to a greater continuity of policy throughout the successive changes of parties and of Ministers and it would give the country some assurance that this policy being based not only upon political but also upon economic institutions, had a foundation as broad as that of the activities whose fortunes it affects.

**PROCEEDINGS OF**

**The Council of State**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**AND**

**THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS**

**January-June 1931**

# THE COUNCIL OF STATE

President : Sir Henry Moncrieff-Smith

The first session of the newly constituted Council of State commenced at New Delhi on the 10th. February 1931 with Sir Henry Moncrieff-Smith, President, in the chair. Fortyseven new members were sworn in. Thirteen of them were officials and the rest non-officials, both elected and nominated. After transacting a few formal business, the house adjourned till next day.

## RETENTION OF PRESENT ELECTORATE

11th. FEBRUARY:—After interpellations to-day, Mr. Abdulla Syed Hussain Imam moved a resolution that 'this House does not favour indirect election for the Council of State', recommending the retention of the present electorate and the increase of the total number of members to 120, of whom 30 be elected and 40 nominated.

Mr. Hussain Imam pointed out that all provincial Governments with the exception of one or two recommended direct election and the Government of India accepted indirect election merely out of deference for the Simon Commission. Popular and political bodies in India favoured direct election. When elections to the provincial Councils and the Assembly were to be all on a direct basis, why should it be otherwise for the Council of State ?

Sir B. L. Mitter thought it unprofitable to discuss the question of method of election to the Council of State without knowing what form the upper house in the federal legislature would take, which in turn was dependent on the constitution and structure of the lower house. The result of Lord Sankey's report was that this question was unsettled at the moment and required discussion between the representative of British India and the Indian States and the representatives of Parliament which was expected to take place before long.

The mover withdrew the resolution.

On the motion of Sir Joseph Bhoru the House agreed to elect three members to serve on the Standing Committee on Roads.

12th. FEBRUARY:—On the motion of Sir Frank Noyce, Education Secretary, the House agreed to elect two members to the governing body of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.

The Commander-in-Chief without a speech introduced the Bill to amend the Indian Reserve Forces Act in order to bring the legislation up-to-date and also to empower the presidency magistrates to try certain classes of cases. The Council then adjourned till 17th.

17th. FEBRUARY:—The Council of State heard to-day for 50 minutes Mr. T. C. Russell's speech in presenting the railway budget.

## PUNJAB CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMEND. BILL

Mr. Emerson, Home Secretary, then moved for the consideration of the Bill to supplement the Criminal Procedure Punjab Amendment Act of 1930 as passed by the Assembly. He lucidly explained the provisions of the Bill which, he emphasised, were intended solely for the protection of convicted persons by providing an appeal to the High Court and for submission to the High Court for confirmation of any sentence of death passed by the commissioners. The Bill, he added, imposed no penalties and it was moved merely in accordance with the assurance given in the Punjab Council by the representative of the Punjab Government with the full authority of the Government of India. Mr. Emerson reminded the House that the Bill introduced in the Punjab Legislative Council was passed in a substantial form and received the support of a majority of the Council and, therefore, it had the support of the people of the Punjab.

There was no member to speak either in the consideration stage or in the third reading and so without any further speeches the Bill was passed.

#### LOAN OPERATIONS

18th. FEBRUARY:—With three non-official resolutions on the order paper the Council met in a comparatively thin house to-day.

*Syed Hussain Imam* moved for a small committee of seven members of the two chambers of the Indian Legislature to advise the Government on loan operation and that this committee be consulted before each loan is floated. He made it clear that his object was to create public confidence in the actions of the Government regarding which at present there was a wide gulf between the Government and the people. The committee would be purely advisory and therefore the Government would not lose anything by agreeing to the motion.

*Sir Arthur McWatters*, Finance Secretary, described it novel, revolutionary and unprecedented as nowhere in the world was such an advisory committee in existence, not even in the Soviet Republic. The members of the Assembly, in fact, of both houses, had opportunities to scrutinise the Government's budget discussions. The Standing Finance Committee always scrutinised the Government's capital expenditure programme and thereby the borrowing programme of the Government. The proposal of the mover was unacceptable because in the matter of loan operations quick decisions must be taken with perfect secrecy and with the best technical assistance which was now available from the managing governors of the Imperial Bank. Neither speed nor secrecy nor expert technical advice was possible in case the members of the Standing Committee were scattered all over the country. Lastly, the difficulties in the way of accepting the motion became greater regarding sterling loans which were raised in England by the Secretary of State.

*Sir Arthur* added that at the Round Table Conference where he was present it was agreed that the credit of India must be maintained at a high level and sterling loans placed on a special footing. The proposal of the mover, if accepted, would fetter the hands of the future Finance Ministers. (Applause.)

The resolution was rejected by the Council.

#### RELIEF TO FAMILIES OF PENSIONABLE GOVT. SERVANTS

A heated debate then ensued on the resolution of *Mr. Khaparde* who moved for relief to the families of pensionable Government servants who die before completing their service by (a) forthwith giving effect to the resolution of *Mr. Vedamurthi* as amended in and accepted by the Council on Feb. 18, 1924 by replacing the existing system of pensions for all gazetted and non-gazetted Government servants by the system of contributory funds and (b) granting up to the date of such replacement to the families of non-gazetted pensionable Government servants who have died before completing their service a gratuity of one month's pay for every year of service completed by the deceased Government servant.

*Mr. Khaparde* reminded the Council of the Government's acceptance of the principle of the resolution in 1924 and a promise of enquiry. But nothing had been done though seven years had elapsed. Meanwhile many persons had died in harness leaving their families destitute. *Mr. Khaparde* quoted instances out of a list in his possession which he laid on the table of the house. He explained that the plight of the subordinate service men and menials was far worse than that of the civil service men and said that the contributory fund system if introduced would encourage thrift. His object in bringing the resolution was to see that the matter did not lie dormant but was expedited and thus afford relief.

*Sir Arthur McWatters*, on behalf of the Government, explained the progress made in the enquiry on the 1924 resolution. There were three parties concerned, namely, Government servants, the central Government and the provincial Governments. The question was discussed at a conference of the provincial representatives before all the local Governments and Government servants' organisations were asked to submit views on concrete schemes. There were three such schemes: firstly, combination scheme based largely on the British precedent in which the pension is reduced by one-third and in place of a lump sum grant a gratuity is given corresponding to one year's pay; secondly, a gratuity of three years' pay to be given and, thirdly, the contributory provident fund scheme. Out of 95 associations, 67 voted for the last one and 47 preferred the provident fund scheme as it existed in railways. The last batch of opinions was received only at the close of last year and now at the time of a deficit

budget it was difficult to accept the provident fund schema. There were however several alternatives suggested and the Government would examine them and deal with the matter expeditiously.

Mr. Khaparde withdrew the resolution.

#### TELEPHONE CHARGES AT DACCA

*Mr. Jagadish Chandra Banerjee* moved a resolution for reducing the telephone charges in Dacca but said that in view of the assurances given he withdrew it.

Sir Joseph Bore promptly denied having given any assurance and only promised a departmental enquiry.

*The President*—In view of this what does the hon. member propose to do ?

*Mr. J. C. Banerjee*.—I withdraw my resolution.

The Council adjourned till the 21st.

*21st. FEBRUARY*:—General discussion on the Railway Budget was held in the Council to-day.

*Sir Akbar Khan* urged discriminating reduction in staff. He warned against any rise in rates and fares at a time of general trade depression and preferred to see some reduction in order to ensure the movement of agricultural products. He pleaded for the development of the railway communications in the Frontier Province.

*Rai Bahadur P. C. Dutt* was worried by the general trade depression and regretted that the Government experts had failed to suggest a remedy for this evil. He expressed the opinion that the suggested cut in salaries should be regarded as a gift of State servants to the nation which would be refunded to them at better times at retirement or death. He urged the connection of Shillong with the Assam Railways which had been recommended many times by the local Government.

*Rai Bahadur Ramsarandas* criticised the growth in expenditure which alone was responsible for deficit inspite of increase in traffic. His remedies to meet the situation were abolition of the non-paying Railway Publicity Department, withdrawal of concessions to the Army Department, transfer to the Army budget of the loss on strategic lines, abolition of appointments like those of sports officer, heavy retrenchment in the staff of the Agent's offices, and reduction of 20 per cent in the salaries of officers and of 10 per cent of employees drawing above Rs. 250 thereby saving a crore and ten lakhs. He opposed the separation of accounts from audit at this time of stringency and proposed temporary abolition of restaurant cars and dependence instead on railway refreshment rooms. He asked for the reintroduction of the week-end ticket system. He complained against Government trying to give Muslims representation at the expense only of Hindus and leaving Europeans, Anglo-Indians and other minorities unaffected.

*Sir George Rainy*, (Railway Member) winding up the debate, explained to Mr. P. C. Dutt that the question of the construction of a bridge on Surma River was under consideration but it was most unlikely that money would be spent on it in the next financial year as all new construction had been stopped owing to deficit in the Budget. He assured Mr. B. K. Basu that he was more than ever convinced that the separation convention could not be satisfactorily settled apart from the big constitutional problem. But the convention must come under examination, in connection with the constitutional changes. That was absolutely inevitable apart from any particular proposal, which might be made obviously when as part of the constitutional development the whole question was raised as to how far the existing source of central revenues might be transferred to local Governments and the question of contribution of Railways to Central revenues, must come under examination along with the whole future system of administration of railways.

Alluding to the charge that the Railway Board was over-sanguine in estimated revenues for the next year, Sir George Rainy said that there was also a danger of over-pessimism and hoped that in the latter part of the next year there would be some improvement in the conditions. He told Mr. Browne that the Railway Board could not be treated in exactly the same manner as the staff in a trading concern in the matter of reduction of staff or salaries, but stated that if there was unnecessary expenditure it ought to be cut down. Instructions, which had been issued to Agents of Railways, were perfectly clear and improvement was expected as a result. He therefore could not agree with Mr. Shivdeva Singh Uberoi that a committee of enquiry was necessary now. The Railway Agents must be given at least six months

to give effect to the instructions unhampered by talks of enquiry and having to submit returns. Concluding, the Railway Member thanked Sir Dinshaw Wacha for his retrospective survey and joined him in wishing for better times for Railways. The Council then adjourned till the 23rd.

#### BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

**23rd. FEBRUARY:**—The only resolution on the agenda to-day was by *Syed Hussain Inam* of Bihar urging the appointment of a boundaries commission to consider the question of amalgamation of the permanently settled districts of U. P. and Bengal on the border of Bihar with the provinces of Bihar. He made a brief speech emphasising that with the almost certain dismemberment of Orissa from Bihar the latter province would become impoverished and find it difficult to carry on the administration.

*Sir B. L. Mitter* opposed the resolution as the Legislative Councils of Bihar, Bengal and U. P. had not expressed themselves on the proposition. Unless there was an agreement between the Legislative Councils of the three provinces concerned it was premature to discuss the proposition in the Council of State. The Simon Commission had only emphasised the urgency of the cases of Orissa and Sind and left over for future Councils the re-adjustments of boundaries.

*Mr. B. K. Basu* objected to land tenure being made a basic principle of redistribution of provinces. He hinted at the growing anti-Bengalee feeling in Bihar and protested at the suggestion of a slice of Bengal being tacked on to Bihar in order merely to enrich Bihar when the Biharees themselves had not taken steps of enriching themselves. For example, he asked, why had not Bihar thought of taxing the mining industries against those outsiders who had no registered offices in their own province?

Nawab Muzammilullah Khan and Raja Rampal Singh, both of U. P. joined with Mr. Basu in opposing the resolution.

The mover withdrew the resolution.

#### PROPORTION IN ARMY RECRUITMENT

**24th. FEBRUARY:**—One motion and four bills figured on the agenda when the Council of State met this morning to transact official business.

*The Commander-in-Chief*, replying to Saiyid Hussain Imam, said that the figures for actual appointments to the Indian army vary from year to year. He, however, gave figures for the vacancies. At present, he said, a maximum of 82 vacancies were offered to Europeans. Of these 70 were obtainable through Sandhurst and 12 through the universities. The maximum offered to the Indians was ten until 1928 when the number increased to 25 of which 20 are by direct entry to Sandhurst and five by nomination of the Viceroy's commissioned officers who proceed to Sandhurst after being nominated. There has been no year in which all the vacancies for Europeans and Indians were filled. The deficit has been partially met by transfers from British services. The approximate total number of Indian and European officers admitted to the Indian army during the year 1925 to 1930 were Indians 57 and Europeans 491 which gives a proportion of little more than one Indian to nine Europeans. The foregoing figures are exclusive of the vacancies recently opened to Indians at Woolwich and Cranwell. Four Indians have passed into Woolwich and six are under training at Cranwell. It has been always the intention of the Government to increase the number of vacancies open to Indians within the limits required by efficiency as soon as a sufficient flow of candidates of the right stamp was forthcoming. The number of Indian vacancies at Sandhurst was more than doubled in 1928. The proposals for further increase have been under consideration for sometime.

*Sir Phillip Chetwode* reminded the Council that the Indian Round Table Conference had decided to appoint a committee to make recommendations for an Indian military college. This question is closely related to that of Indianisation and the Government propose to consider the two subjects together.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS.

On the motion of Mr. Woodhead, the Council agreed to elect six non-official members to the Central Advisory Council for Railways. The Council also passed the amending bills to the *Income-Tax Act*, the *Indian Territorial Forces Act* and the *Auxiliary Forces Act* as passed by the Legislative Assembly. On the motion of the Commander-in-Chief the *Indian Reserve Forces Act Amendment Bill* was passed. The Council then adjourned.



## INDIANISATION OF ARMY

**25th FEBRUARY:**—The Council of State discussed to-day only one non-official resolution. It related to the Indianisation of the Indian Army.

Sayid Husain Imam, the mover, recommended the formation of a committee of experts and members of the Central Legislature to frame a scheme. He referred to the drawbacks of the present system of recruitment and training as explained by the Skeen Committee and said that when India was to be given the substance of Dominion Status, it was only right that the Indianisation of the officer ranks of the Army should be more rapid.

Major Akbar Khan said that the recommendations of the Skeen Committee had been considerably modified by the Defence Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference and Indianisation had been decided upon. He personally thought that complete Indianisation would take several years and several decades. Details of the recommendations of the London Conference Sub-Committee were not before the House. Let the mover bring a resolution when the facts were more adequate.

Sardar Shivdev Singh alluded to the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the London Conference on Defence and emphasised that defence was in future to be the concern of the Indian people and steps must now be taken to start an Indian Sandhurst. He urged that a committee of experts as recommended should meet soon. Meanwhile he wanted that the number of Indians taken for Sandhurst at the half-yearly competitive examinations in India should be doubled, that is, raised from 10 to 20.

Mr. G. A. Natesan did not attach much importance to the Skeen Committee's report, because that committee did not have before it the Reports of the Military Requirements Committee and the Indianisation of Indian Army Committees of 1921 and 1922 respectively. Both these committees had at that time prepared a cut and dry scheme, recommending complete Indianisation of the Indian Army within 25 years without affecting the efficiency of the Army. For some reason or other, both these reports were kept away from the Skeen Committee. And, in fact, but for the patriotism of some Indian members and also the candour of Mr. Thomas, these two documents would not have been available to the Defence Sub-Committee of the London Conference. The only question now was, how to give effect to the recommendations of the Defence Sub-Committee of the Conference. That was for experts.

Sir Philip Chetwood, Commander-in-Chief, replying on behalf of the Government, said that the intention of the Government was to carry on the work of the Round Table Conference. The Indian Government was in communication with his Majesty's Government as to ways and means, the Government had been corresponding with his Majesty's Government as to steps that should be taken on the recommendations of the Defence Sub-Committee. His Majesty's Government had accepted the principle of more rapid Indianisation and the creation of an Indian Sandhurst. The Indian Government had accepted it and as the head of the Indian Army also had accepted it.

As for the appointment of an expert committee as recommended by the London Conference, there had been some correspondence on the definition of an expert. His Majesty's Government's reply was that this term included any person, whether official or otherwise, who was qualified by special knowledge and experience to contribute to the solution of the problems. The immediate problem was the establishment of a military college to train Indians for all arms of the Indian defence force. For his own part, he had arrived at certain conclusion which, when made public, would be found to represent a substantial advance on the present position, provided there were sufficient candidates forthcoming.

The committee of experts to be appointed would include representatives of the Indian States. Next March, the presence of the Indian Princes in connection with the session of the Chamber of Princes would be availed of for discussing the representation of the Indian States.

However, the committee would meet in Simla as soon as the Government of India had moved up to the hills. There was thus no burking either of the question of more rapid Indianisation or the establishment of a military college. Indeed, the expert committee would meet in Simla not in an atmosphere of unreality which attached to the previous committees like the Skeen Committee or the Military Requirements Committee or the Shea Committee, because the principle of Indianisation had been accepted and the young plant of Indianisation was to be made to grow well. The committee would meet to implement the new policy. announced by

the Premier at the Round Table Conference. Reports of previous committees on the subject were all washed out now. The expert committees would start anew. (Applause) Concluding the Commander-in-Chief emphasised the importance of the efficiency of the Army, for failure in war was more serious than political or administrative failure. The resolution was withdrawn.

Both Mr. H. M. Mehta and Mr. K. B. Rangaswami Iyengar, who had resolutions urging the release of political prisoners, did not move them.

The President announced that Messrs. A. Hamid, G. A. Natesan, Ramsaran Das and B. K. Basu had been elected to the Standing Emigration Committee. The Council adjourned till next day.

**26th. FEBRUARY:**—The Council of State sat for three hours to-day. The debate on protection to the galvanised steel industry alone occupied over two hours.

Previous to this debate the Council passed without any non-official speeches *Bills for developing the gold thread industry and the steel industry*, and the *Bill amending the Cantonments Act* and giving effect to the Treaty for Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armaments. There was no change made in any of these measures which had been passed by the Assembly.

Mr. Woodhead in explaining the Gold Thread Industry Bill made it clear that the effect of the increase in duty by 50 per cent. would have practically no adverse effect on the weaving industry in Madras.

#### GALVANISED STEEL INDUSTRY

Considerable warmth was imported in the debate on protection to the galvanised steel industry. Mr. Woodhead, Commerce Secretary, moved for adoption of the resolution embodying the Assembly's decision that protection given to the industry till March 31, 1931, be continued up to March 31, 1932, that is for a year, and that before that date the Government should make enquiries in order to ascertain whether the system of bounties might not be substituted wholly or in part for an increased duty. He emphasised that the Tariff Board was in favour of a protective duty rather than a bounty and that the measure of protection required was Rs. 67 per ton. Unless protection was given, there was a real danger that the price at which the Indian manufacturer could sell galvanised sheets would be below the works cost and it would be difficult for the industry to carry on the manufacture of galvanised sheets.

Mr. A. Hamid, representative from Burma, was the first to oppose the resolution. While prefacing his remarks by saying that he had no desire to obstruct the Government or deprive the Government of some revenue, he opposed the resolution because it was not a straightforward proposition but a motion for revenue introduced by the backdoor. Mr. Hamid charged the Tatas with having broken faith with the shareholders in respect of the statement they made to the public at the inception of the company. Secondly, he remarked that the company had squandered public money by top-heavy management, in which one person was paid higher than the Viceroy and another who had resigned from Government service was paid three times Rs. 2,000. Indeed, if the Bombay Trading Corporation had a glorious reputation of winning Burma for India, the Tatas had earned an inglorious and unenviable reputation of having lost Burma for India. This was due to the fiscal policy of the Government of India which placed Burma in acute difficulties. And that in respect of Burma from which India enjoyed trade in silver, rice, kerosene and other minerals. There were twelve lakhs of Indians in Burma and many straightforward Englishmen whose relations with the people of Burma were cordial. The state of Indians would be hard indeed if the Government of India embittered the relations between the Burmese and Indians in Burma by a policy of helping the old miserable Tatas' industry merely out of sentiment. The purpose of the Tatas would have been served if the Government had given a bounty of ten to eleven lakhs, instead of a protective duty which hit the poor people of India and Burma many times more than that burden.

Mr. E. Miller, representative of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, opposed the resolution for reasons in some respects similar to those of Mr. Hamid. He said the Tariff Board's report did not convince that protection was either necessary or desirable. Further investigation should have been made before the sanction of the legislature was sought for protection to the industry. The economies effected by the Tatas during the recent years had been inadequate, although retrenchment was everywhere the watchword in these days.

The Tatas after all could supply only one-fifth of India's requirements and so the amounts of protection should not have exceeded Rs. 11,08,000. But under the cloak of giving protection to the Tatas, the Government were raising a huge amount of revenue. This procedure did not reflect to the credit of the Government and he urged the Government to withdraw the proposal.

Syed Abdul Hafeez (East Bengal), joined in the protest at the Government raising a revenue of Rs. 1,50,00,000 when only Rs. 11,00,000 were needed to help the Tatas with. He alluded to the report that the Tatas might pass into the hands of Americans and asked how was this a national industry deserving protection at the hands of Indians.

Mr. Ramsaran Das (Punjab), on the other hand, strongly supported the resolution. The Tatas had rendered unforgettable services during the war and even to-day were supplying tin sheets to Burma for her kerosene trade. If India derived benefit from association with Burma, Burma also enjoyed advantage by her association with India. Take tea, Rs. 38,00,000 worth of which was imported by India every year. Burma should not mind Rs. 6,00,000 alone.

Mr. Hussain Imam (Patna) also opposed the resolution, because this was an occasion for the Indian people to exercise their right of control over the Tatas and to demand that something should be done by way of the Indian taxpayers' representatives being given a share of the control over the company's work. He feared that even the Government of India was being disregarded by the Tata Steel Company which was worth about Rs. 14,50,00,000 contributed by the public.

Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoj, who at the outset made it clear that he had no interest in the concern and that he did not at any time possess any shares in it, gave vehement support to the resolution. He regretted the acrimonious turn given to the debate by Mr. Hamid from Burma and took exception to his allegations as to breach of faith and asserted they were unfounded. If the Tatas paid high salaries to experts, they could not help it, because there were no Indians available. When leading lawyers could earn Rs. 30,000 per month, why should they grudge Rs. 25,000 to an expert in the steel industry? Personally, Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoj preferred a bounty to a duty for protection but the Government's conduct was certainly commendable and not reprehensible in having come to the protection of the Tatas according to the Tariff Board's report it needed protection. That protection was only for 12 months, not a long period at the end of which there would be a full opportunity for the legislature to review the position in order to decide whether protection should thereafter be in the form of a bounty and, if so, how much.

Mr. K. B. Harper (Burma Chamber of Commerce) said he could not welcome the resolution because Burma was being asked to bear the unbearable burden for the sake of industry in India. It was something of protection once or twice, but when it was repeated further then certainly Burma's complaint was justified. He supported the position taken up by the representative of the Associated Chamber of Commerce in the Assembly and said that if the Government wanted to raise revenue that should be done in the proper time and in the proper manner.

Rai Bahadur Jagadish Prasad (United Provinces) accorded support to the resolution because the Tatas was a national industry and the popular house, the Legislative Assembly, had arrived at the decision after a most careful consideration of the issues raised by the report of an expert body like the Tariff Board.

The Commerce Secretary, replying, took exception to the charge of dishonesty or *mala fide* motive attributed to the Government and said that it was not right to say that the Government came before the Legislature by the backdoor.

The resolution was passed without division, though several members cried 'no' when it was put. The Council then adjourned till the 28th. FEBRUARY when Sir Arthur Mewatters presented the Budget for the current year and took 50 minutes in finishing his speech during which he did not refer to any notes. The house then adjourned till the 7th. MARCH.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

7th. MARCH:—The Budget was subjected to general discussion in the Council of State to-day.

The debate was opened by Mr. B. K. Basu who looking at the Budget from the situation in the next two months was so serious as to need drastic remedies. For owing to the anticipated enhancement of duty on sugar and kerosene there have been large imports in those two articles in January and February. The returns

from customs, therefore, would be on a small scale. On the other hand, the Government would have to meet treasury bills to the extent of three to four crores a week. The speaker held the Government to be on the wrong side of two to two and a half crores every week and with the limited capacity of the Imperial Bank to advance money it would require all the ingenuity of the Finance Member to maintain India's credit at this critical juncture. The contribution from railways, the speaker said, was a mere book entry and the surplus shown in the budget was illusory. Mr. Basu appealed to Government not to toy or flit with retrenchment but to do something substantial.

*Sir Dinshaw Wacha* said India was a land of deficit budgets and with the world trade depression and internal unrest the present deficit budget could not be a surprise. Critics there were bound to be, but the criticism should be with a view to help and not retard the path of progress. What he felt was that there was lack of hearty co-operation and constructive suggestions on the part of speakers. This he attributed largely to a lack of knowledge of finances. *Sir D. E. Wacha*, however, felt that *Sir George Schuster* had shown considerable courage in facing the issues boldly and his handling of the Indian finances would be of help to his successors.

Alluding to income-tax, *Sir D. E. Wacha* admitted that it would cause hardship but the bill would not kill the goose that lay the golden eggs (commerce). On the other hand it might even fatten it. Regarding customs duties, the speaker was opposed to protective ones, as he said protection was inimical to the general interests of the country. Everlasting protection he said, led to monopoly which in its turn brought revolutions. The salvation of India lay in free trade and open door policy. He, however, congratulated the Finance Member for evenly distributing the burden of taxation. *Sir George Schuster*, he said, acted on the principle of taxation according to ability, which was enunciated by Adam Smith. The experience of the speaker of retrenchment committees was that they served no useful purpose. 'They propose and the Government dispose.' The expenditure on the other hand continued to increase, as it was bound to be with the development of the country. In this connection *Sir D. E. Wacha* referred to military expenditure and said the evil of the whole thing lay in the amalgamation scheme of the Indian Army. Unless that scheme was repealed and another to suit Indian conditions adopted, there could be no reduction in the army budget. For the present the War Office was dominating the Indian Army.

*Sir George Schuster*, winding up the debate, largely traversed the ground covered by him in the Assembly. His taxation proposals had been attacked from two points of view, one in respect of the increased duty on kerosene and the other the increased income-tax rate. Regarding the former, the Finance Member drew attention to the fact that industrial labourers had gained by low prices and the duty on kerosene oil would not completely take away that advantage. As for the agricultural labourer, he admitted that the low prices had adversely affected him but the increased duty on the kerosene would add only one and half annas a year to his burden by the 5 per cent extra duty on cotton piecegoods, which on the whole had been welcomed by the house, was Re. 1 per annum. Here the Finance Member warned that the Indian public should see that the cotton industry was not allowed to be developed into a monopoly for the benefit of a few individuals. As for income-tax, he fully realised that it was a sacrifice, but not an unbearable sacrifice, not a killing imposition. This would not, however, be a permanent feature but only a temporary provision and it might be possible during the year to find some other sources of revenue.

As for filling up the deficit by taxation or retrenchment, *Sir George Schuster* claimed that he could not have done better than what he had done and challenged any one to devise a better budget. India was passing through a transition period and that added to the difficulties. If there was a federal constitution, they could have done better. For the present they were marking-time. But India had to readjust her economic standard. All India was on the eve of constitutional changes, they should face the economic and financial results of it now.

Alluding to the Retrenchment Committee, *Sir George Schuster* reiterated his view that out of its labours they could not have a measure of economy which would have major effect on the situation to-day. If the committee was appointed then the Government would consider the question of putting in a member of this House. But no large economy was anticipated without a change of policy. But in

the present period of transition the Government required co-operation from responsible members of Indian public, particularly from leaders of the commercial community. (Applause)

#### LEGISLATION FOR FIRST OFFENDERS

*9th. MARCH*.—With five resolutions on the agenda paper the Council of State met this morning to transact non-official business.

*Mr. G. Narayanaswami Chetty* moved a resolution urging for early legislation for dealing with first offenders in the country on the same lines as first offenders were dealt with in England. The mover in a very fastly read speech said that his proposal had the support of the Conference of Inspector-General of Prisons and the Jail Committee. The speaker held that it was an urgent matter of social reform and would take away the social stigma from children who happen to be convicted.

*Mr. Emerson*, Home Secretary, replying said that he was in entire sympathy with the resolution and accepted its principle. He, however, told the Council that conditions varied in different provinces in India and the Government in the first instance had confined themselves to do experiments like those in Madras, Bengal and Bombay. The local Governments were also consulted and their views were now under serious consideration to the Government of India who had now accepted the principle of all-India legislation. It must, however, be remembered that it was not practical to impose obligations on the provinces which they may not be able to carry out. Legislation would, therefore, be of an enabling character allowing uniformity in the matter. *Mr. Emerson* did not promise to introduce the necessary legislation in the next session of the Central Legislature but assured the Council that the Government would do so as soon as circumstances permitted. He also reminded the House that the success of the Probation of the Offenders Act in England was largely due to the active co-operation of private societies and individuals and with the best of intentions it was useless to introduce legislation in India unless the active support of various societies was forthcoming.

The resolution was withdrawn and the next two resolutions regarding the Round Table Conference were not moved in view of the impending full dress debate in the Council the next day.

#### SALE OF ADULTERATED GHEE

*Lala Ramsarandas* moved that steps be taken with a view to preventing the cheating of the public by adulteration of *ghee* and in order to secure uniformity of practice throughout British India to impose statutory penalty on the sale of *ghee* adulterated with *vanaspathi* or any other substance whatsoever. He reminded that a number of times this question was discussed here and in the Assembly and quoted the prices at which *ghee* and *vanaspathi ghee* were sold recently. He pointed out that adulteration was proceeding apace and the Government by taking no steps to prevent fraud were a party to it. *Vanaspathi* being tasteless and smell-less was being easily mixed up with genuine *ghee*. He did not seek to prohibit importation as he did on the previous occasion, but merely urged that a penalty should be imposed on the sale of adulterated *ghee*.

*Raja Raghunandan Prasad*, *Choudhury Muhammad Din*, *Sardar Shivdeb Singh Uberoi* and *Mr. Narayanswami Chetty* supported the resolution.

*Sir Frank Noyce* reminded that the medical opinion was that vegetable *ghee* was not injurious to health and had a food value. He objected to the resolution because it required penal legislation. As the result of the resolution passed on the last occasion the Commerce department circulsed the local Governments. But no local Government had so far asked for such all-India legislation. The Punjab and the United Provinces Acts had gone far to meet the views of the mover. The Central Provinces did not consider legislation necessary as bye-laws had been framed for prevention of adulteration. The Bombay municipality had its own laws and the question of extending them to other municipalities was under consideration.

Proceeding *Sir Frank Noyce* said the local Governments were the best judges of the question. It could not be dealt with by all-India legislation but by provincial legislation.

*Lala Ramsarandas* felt that *Sir Frank Noyce's* reply confused him. He reiterated the complaint that the Government were party to a fraud on the public and pressed the resolution.

The resolution was lost by 13 against 23.

## PRECAUTION FOR FIRING ON CROWDS

*Mr. S. C. Ghose-Moulit* had a resolution intended to urge on the Government to see that when firing was resorted to for dispersing crowds the magistrate or other civil or military officer responsible should take all reasonable precautions to see that no more injury was inflicted on the crowd or the assembly than was absolutely necessary. He, however, did not move it in view of the fact that the political situation was easing after the Irwin-Gandhi agreement.

The Council then adjourned.

## THE R. T. C. DEBATE

*10th. MARCH*:- Speaking on Sir Sankaran Nair's motion asking for the laying of the papers regarding the Round Table Conference on the table in the Assembly Syed Abdul Hafeez was optimistic and held that the Hindu-moslem question would soon be solved. He however regretted that the delegates to the London Conference could not solve that question, probably because the Moslem delegation was under the mandate of the Delhi resolution of the All-Parties Moslem Conference.

Sir Phiroze Sethna felt disappointed at the speech of Sir C. Sankaran Nair who, he said, picked up holes here and there, instead of appreciating the scheme as a whole. Speaking of the achievements of the Congress, Sir Phiroze Sethna said that the Federation which the Simon Commission regarded as a distant possibility and the Government of India an impossibility was brought within the range of practical politics in London. The work of the Conference, he said, was not plain sailing. On the one side, there were conferences to settle communal differences and on the other side there was the difficulty of bringing the other British parties to see the Indian point of view. The tide however was turned by Lord Reading, who was struck by the unanimous demand for Dominion status and the offer of the Princes to join the Federation. The Indian Delegates were also able to convert the Conservative delegation to a certain extent, and Sir P. C. Sethna hoped that Mr. Baldwin would continue to lead that party in England in order to help India towards the self-government.

Alluding to safeguards, Sir P. C. Sethna emphasised the fact that only a few years ago, even the Congress was prepared to accept reservations for a transitory period. Now that the basic principles had been agreed upon, they were to settle the details at the second conference in which the Congress would participate. This was due to the negotiation between the two Mahatmas, and Sir P. C. Sethna felt sure that if the spirit which animated the round-tablers was continued in India and followed up at the second conference with the help of Congressites, there would be permanent peace and plenty in India.

Mr. Khaparde said that he was not perturbed by the antics of Mr. Churchill, for Mr. Churchill was still a member of the Conservative Party, a party which five years ago sent out Lord Irwin to India. If only all the parties in Britain were united and if all the parties in India were also united in their demands, then probably the London Conference would have achieved much more. The difficulty in the situation in India lay in the fact that Mr. Gandhi who had throughout talked of Swaraj, hindered its achievement by launching the civil disobedience movement and non-co-operation. However, the London Conference had evolved the principle of a Federated India with responsibility in the Centre though with certain safeguards. He urged that these limitations to responsibility should be so limited as to allow the constitution a free and unrestricted growth.

Mr. A. Hamid (Burma) referred to the recent peace negotiations and described Lord Irwin as Irwin the Peace-Maker, Irwin the Christian and Irwin the good. It was good that the London Conference evolved a Federal constitution, but Mr. Hamid felt that there could be no true Federation until there was communal unity. This could be achieved only by statute, and not by political patch-ups. The only way to compel fanatics on both sides to come to an agreement was to have a statute. Otherwise, India would have to be ruled by Englishmen. But every right-minded person was anxious not to revert to Sikh rule or to the rule of Aurangzeb. His slogan was unity first and unity last.

Speaking about the future of Burma, Mr. Hamid said that Burma would not be satisfied unless she was granted the same political status as India, and would therefore be prepared to join Federal India, provided it would be to promote Burma's interests.

Lala Ramsarandas, speaking mainly on the question of safeguards, felt that the

powers of Governors to intervene in the interests of peace and tranquillity was likely to become nominal with advance in responsible government. The Governor's intervention to protect the rights of the minorities, however, would prove inimical to the interests of India. He regretted that the minorities question was not solved in England. He submitted that separate electorates were not calculated to bring about democracy in India. He urged the claims of the Hindus of the Punjab, who were very unfairly treated by the Simon Commission and the Central Simon Committee. Lastly, Lala Ramsarandas held that the distinction between martial and non-martial races for recruitment to army, was a creation of the British Government.

*Narab Khanja Habibullah* welcomed the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement, and hoped in its turn, it would usher in an era of inter-communal unity. Mussalmans, he said, made a gesture of goodwill in welcoming Mr. Gandhi to the meeting of the Council of the Moslem League, and the speaker also acknowledged the statesmanlike speech of Mr. Gandhi the other day in Delhi, in which he appealed to the Hindus to give to Mussalmans whatever the latter demanded. The speaker maintained that the Moslem demands if judged dispassionately were neither unjust nor unreasonable, and if conceded would result in abiding peace in the country.

*Mr. P. H. Browne*, (Bengal Chamber), intervening in the debate, gave expression to the views of the European members in the lower House. While paying a tribute to the Round Tablers and Lord Irwin, he asked the Council not to forget the part played by that large number of men and women who through all this long months steadfastly stood on the side of India's advance by constitutional means and were co-operating with the Government. The Europeans in India were willing to participate in the building up of the future Constitution, but they wanted that the interests of all minorities must be safeguarded and that the commercial interests of Britishers should be placed on an equal status with those of others. Britishers did not want favour or preference, for they were no more foreigners in India than Indians were in England. When they could enjoy civil rights in voting, they were equally entitled to ask that their commercial interests were not in any way limited. While Britain and the Britishers in India had given evidence of goodwill to Indians, the latter as a whole had not shown evidence of reciprocity in this respect. Mr. Browne concluded: "Let the Hindus show more goodwill to Moslems. Let the Moslems show more goodwill to their brothers in India."

*Mr. Devadas* representing the Indian Christian community said that England was held in India in greater esteem than ever before because of Lord Irwin's success in the negotiations with Mr. Gaudhi. Truly righteousness exalteth a nation. Mr. Devadas did not like the depressed classes being put in the category of Hindus, when their ordinary civic rights of using temples and tanks were being denied. He objected to recruitment to the Army from only certain classes and from particular areas, and demanded recruitment from all classes in all provinces. This was essential in these days when war was becoming a science. He wanted recruitment throughout India because that was the only way of ensuring even distribution of money.

*Mr. Natesan* deplored Sir Sankaran Nair giving a wrong lead to such an important debate, and recalled Sir Sankaran Nair's interview to the Associated Press on his return to India from England, when he welcomed the achievements of the London Conference as representing a great advance over the present system, and therefore requiring the support of India. Sir Sankaran Nair had mixed up the Simon report, the Central Committee report and all other reports in his speeches. But in the words of Sir Phillip Chetwode on another occasion, these were all washed out by the Round Table Conference report. The test was whether the conclusions of the Conference took India forward, and that being so, no Indian patriot should cavil at the achievements of the Conference. As Sir Hubert Carr had put it, the Conference had restored the confidence of India in the good faith of Britain. And this good faith had been further cemented by Lord Irwin, who through his negotiations with the truth and peace-loving Gandhiji, had ensured the participation of Congressmen. Let there be no sneering talk of Gandhiji, when the energies of all were bent in the direction of forgetting the past and writing on a clean slate for placing India on Dominion Status.

*Mr. Promode Chandra Dutt* (Assam) asked why the question of provincial boundaries was not tackled at the London Conference when the Simon Commission laid such great stress on it. As regards Assam, the question for decision was whether it could stand on its own legs financially and whether certain districts should be transferred from her to other provinces and from other provinces to Assam. In any case Assam should be represented at the next Round Table Conference.

*Sir Akbar Khan* wanted effective guarantees for the religions and cultural security of Mussalman and the safeguarding of the Frontier, as a condition precedent to their joining the Federation.

*Chowdhury Mahomed Din* paid a tribute to the I. C. S. for bringing about the present stage of national development, and held that the greatest achievement of the London Conference was the creation of sense of responsibility amongst the party of politicians who had hitherto followed the path of destruction.

*Dewan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetty* said that no constitution would be acceptable without effective safeguards for the depressed classes. He expressed satisfaction at the sympathy and support of the British nation to India's attempt to achieve responsible Government, but said there were certain essential problems to be solved in making a Federal form of Government a reality : (a) unity among all classes and communities and (b) security and protection of minorities ; (c) a clear definition of safeguards ; (d) grant of adequate protection to depressed classes and formation of a separate electorate for them. Any constitution which did not provide for these was bound to be a failure.

At this stage, when no Government member had spoken, *Sir Sankaran Nair* withdrew the resolution. The Council then adjourned.

#### SHORT TERM IMPRISONMENTS

**11th. MARCH** :—The Council of State discussed to-day non-official resolutions.

*Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetti* moved a resolution asking the Government to take steps to prevent altogether imprisonment for terms less than two months. *Mr. Chetti* said that the Indian Jail Committee taking the average of five years ending 1918 found that the percentage of persons admitted into jails with sentences of 15 days or less was nearly 35 per cent. The speaker said that it was universally opined that short term imprisonments were of no effect and were wholly devoid of a deterrent effect. On the other hand, they were expensive to the State and not helpful to the individual. Short term imprisonments destroyed the self-respect of the offender, made him come into contact with undesirable people in jails and rendered him indifferent to further disgrace. It also developed anti-social grudges. The speaker suggested a system by which men could be let off under orders, convicted and discharged with warning, or be fined.

*Mr. Emerson*, Home Secretary, opposed the resolution on behalf of the Government. He said though the Government were fully alive to the undesirability of short term imprisonments but the terms of the resolution were unacceptable to the Government. The Government of India were in agreement that short term imprisonments should be avoided but even the Jail Committee had suggested no effective alternative. The Government of India on their side were constantly bringing home to the Provincial Governments to urge upon courts to avoid short term imprisonments wherever there was any alternative, but there were cases when short term imprisonment was the only appropriate form of conviction. The Government, therefore, were unable for the present to make such changes in their Penal Code as to wipe out all provisions for sentences of less than two months. *Mr. Emerson*, however, assured the mover that the Government would once again bring the resolution to the notice of the local Governments.

On this assurance *Mr. Chetti* withdrew his resolution.

#### RETRENCHMENT IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

**16th. MARCH** :—Though three very important resolutions were on the order paper to-day, only one was moved, after which the House adjourned till the 18th.

*Syed Hussain Imam* moved for the formation of a committee on the lines of the Geddes Committee in England to effect retrenchments in the departments of the Government of India. He referred to the lack of enthusiasm shown in both the Houses over the Finance Member's proposal to appoint a retrenchment committee and opined that his own proposal might meet with approval, especially if the good work done by the Geddes Committee in England was borne in mind. The Geddes Committee had gone into every department of national expenditure and recommended a reduction of £83 million, most of which had been accepted and carried out. The retrenchment committee proposed by the Government of India had been described as an eyewash because it could only deal with votable items of expenditure of only the civil departments. This represented 19 per cent. of the entire expenditure of the Government of India. What could they do in such a restricted sphere? A bold policy was required because the expenditure in India had grown during the last



few years by 52 per cent as against 27 per cent. in England. The policy of treating the reports of retrenchment committees like that of the Inchcape Committee would not do to save the situation.

*Sir Arthur Mcwaters* announced that the Finance Member was convening a meeting tomorrow afternoon of those interested in the question of procedure in appointing a committee and invited the members to participate in it. The need for an enquiry was not in dispute but only the procedure which could yield the best results at present. The Finance Secretary protested against the suggestion that the Inchcape Committee's report had been treated as a scrap of paper. As Finance Secretary in 1923, he himself took up every item of a reduction proposed, and, in consultation with Lord Reading, went into the details of every recommendation, both on the civil and military side. In fact, a statement showing the action taken on that report and the reasons for no action in other respects was published.

Sir Arthur quoted statistics to show that in the military expenditure the reduction made that year was even slightly greater than that recommended by the committee and no reductions had been made ever since. On the civil side also there had been large reductions made. It was true that the expenditure on the civil side had grown since, for example, the Post and Telegraph department, due to the increased pay of the subordinate staff, grants to agricultural research, grants to the Benares University, and grants for education on the Frontier. But this year every major work had been held up and no programme of construction had been launched. The contingency allowance had been reduced by Rs. 26 lakhs. This was a record not to be ashamed of. Yet the Government did not claim a monopoly of wisdom. They were prepared to appoint a retrenchment committee. Opinion, however, differed as to the method of enquiry. Military expenditure would come under review by the proposed committee. Let the form of enquiry be decided, and the Finance Secretary invited those interested in it to join tomorrow afternoon's conference.

*Mr. G. A. Natesan* was for no retrenchment committee on the eve of constitutional changes which when decided upon would show where economies could be more easily secured. At present any retrenchment committee, even with the luxury of additional expenditure, will be beating about the bush, especially in the face of Sir George Schuster's categorical statement that there was no room for retrenchment. At the same time Mr. Natesan asked the Government to note that every time the legislature wanted retrenchment they stated that there was no room for retrenchment. They said so in 1922 before the Inchcape Committee was appointed and yet when it was appointed and made cuts amounting to Rs. 10 crores the Government of India gave effect to them. It showed that where was the will there was the way, but a bold decision in this respect could come only from a national Government, which India did not possess.

The mover withdrew the resolution in view of to-morrow afternoon's conference.

*Mr. Ghosh Maulik* did not move the resolution wherein he embodied the suggestion of referring the question of protection of minorities in India to the League of Nations for decision.

*Lala Ram Saran Das* was not present to move the resolution for the prohibition of import of all foreign wheat.

#### CENTRAL JUTE COMMITTEE

**18th. MARCH:**—Four non-official resolutions were discussed in the Council of State to-day. The first resolution was moved by *Mr. Abdul Hafsex* urging that immediate steps be taken to accept and give effect to the Agricultural Commission's recommendations and set up a Central Jute Committee representing the various interests concerned in the proportion of 65 per cent. jute growers, 20 per cent. bailers and 15 per cent. jute millers. He knew that a scheme was under consideration but asked why this long delay in giving effect to it. His point was that the jute growers should have a preponderating voice on the committee. There was a charge that the Central Cotton Committee had inadequate representation of agriculturists on it. This must be avoided in respect of the proposed jute committee and interests of the jute growers protected, because already jute was being sold at a loss to the cultivator and lands were passing into the hands of money-lenders.

*Sir Frank Noyce* on behalf of the Government accepted the resolution, but not the latter part wherein the proportion of representation of interest was specified. He informed that the Bihar and Assam Governments had accepted the proposal to establish a committee but the Bengal Government had not yet expressed itself finally on

the legislation embodying the proposal to establish the committee. The Education Secretary assured that the committee would be representative of all interests, European and Indian, commercial, manufacturing and cultivating interests. While, therefore, agreeing to the first part of the resolution he parted company with the mover in the second part because the Government could not bind themselves to any definite proportion. He, however, informed that the committee would consist of 22 members with the vice-chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research as chairman. Altogether there would be eleven representatives of agricultural interests and eleven representatives of commercial interests.

*Mr. P. H. Browns* made it clear that the Clive Street was not against the proposed committee. He and his friends felt that the proposed expenditure of five lakhs on this committee could be utilised this year better towards reducing the Government of India's deficit. Otherwise the Clive Street had no special objection to the appointment of a Central Jute Committee.

*Mr. Hafeez* agreeing to the deletion of the proportion of  $\frac{2}{3}$  representation, the resolution as amended was carried.

#### PUBLIC BORROWING IN INDIA

*Lala Jagdish Prasad* moved for a committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into and report upon the policy and programme of public borrowing in India and abroad undertaken by the Government of India, provincial Governments and statutory public corporations or trusts authorised to float public loans. He took his stand on the resolution previously moved by *Sir Manekjee Dadabhoy* from whom he expected support to-day. He alluded to the high bank rate, flight of capital, etc. and attributed it to the fact that there was no definite borrowing policy. During the next seven years the Government of India had to borrow Rs. 220 crores to meet the maturing obligations quite apart from money that might be required for the railway capital programme. The rate of interest at which money was borrowed in England was ruinous to India. A committee like the one proposed might suggest a remedy after a proper valuation of the assets and enable the Government to modify the present arrangements for the provision of the sinking fund.

*Sir Arthur McWatters* did not object to the resolution on general grounds but for practical reasons he objected to the committee of enquiry. The appointment of such a committee now when there was financial stringency and when constitutional changes were impending might create the impression that things were bad whereas the fact of the matter was that India's credit was improving. The whole question of the financial relation between the Government of India and the Whitehall and as between the Central Government and provincial Governments was being reviewed by the R. T. C. and this was hardly time to add a fifth wheel to the coach.

*Mr. Hussain Imam* supported the resolution for he did not know how long the R. T. C. would take to come to an end.

The mover emphasised that his object was to restore confidence in the Indian money market. The resolution was put to vote and lost.

#### INCOME-TAX ASSESSMENT

*Lala Ramsaran Das* moved for steps to ensure that for the purposes of assessment of income-tax where an assessee had had recourse to courts for the recovery of rent or loans a reasonable sum on account of the legal practitioners' fees and court fees be deducted from the income of the assessee. He gave an elaborate explanation of the position mainly in the Punjab and demanded acceptance of the resolution in the interests of equity and justice.

*Sir Arthur McWatters* accepted the resolution and informed that the commissioner of income-tax, Punjab had replied that a reasonable sum was already being deducted in respect of loans. *Sir Arthur McWatters* admitted that the position might be different regarding rent or *hundis* and as regards the former six per cent. was normally allowed. He was, however, quite prepared to examine the position and see if six per cent. did not meet the requirements.

*Mr. Ramsarandas* withdrew the resolution in view of the Finance Secretary's assurance.

#### WORKING OF THE TATAS

The last resolution was by *Saiyed Hussain Imam* (Bihar) urging a committee of experts and members of the central legislature to report on the working of the Tata Iron and Steel Co., with a view to find how far protection had stabilised the steel industry. His object, he declared, was to ascertain why the Company was not able

to be self-supporting yet, in what particular respect its working required to be improved and when it could stand without protection and whether that the bounty which the Company was receiving was being properly spent. He opined that the industry required not palliative treatment and incidentally thought that if there was a reduced output in railway materials because the demand here was less, the Company might make up by manufacturing more structural steel. At any rate it was his conviction that the Company had not decided to improve itself by these means merely because the Government and public every time came to its help. But no longer should this policy of drift on the part of the Government and legislature continue and therefore, he did not mind even an enquiry by the Tariff Board.

*Mr. A. Hamid* (Burma) said his information was that the Company was endeavouring consistently and methodically to turn to good account the sad experience of the past few years. He realised that an administration of the magnitude of the Tatas could only proceed with its policy of retrenchment with appropriate caution.

The Tatas were appreciative of the fact that public opinion was critical. The mover had enough information in the report of the Tariff Board on galvanised sheets. Speaking for himself he regretted certain remarks he had made on the previous occasion about a present employee of the Company who had been a Government servant as he since found that those were not correct. (Applause)

*Sir Phiroze Sethna* (a director of the Tatas) thought that *Mr. Hussain Imam* who hailed from Bihar should have ascertained facts about the Company before criticising. If the legislature had not given protection in the last seven years this national industry would have surely gone to the wall and with it thousands of labourers would have been rendered idle. Fourteen crores had been invested in the industry. The depression in the steel industry was not only confined to India but it existed the world over. The Tatas had effected retrenchment and improved efficiency. Its output had increased and was even now on the increase. The strike had cost one and a half crores of rupees but the industry was recovering from it. The general cut of ten per cent in the salaries had been accepted willingly by those officers getting over Rs. 500 and the directors were getting less as fees. Indianization was also proceeding apace, but it could not be at the same rate here as was possible in the cotton industry. There was no need for a committee of enquiry now for the Government must appoint a committee three years hence.

*Mr. Woodhead*, Commerce Secretary, said that all information required was available in the report of the Tariff Board on galvanised steel sheets. He gave statistics to show that the Company's output was steadily increasing after the close of the strike and in view of the fact that the Government must appoint a committee before March 1934 he opposed the resolution.

*Mr. Hussain Imam* felt that neither the Government nor the director of the Tatas had shown whether the Company would at the end of 1933-34 be free from the necessity of protection, but he withdrew the motion in view of the general opposition.

#### THE FINANCE BILL

**28th. MARCH**—In the Council of State to-day, the Governor-General's messages were read stating that as the Assembly had refused to pass the Finance Bill in the form recommended, therefore he certified that its passage in the form recommended, was essential to the interests of British India and recommending to the Council to pass it in that form. The debate on this bill was held on the 30th.

#### DRAFT LABOUR CONVENTION

The Council agreed without discussion to *Sir Joseph Bore's* resolution recommending to the Government not to ratify or accept the Draft Convention of the International Labour Conference, adopted at its tenth session, concerning the regulation of the hours of work in commerce and office, in hotels, restaurants and similar establishments, in theatres and other places of public amusement and in establishments for the treatment of sick or mentally unfit.

*Sir Joseph* pointed out that enquiries regarding these conventions had involved a very heavy expenditure and there was no likelihood of the provincial Governments agreeing to such enquiries. At the same time the Government's attitude should not be understood as meaning 'no action.'

#### CERTIFIED FINANCE BILL PASSED

**30th. MARCH**—The Finance Bill certified by the Governor-General came up for consideration and passage to-day in the Council of State.

*Sir Arthur McWatters*, Finance Secretary, in moving for consideration of the Bill referred to the exceptional provisions imposing taxation under customs, excise and income-tax and alluded to the reduction made in respect of income-tax of little over crore as a result of the Assembly's demand. Despite this the Assembly refused to pass the Bill as recommended and insisted on the cut amounting to 235 lakhs, while the Government was prepared for a reduction in additional taxation to the extent of 105 lakhs. The amount at issue, therefore, was 130 lakhs.

The Finance Secretary, proceeding, alluded to the economies made in military expenditure and also in the civil side and declared it was impossible to economise further. Hence, the Governor-General's recommendation and certification with a view to present a balanced budget which was so essential to India's credit was to remain uninjured. India's loss would be very much larger through deterioration of credit if the deficit was uncovered. He, therefore, pleaded for an unanimous vote in presenting a soundly balanced budget.

*Mr. B. K. Basu* (Calcutta) viewed the Bill from the standpoint of the ways and means position and said the situation had considerably improved due to the Irwin-Gandhi settlement which had such a psychological effect that London investors began to re-enter the Indian market and already since the day of the agreement the Government of India had been able to secure 16 crores which would enable the Government to meet heavy maturities this month and if the same improvement continued they would be able to meet 20 crores of maturities next month.

Proceeding, *Mr. Basu* said the Finance Member should take advantage of this unexpected transformation in the financial credit of India and if necessary float in order a loan of 50 crores to wipe off short term loans.

Concluding, he attributed to the Members of the Executive Council the responsibility for the certified Finance Bill and said the good and outgoing Viceroy had been badly served on this important question. He suggested that the conference of party leaders of the Central Legislature could have been held earlier and the catastrophe could have been avoided.

*Lala Ramsaranadas* did not agree in the logic of *Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoj* and as an elected member he felt it his duty to safeguard the interests of his electorate and of the country at large. Some years ago the Government were able to balance the budget without recourse to extra taxation and the same could have been done this year as well. At a time when unemployment was the greatest problem and when people were starving the Government were imposing fresh taxation to the extent of 15 crores. Retrenchment was the only remedy and that should be effected in the top-heavy civil and military services and not by merely postponing the re-equipment charges.

*Mr. Hussain Imam* (Patna) regretted that such a heavy taxation measure was being imposed on the eve of constitutional changes and there was a good deal of distrust regarding the safeguards. He criticised the policy of the Government contracting currency and after quoting the position in Germany, France, England and other countries, he said the Government of India's policy had led to nervousness in the minds of the people.

The speaker condemned the capitation charges in the army. The heavy burden of taxation on the people would make it impossible for India to recover and be ready for the new constitution.

*Sir Akbar Khan* felt the tax on kerosene oil would hit the poor, while raising the rate on income-tax of the middle class people was unjustified. He wanted an assurance that fresh additional taxes would only be temporary. He joined in the plea for a reduction in the military expenditure.

*Mr. Shib Dev Singh Uberoi* said the new taxation was the last straw on the camel's back and thought if the Government had effected further retrenchment, they could have balanced the budget without recourse to recommendations and certifications. At any rate the middle classes required relief from increased taxation on their income.

*Mr. Ghose Maulick* also attacked the Finance Bill from the point of the heavy military expenditure where he argued for a reduction by way of Indianisation.

*Mr. E. Miller* (Bombay) opposed the fresh taxation from the point of view of the European trade, particularly the tax on transport. He opined that if relief was possible it should go to the help of those who were engaged in transport.

*Deewan Bahadur G. Narayanswami Chetty* opposed the duty on kerosene and increased tax on middle classes and pleaded for help to salt manufacturers in their attempt to compete with imported foreign salt.

*Mr. A. Hamid* (Burma) said the people of Burma had taken the increases in taxation rather seriously and during the last few days he had received several messages urging him to oppose the new taxes. He severely criticised the working of the income-tax department as inconsiderate and unsympathetic and attributed the opposition to any new taxation in part at least to the feeling of resentment at the working of that department. He joined in the plea for the reduction of the salaries of officials and reminded the Government of India that the officials in Burma were prepared to have their salaries reduced if the Government of India would give the lead.

*Sir Arthur McWatters* was glad there was unanimity of opinion for the motion he had made. He said that the heavy taxation was regrettable but was inevitable this year and assured the House that when the emergency disappeared then the fresh income-tax burdens would be lifted. Meanwhile he assured them on behalf of the Government that they would proceed in the task of retrenchment wherever possible.

The Finance Bill as recommended was then taken into consideration. Several amendments were moved but were either rejected or ruled out of order. By 32 votes against 6 the Council rejected the amendment of the *Raja Dhudhoria* for the reduction of the income-tax rate by one pie in the case of incomes up to Rs. 10,000 and a two pies reduction in the case of incomes in some of upper grades.

The Finance Bill as recommended by the Governor-General was then passed and the Council adjourned till the 1st. April.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

*1st. APRIL* :—The bills imposing a temporary duty on imported salt and wheat, as passed by the Assembly, were laid on the table to-day. These and the bill amending the Factories Act which was in the hands of members since yesterday remained to be disposed of. The President invited suggestions in this respect as under the rules two clear days' notice must be given to the House.

Regarding the Factories Bill, which was acknowledged as non-controversial, there was no objection to immediate consideration and accordingly the House passed it without discussion. But as for the other two measures dealing with wheat and salt these were considered by the non-official members as important and also controversial.

They objected to legislation like the Salt Bill being brought forward at the fag end of the session.

*Mr. Dutta* did not speak up even when requested by some members, but he was understood in the press gallery to suggest that Government by treating the Council of State in this manner were fostering the public feeling against that body.

*Mr. Ghose-Maulik* suggested that the Salt Bill be taken into consideration to-morrow. The President agreed and ruled that it be taken into consideration to-morrow.

Regarding the Wheat Bill *Rai Bahadur Lala Ramsaran Das* supported by *Sir Akbar Khan* wanted it to be taken into consideration to-morrow and to that extent suspend the standing orders.

#### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

The President, who was also inaudible in the press gallery, was understood to sympathise with the members in that they were not given full time. At the same time he informed *Mr. P. C. Datta* that at no time did any member of Government press the President to shorten the notice to any extent and, therefore, the impression that the Government was trying to force the Council to take up the bills without giving sufficient time for consideration was wrong. But in view of the experience over the Finance Bill, he had a certain observation to make. The Finance Secretary had suggested the other day the idea of amending the Collection of Taxes Act so that the Government could collect taxes within 40 days instead of as now within 30 days after the introduction of the Finance Bill. The president thought that this extension of the time by 10 days would only provide an inducement to dilatory methods in respect of the Finance Bill and reiterated the suggestion he made previous to his becoming President of this House that the introduction of the budget should be advanced by one week so that the voting on demands for grants might be got out of the way by the end of the first week of March and from then onwards the legislature would have time to consider the Finance Bill.

#### DUTY ON FOREIGN SALT

*2nd. APRIL* :—The last sitting of the session of the Council of State was held

to-day with a thin non-official attendance. The Bill imposing a temporary additional duty on foreign salt and the Wheat Bill were the only two measures on the agenda.

Regarding the former, the Finance secretary surveyed the report of the Tariff Board and the salient points contained therein and pointed out the fact that the Government had accepted in principle that they should make over to the provinces which consumed imported salt the proceeds of this extra duty. The Bill was based on the belief that there was a majority of public opinion in favour of the policy of developing the internal salt sources in India.

None objected to the consideration of the Bill, but *Mr. Ghose Maulik*, speaking on clause 4, opined that the remedy proposed by the Government might prove worse than the disease. By reason alike of the quality and quantity of the salt produced in Madras and Karachi and by reason also of the cost of that inferior salt, Bengal would not take that salt and preferred to take foreign salt. The Bill was hasty and ill-considered.

*Sir Arthur McWatters*, Finance Secretary, did not agree with *Mr. Ghose Maulik* and explained how the proposed Government action would help to keep the price of imported salt at a reasonable level, and said the Bill gave power to the Government to remove the duty at the end of the year.

Clause 4 was passed, as also all other clauses, the only dissident throughout being *Mr. P. C. Dutta*, of Assam. When, therefore, the third reading was moved, *Mr. Dutta* was the only oppositionist voice, and he pointed out that the local Governments should have been consulted on this question and that the Government of India were treading on uncertain ground. The Bill was passed.

#### WHEAT BILL

The discussion on the Wheat Bill was somewhat prolonged.

*Mr. Woodhead*, Commerce Secretary, occupied half an hour in explaining the reasons for the Bill and pointing out that the existence of a large surplus of stock in Northern India must find a widened market in the interests of agriculturists. He assured the House that the import of wheat flour was perfectly negligible.

*Lala Ramsaran Das* confined his attention to the danger to Indian wheat threatened from Russia, where under a five year plan of intensive cultivation of wheat and extension of the area of cultivation there might be such a large crop that there was sure to be unfair dumping of wheat in India. He quoted statistics to prove that this was a possible danger and concluded with an appeal to the Government to be prepared to meet it whenever required.

*Mr. B. K. Basu* (Calcutta) congratulated the Punjab wheat-growers on their ability to move the stony heart of the central Government to take up the cause of the Bengal jute-growers, whose condition was very acute.

*Chaudhury Muhammad Din* and *Sardar Shidev Singh Uberoi*, both of the Punjab, *Sir Akbar Khan* of the Frontier and *Rai Bahadur Jagadish Prasad* of the United Provinces, all supported the Bill.

*Chaudhury Muhammad Din* warned the Government that there might be a movement for non-payment of tax by the Punjab landlords if at any time their situation happened to be worse than it now was.

Both *Chaudhury Muhammad Din* and *Sardar Shivdev Singh* expressed their misgivings over clause 3, while *Sir Akbar Khan* said that zamindars could not pay land revenue if the price of wheat were to go down below Rs. 3 per maund. All however joined in assuring *Mr. B. K. Basu* of support to any Bill to support the jute-growers. *Mr. Miles Irwing* informed the House that the Punjab Government had already shown their interest in cultivation by foregoing revenue to the extent of Rs. 30 lakhs this year.

*Mr. Woodhead*, Commerce Secretary, would not agree to the idea of a permanent embargo in the importation of wheat, which was at the back of the mind of *Lala Ramsaran Das*. As one coming from the jute-growing districts of east Bengal, *Mr. Woodhead* asked for a constructive suggestion from *Mr. Basu*.

The Bill was taken into consideration and there was opposition only to clause 3, which, however, was feeble. The Bill was passed, *Mr. Devadas* protesting against the principle of taxing foodstuffs.

This concluded the business of the term and the Council adjourned *sine die*.

# The Legislative Assembly

President :—Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola.

The fourth Legislative Assembly opened its first session at New Delhi on the 14th JANUARY, 1931. As soon as the House sat the Secretary read a message from the Viceroy appointing Mr. Shanmukham Chetty as Chairman. The message was applauded and Mr. Chetty took the chair amidst cheers. He announced that in order to constitute the fourth Assembly, the members were to take the oath. He took the oath himself before taking his seat.

After oath-taking, the Chairman Mr. Chetty, referred to the notice of an adjournment motion from Mr. Jog relating to the death sentences passed upon four persons of Sholapur in respect of whose guilt there had been difference of opinion between the Judges of the Bombay High Court. The notice was received here on the night of January 12. Mr. Jog wished to know if the newspaper report of the execution of the death sentences was correct.

Sir James Crerar answered in the affirmative.

Thereupon Mr. Jog withdrew the motion.

15th. JANUARY :—The Assembly held the first business meeting to-day when six Government bills were introduced.

## BILL TO AMEND MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT

Sir George Rainy introduced a bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Act with a view to give effect to the Draft Conventions adopted by the International Labour Convention relating to seamen in 1920 and 1926.

## BILL TO SUPPLEMENT CR. P. ( PUNJAB AMENDMENT ) ACT

Sir James Crerar next introduced a bill supplementing the Criminal Procedure ( Punjab Amendment ) Act, 1930, providing for an appeal to the High Court by any person convicted by commissioners under the local Act.

## BILL TO SUPPLEMENT BENGAL CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT

The Home Member next introduced a bill to supplement the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1930. The object of the bill is to re-enact sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Supplementary Act of 1925 and thus to supplement the provisions against the commission of terrorist crimes in Bengal and the organisation of conspiracies to this end.

## PRESS BILL

Sir James Crerar next introduced a bill to provide for the better control of Presses, designed to give the powers conferred by the Press Ordinance and to give it duration of one year with power to the Governor-General to extend it, if necessary, for a year at a time, for a further period of two years.

When the leave of the House was asked for the introduction of this bill there were a few voices of 'No, No' but a division was not challenged.

## UNLAWFUL INSTIGATION BILL

The Home Member next introduced the Unlawful Instigation Bill which gives the powers given by the Ordinance and is limited to one year.

Both the Press Bill and the Unlawful Instigation Bill, when enacted, supersede the Ordinances and save action being taken under the Ordinances.

## BILL RE. COUNTERFEITING CURRENCY

Finally, Sir George Schuster introduced a Bill to give effect to the International Convention for the suppression of counterfeiting currency. The Government of India signed at Geneva in April 1929 a Convention on the subject but it was necessary before ratifying it that the Indian law be brought into line with its provisions. The bill aimed at doing it. The House then adjourned.

17th. JANUARY :—The Assembly met to-day to elect its president. The contest was between Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola and Sir. Harisingh Gour. After the counting,

Mr. Chetty, the Chairman, declared that Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoolla had secured 76 votes and Sir Harisingh Gour, 36.

There were general cheers at the announcement of the result.

#### The Viceroy's Address

The House at this stage adjourned to hear the Viceroy's address. The following is the text of His Excellency's speech :—

"It is my privilege to-day to welcome members of this House to the opening session of the fourth Legislative Assembly. Among them are many who have already made their names in public life and if we regret, as we must, the absence of some who have hitherto been frequent participants in our debates we are glad to see again many who are well-known to the Assembly along with others of proved quality in other fields who have come forward to serve their country in this sphere.

"My first duty is to offer my sincere congratulations to your President on his election to his responsible and honourable office. He brings to his duties a wide experience of public affairs and of Legislative procedure and I am confident that he will discharge his important functions with dignity and with wise impartiality. Though the election has on this occasion been contested, I have no doubt that now that the decision of the House has been taken the President will, on all occasions, be able to count upon the loyal support of all parties and persons in it.

"I would have wished that this Assembly might have been convened for its first meeting at such a date as would have enabled those of its members who have attended the Round Table Conference to be in their places at the beginning of the session. There are, however, certain fixed dates and certain requirements of procedure which have limited my choice in this matter. The Railway Budget must be completed in time to permit us to bring the second half of the General Budget before the House at the beginning of March. Moreover, on the occasion of a new Assembly, the Standing Finance Committee, which at other times complete the greater part of their task before the beginning of the session, have to be reconstituted. There are also important measures of legislation to which I must presently refer and for which it was clearly essential to give ample time for discussion. These were all reasons which would have made delay inconvenient. On this particular occasion, too, I was anxious that the work of the session should be completed before I laid down my office and, as the date of my departure from India was uncertain until a week or two ago, I felt it desirable, if possible, to conclude our business by about the third week in March. For these reasons I decided to summon the House in the middle of January and I trust that this may not have exposed Hon. Members to inconvenience. It has meant, I fear, the absence to-day of certain members from their places. But, while regretting this, I trust I have made plain the reasons that appeared to preclude the adoption of any other course.

"The same consideration of urgency did not apply to the Council of State and, as their session will not open until February, I have had to forego the pleasure of addressing them on this occasion. I shall hope, however, towards the close of the session to ask the members of Houses to give me an opportunity of taking my formal farewell of the Central Legislature.

"For myself, this occasion must necessarily be tinged with regret for the opening of the last session of the legislature with which I shall be concerned and it brings nearer the day when I shall have to say good bye to many friends in India amongst whom I am fortunate to count numbers, who are and who have been members of this House.

"I am, however, happy to think that when the time comes for me to lay down the responsibilities of my present charge, I shall hand them over to one well-known to India who is singularly well qualified to guide her destinies at this particular juncture, and who has, during a long and distinguished period of Indian public service, already assured for himself a place in the esteem and friendship of very many of India's people.

#### FRONTIER SITUATION.

"Before I speak of the Legislative and other business which will come before the House this session, there are certain important matters of more than departmental interest which deserve mention. Our relations with Foreign States along the whole of our great land Frontier continue to be of a cordial character. On the North-West Frontier the disturbances which marred the spring and summer months of last year have subsided and, except in your relation with the Afridis, normal condi-



tions may be said now to have been generally restored. As a result of two unprovoked invasions on the Peshawar district during the summer by lashkars of certain sections of the Afridi tribe, it was decided by my Government, with the concurrence of His Majesty's Government to take measures for the protection of Peshawar against the danger by preventing hostile concentrations from again using the Khajuri and Akakael plain on the western border of the Peshawar district as a base for such attacks. In pursuance of this decision some miles of road have been or are being constructed to link up the plain with adjoining areas in which communications have been developed and portions of the plain have been occupied by troops with negligible opposition. A considerable number of troops have been employed under very severe climatic conditions in these operations and have carried out their duties with the cheerfulness and efficiency that is always characteristic of the army in India.

"The situation created by the Afridi incursions compelled my Government in the interest of the public safety to impose martial law in the Peshawar District. The Chief Commissioner was appointed chief administrator of martial law and made every effort to ensure that there should be as little interference as possible with the ordinary administration. In this he was successful and, now that provision has been made otherwise for the continuance of certain emergency powers under a public safety regulation, the Martial Law Ordinance is being withdrawn.

"With the approval of my Government the Chief Commissioner, in July last, gave an undertaking that the administration of the five districts of the province would be scrutinised and if, on comparison with the adjoining districts of the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province administration appeared to be in any way deficient, especially in its beneficent activities, step would be taken, as funds admitted, to remedy the defects. The Chief Commissioner's proposals in fulfilment of this undertaking are now under consideration. Among other measures the re-assessment which was recently made of the Peshawar District has been revised to bring it into accord with the Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act with the result that the total assessment was reduced by some Rs. 60,000.

#### S. AFRICAN QUESTION

"Questions affecting Indians Overseas have, as always, claimed the special attention of my Government. When I last addressed this House I referred briefly the Land Tenure Bill introduced in the Assembly of the Union of South Africa, which had caused considerable alarm among Indians in the Transvaal. My Government sought counsel from the Standing Committee on Emigration on the far-reaching provisions of this measure and received from them valuable advice to guide them in their line of approach to this difficult and delicate problem. We fully recognise the serious implications of the Bill and, in particular, the effect it must have on the trading and business interests of the Indian community in the Transvaal. We are aware, too, of the feelings of deep concern which the Bill has aroused amongst those whose interests are threatened and of the sympathy which is felt for them by their compatriots in South Africa and in this country. I have given this question much anxious thought and personal attention. Every opportunity has been taken of representing the Indian point of view and as our Agent, Sir Kurma Reddi announced at the recent conference of the South Africa Indian Congress, our views will be communicated to the Union Government. It is unnecessary to assure the House that we are making every endeavour, in co-operation with the Union Government, to secure an equitable solution, and earnestly hope that the negotiation to be conducted by our representative will result, after full and frank discussion, in an agreement satisfactory to both sides.

"Turning to East Africa, Honorary members will remember that the conclusions of His Majesty's Government have now been referred to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. My Government are not ignorant of how widespread is the anxiety on the several questions that are involved, and they have submitted their views to this Committee through His Majesty's Secretary of State for India. We have further requested permission to present our case through a representative from India. I am glad to inform the House that, in the event of that request being accepted, it is hoped that our spokesman will be the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri whose readiness to undertake any duty in the service of his country has ever been so conspicuous a characteristic of his public career and who is shortly returning from the conference to resume his seat on the Royal Commission on Labour under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Whitley. That Commission, after sparing no pains to see for themselves the Labour conditions of

India and to hear all shades of opinion, are now engaged in drafting their report, and Hon. members who will be grateful to them for the manner in which they have prosecuted their enquiry will also be glad to hear that they expect to be able to complete their work next March.

#### FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

"I turn now to the main items of the business which will claim the attention of members. It will be part of your task to consider the measures for maintaining the financial position of India which will be placed before you in due course by my Government and I venture to say that there can have been no period in the history of the country when financial problems have needed not only so much earnest consideration, but also the co-operation of all the forces in India which have power to help the situation. In using these words I have in mind not merely the needs created by the present economic crisis, but the task of finding adequate financial resources to give the new constitution, now under discussion, a favourable start. India, like the rest of the world, has suffered seriously from an almost universal trade depression and in the nature of things has felt the full weight of the collapse in world prices of agricultural products. The trouble arising from the state of affairs, as I recently had cause to point out, are being seriously aggravated by the disturbances resulting from the Civil Disobedience movement.

"I do not wish to dwell at length on this subject of that movement to-day. Nor, indeed, is it profitable to indulge in recriminations about the past. What concerns us is the present and the future and I would ask all Hon. members to ponder deeply on the injury which the present dissensions are causing to the economic life of the country. If only distrust and attempts to paralyse Government could be replaced by a spirit of mutual confidence and co-operation, even in spite of the world crisis, we might see the dawn of a new optimism in India and the opening of new ways for the recuperation and development of her economic strength.

#### SPECIAL POWERS

"There are in particular two aspects of the Civil Disobedience movement to which I must invite the attention of Hon. members. A little less than a month ago I felt it my duty to have recourse again to the special powers which I took last year for the better control of the press and newspapers and for dealing with persons who may instigate others to refuse the fulfilment of certain lawful obligations. In doing so, I expressed my regret that the urgency of the emergency which necessitated the promulgation of these Ordinances, had not allowed me to await the meeting of the Central Legislature but I indicated the intention of my Government to bring these matters before this House at the earliest opportunity.

"That intention we now propose to carry into effect by introducing legislation on these two subjects forthwith and I must, therefore, briefly review the main factor which have led us to this decision.

#### RIVAL AUTHORITY

"A political movement must be judged and dealt with not according to the professions of those who initiate it or carry it into effect but in the light of practical results. Whatever may be or have been the true object underlying the present Civil Disobedience movement, Government still see in many parts of India determined efforts to substitute another authority for its own and to interfere with the maintenance of which Government is the constituted guardian. I need not at this stage detail the several forms which such activities have taken, but none, I think, is more pernicious or more cruel to those whom it endeavours to mislead than the pressure put upon payers of land revenue and other liabilities to withhold payments that they are legally bound to make. In certain parts of the country those responsible for the movement have successfully instigated the withholding of such payments, and in other parts vigorous efforts are being made to this end. It is very easy to see how such a programme can be put forward in an attractive guise, especially at a time when the low prices of agricultural products have unhappily created a situation of great gravity.

"I would once more make it very plain that the special powers taken by Government are in no way intended to modify the usual policy followed by local Governments of granting suspension or remission of land revenue when economic circumstances demand it. Indeed, while the necessity of combating these insidious and dangerous attempts to cripple the administration constrained them to

take these powers, I attach great importance to them as a means by which small agriculturists may be saved from the effects of such propaganda by people who themselves have little to lose, but who are callously ready to involve the small landholder in the risks of legal processes and even forfeiture of his land. Legislation on this subject will accordingly be laid before you. We also propose to ask this House to give legislative sanction for a limited period to the provisions contained in the Press Ordinance issued a few weeks ago.

#### VIOLENT CRIMES

"Apart from the activities of the kind to which I have just referred and which in themselves constitute so grave a menace to the public tranquility, we have lately witnessed a disturbing increase in those crimes of violence which have deeply stained the fair name of India and which, I know, are as abhorrent to the members of this House as they are to all other reasonable persons. The experience of the past few months leaves no doubt as to the existence of an organisation whose insane objective it is to promote the overthrow of established Government by the deliberate creation of a state of terrorism. I know that vast majority of Indians deplore the growth of movement wholly foreign to their tradition and instincts and I see in the wide condemnation of outrage, in particular, in the indignation evolved by the attack on His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab, a growing recognition of the urgent and paramount need of removing this malignant cancer in the life of India.

"I desire to express my deep sympathy with the relatives of all who have fallen victims at the hands of assassins and I gladly pay a high tribute to the skill and courage of those who, at the constant risk of their lives are engaged in the detection and prevention of terrorist plans. The devotion to duty of the officers, high and low, of every Department of Government, in difficult and often dangerous circumstances, has been a feature of the past year of which all branches of the service may well feel proud. I and my Government, in our sphere, shall spare no effort to protect our officers and the public, but, whatever action Government may take in this matter, it cannot achieve complete success unless, it is assisted by the whole-hearted determination of every citizen to stamp out such evil thing from their society. I earnestly appeal to all who have at heart India's good name to show by action and words which will admit of no doubt or reservation that they regard the terrorist movement with repugnance and those who are actively engaged in it or extend to it their sympathy or support are the worst enemies of India.

#### CRIME OF THE PRESS

"Among other influences which have undoubtedly tended to the encouragement of such revolutionary methods and violent crimes are certain sections of the Press whose reiterated laudation of false sentiment and of distorted patriotism lead all too often to the injection of deadly poison into a certain type of mind. Fair criticism of the administration or of our constitutional proposals I do not fear. I rather welcome it. But when the great power of the Press is exerted from its true functions to dangerous and destructive doctrine, Government can no longer stand aside. I am very well aware that the two projects of legislation to which I have referred must excite keen discussion and perhaps controversy, and I would gladly have avoided controversy at this time, had I felt in to be possible.

Profoundly hoping as I do that the outcome of the Round Table Conference may be to assist the speedy restoration of normal conditions, I should have preferred, if I could, to suspend action and await the advent of a situation in which special powers would no longer be required. But, so far as the terrorist movement is concerned, there is little ground for supposing that those who direct it are likely to be deterred from their course by constitutional agreements that may be reached and, for the rest, it is not possible for Government to play the role of benevolent spectators so long as those who have been endeavouring to destroy its foundations at every point show no sign of abating their activities. It, therefore, seemed clear to my Government that, in the face of these facts it would be a dereliction of our duty to refrain from taking the necessary protective action and it also seemed clear to them that, on such vital issues, the members of the House had both the right and the duty to express their views. I am confident that, when they examine our proposals, they will do so with a deep sense of the responsibility which they share with Government for preserving the peace and stability of the country.

"I have never concealed my view that action of this kind, necessary as it is, will of itself give us the remedy that we seek for the present discontents and, during the past months, the thoughts of all who have believed that honourable agreement is not beyond our grasp have been focussed upon the proceedings of the Conference in London. There were those, both in India and Great Britain, who openly scorned its meeting and, before and since it met, have made scant concealment of their hope that it would fail, little mindful of the gravity of the times and of the need for their redemption on both sides by practical and courageous statesmanship. From the outset there were many among the delegates from India who must have been conscious of the fact that their own faith in the efficiency of constitutional methods was not shared by many of their compatriots. In these circumstances it demanded from them no small degree of political courage to disregard the powerful pressure to which they were exposed and men of every opinion can well afford to recognise the sense of public duty which impelled them to do what they deemed right in the face of much bitter contumely of those who went to England.

"There is one to whom I must make a special reference, for I feel assured that we should all wish to join in an expression of deep sorrow that one of the most notable personalities of the Conference should not have been permitted to witness the outcome of the labours to which, as it proved, he gave his last days of life.

"The Conference, graciously opened by His Majesty the King-Emperor, is now about to conclude its labours and we await with eager interest the announcement to be made by the Prime Minister in the next few days. Pending that announcement, I content myself with pointing to certain things which already stand out in sharp relief. The first undoubtedly is the recognition by the Indian States of the essential unity of all India and their readiness to take their full share in designing the instruments of Government through which that conception of unity may gain concrete expression and effect. I do not underrate the difficulties that still have to be surmounted before these aspirations can be realised in their entirety. But those need not blind us to the far-reaching and deep significance of the step taken by the States' representatives in London. I scarcely think I exaggerate when I say that the historian a hundred years hence, commenting on these times, will find in it the turning point of the constitutional history of India.

"The Conference has had two further results that seem to me of incalculable value. At the time of its convention the atmosphere was clouded with misunderstandings on both sides. Opinion in Great Britain was ill-informed of the realities of thought in India. Opinion in India even in circles where so-called moderate views prevailed, was suspicious and sceptical of the purpose of Great Britain. If ignorance and suspicion still linger they represent the rear guard, and no longer the main body of opinion in the two countries. Great Britain has realised, as she has heard it at first hand from all sections of the Indian delegation, something of the new forces that are animating the political thought of India: while India, feeling no longer that she is misunderstood, is better prepared to recognise that British statesmen have approached the problem not indeed ignoring real difficulties, but with a single will to find means by which they may be speedily and securely resolved. And thus it might appear that all who have longed to see the Conference bear fruit for the true healing of the nations may take new hope.

"The London discussions have revealed a genuine desire on all sides to find practical means by which speedy and substantial recognition may be given to the natural claims of Indian political thought. There is no one who will not deplore the fact that the work of the Conference should have been so gravely impeded. Any constitution that is to work smoothly must obviously command the confidence of all communities and in this matter India can help herself more than anybody else can help her. I would most earnestly trust that leaders of all communities would once more come together, resolved no longer to allow the constitutional progress of India to be impeded by this cause, or India herself to lie under this reproach of an internal discord and mistrust.

#### MAHATMA GANDHI

Apart from this it is evident that to many of those participating in the Conference the influence of personal contact with men of differing views, along with the inspiration of the new and wider vision of a united India that the Conference has unfolded, has had the effect of presenting an old problem in new guise and of leading them to revise some of their earlier views upon it. That way lies the best possibility for both countries to return to the conditions of peace and harmony that we all desire. Many times during the last twelve months thoughtful men and

women must have pondered deeply over what has been one of their most poignant and perplexing features. However mistaken any man may think him to be and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy associated with his name, no one can fail to recognise the spiritual force which impells Mr. Gandhi to count no sacrifice too great in the cause, as he believes, of the India that he loves, and I fancy that, though he on his side, too, thinks those who differ from him to be the victims of a false philosophy, Mr. Gandhi would not be unwilling to say that men of my race who are to-day responsible for the Government of India, were sincere in their attempt to serve her. It has been one of the tragedies of this time that, where ultimate purposes have perhaps differed little, if at all, the methods employed by some should have been, as I conceive, far more calculated to impede than to assist the accomplishment of that largely common end. And deeply as I crave to see the dawn of a happier day in India, I am bound, so long as a movement designed to undermine and sap the foundations of Government holds the front place in the programme of the great Congress organisation, to resist it to the uttermost of my strength. Is it not possible, I would ask, for those responsible for this policy to try another course that, in the light, on the one hand, of sinister events in India and on the other of the encouragement offered to India by the progress of the Conference in England, would seem to be an excellent way? A great deal remains to be done, for it has long been generally recognised that if and when the broad lines of constitutional revision could be drawn, much subsequent detailed thought would be required for its adjustment to the particular circumstances of India. Quite evidently it would be for the good of India that the best elements, both here and in Great Britain, should join hands in the work of elaborating and bringing to fruition the undertaking so well begun in London and thus place the seal of friendship once again upon the relations of two peoples whom unhappy circumstances have latterly estranged. On the wide basis of friendship and mutual respect alone can be confidently build the structure of a strong and self-reliant India, one within herself and one with the other partners in the British Commonwealth. I feel confident that I can count on every member of this House to lend at all times such assistance as may be in his power to the furtherance of a work so fraught with consequence to the welfare of India, of Great Britain and of that empire in which I very earnestly pray India may for all time be proud to take her place.

#### PRESS & UNLAWFUL INSTIGATION BILLS

19th. JANUARY:—In the Assembly to-day, Sir James Creer announced the postponement of the Press Bill and the Unlawful Instigation Bill in view of the representations made to him from various sections of the House that the Premier was to make a momentous statement and that it was undesirable to take action at this critical juncture. The Government, however, reserved the liberty to proceed further with the bills while the Assembly was still sitting, or if an occasion should arise when this may be impracticable, to tender such advice to the Governor-General as the circumstances might appear to them to require.

Mr. Rangachariar welcomed the postponement of the bills which his side of the House was determined to oppose, but regretted that the Government was unable to suspend the Ordinances to create an atmosphere of earnest goodwill for which the Viceroy has pleaded.

#### PUNJAB CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ACT

The House held a prolonged debate on the Punjab Criminal Procedure Supplementary Bill, which was passed without amendment.

Sir James Creer pointed out that the Bill provided for an appeal to the High Court by a convicted person on a trial held by commissioners under the Local Emergency Act and for submission to the High Court of any death sentences.

Mr. Jagannath Agarwal, on behalf of the Punjab, entered an emphatic protest against this piecemeal legislation and wanted the Government to bring a consolidated measure embodying the Punjab Act for a proper appreciation of the situation and examination by this House as to the propriety or desirability of either the Punjab Act or this Bill. An undesirable provision making an inroad on the criminal law of the land had been incorporated in the Punjab Act, and the present supplementary Bill was conferring the right of appeal. This was the only redeeming feature. He reminded this House that in the Punjab Legislative Council, Sir Henry Craik had stated that if this Bill was not passed by the Assembly, it would be certified. Mr.

Agarwal objected to the Assembly's consent to the Bill being 'bartered away behind its back.

Mr. *Bhagatram Puri* (Punjab) joined Mr. Agarwal in recording a protest but entered into such a detailed discussion of the merits of the Punjab Act that often times he was called to order by the Chair. But the first ruling given by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoolah was in Mr. Puri's favour. This was when Mr. Moore objected to Mr. Puri's examination of the Punjab Act regarding the wiping out of the committal procedure.

Mr. Puri continuing his speech alluded to the absence of jury trial, though the status of the commissioners was of a sessions court, and hearsay statements being admissible as evidence without being cross-examined by the accused.

Sir *Abdul Rahim* regretted the anomalous position of the House discussing the Bill without discussing the Punjab Act. It would have been much more satisfactory if Sir James Crerar had explained the silent provisions of the Punjab Act. The House could not discuss the Punjab Act though it was an extraordinary Law. It was extraordinary that an emergency act was given a life of five years. It was a new definition of emergency. He knew how some special Acts which came to the High Court were extremely illusory regarding safeguards to the accused. He hoped that the accused under this Bill had real powers. That being so, he did not oppose the Bill.

Sir *B. L. Mitter* Law Member, pointed out that the Bill was intended to mitigate the rigours of the Punjab Act and fill a lacuna therein which the Punjab Council could not do. Speaking with experience of Bengal special tribunals, he stated that in not one instance was the decision of a tribunal reversed by the High Court. Nor was there any charge in the press that the trial had been unfair to the accused. (*A voice: Question*). So good was the administration of the Bengal Special Act that though it was originally opposed by a section of the people of Bengal, it was passed without division in the Bengal Council.

The Independents supported the Bill but wished to make it clear that they dissociated themselves from the Punjab Act.

Sir *H. S. Gour* said that if an accused was to have the right of appeal, it was contingent upon his getting the right of a sort of trial which under the Punjab Act was denied to him. There was to be no jury trial which was extended to the people of India after a strenuous fight in the legislature. He recalled Sir Henry Craik's remark in the Punjab Council that there was another device (*Voices: 'device' and ironical cheers*), namely, certification.

Mr. *Shahnawaz* supported the Bill but did not like the Punjab Act and wished the Government of India either to ask the Punjab Government to amend it or allow a non-official member of the House to table such a Bill.

Messrs. *Shahni*, *Ankleasaria* and *Jog* also spoke after which the motion to consider the Bill was passed and the House rose for lunch.

Within a few minutes of the Assembly meeting after lunch, in a thin House and without any further discussion or division, the Punjab Criminal Procedure Amendment Act Supplementary Bill was passed, voice of dissent being mainly from the Punjab block.

#### TERRORIST CRIME IN BENGAL.

Sir *James Crerar*, moving the consideration of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act Supplementary Bill referred to the recrudescence of terrorist crimes in Bengal in 1925, which necessitated an Ordinance by Lord Reading. The Ordinance was afterwards replaced by the Act of 1925 passed by the local legislature. Those provisions of that Act which related to the appointment of commissioners, were continued for a further period of five years by the 1930 Act which was similarly passed by the Bengal Council. In this latter Act, the Bengal Government did not propose the continuance of the powers of the 1925 Act which conferred the powers of arrest and detention. But the Chittagong and other outrages necessitated Ordinance I of 1930 which restored the powers of arrest and detention. That Ordinance was replaced by the local Government by an act passed in August last year continuing for a further period of five years the powers which had been conferred by the Ordinance. The object of the present Bill is to re-enact the sections of the supplementary Act of 1925 and thus provide against the commission of terrorist crimes in Bengal. It empowers the local Government with the sanction of the Government of India, to order committing to custody in jail outside Bengal any detenué.

Sir James Crerar stated that the terrorists had their contact within jails and there was apprehension that some rich detenues might bribe the subordinate jail officials. Sir James assured that no transfers would be made by the Government of India without a careful scrutiny of the case. The Home Member appealed to the House to assist the Bengal Government in dealing with a difficult and dangerous situation.

The non-official protest came from the Independent party through Mr. *Abdul Matin Chaudhury* who objected to the haste and hurry of this legislation, which embodied the dangerous principle of deportation and exile to distant jails, thereby making impossible for the poor detenue to see his relatives. After all, these detenues were not criminals but only suspected to be connected with the terrorist movement. This Bill would be used as an instrument of torture against the detenues whose lot would be harder than that of the political prisoners in the Czarist regime.

Sir *Abdur Rahim* urged that a measure of this sort, which gave power to detain persons in custody without trial, should not go beyond the limits of strict necessity. If there were undesirable detenues in Bengal, why should that Government transfer them on to the shoulder of another province. The detenues should not be removed from the wholesome influence of their well-wishers. In Indian jails even the consolation of religion was often denied to the prisoners.

Mr. *Lahiri Choudhury* described the Bill as unreasonable and lawless and expatiated on the disabilities of the detenues.

*20th. JANUARY:—*The debate on the Bill was resumed to-day and the motion for circulation was supported by Sir Hari Singh Gour, Maulana Mohammed Yakub, Dr. Subrawardy and Mr. Biswas, while Mr. Anwarul Azim, supporting the Bill, felt that it contained nothing to frighten the law-abiding citizens. Sir Hari Singh Gour held that the Bill was a revival of the 1925 legislation which the Assembly had thrown out by a majority of 44. The whole question, he said, boiled down to this, whether the House was willing to get people imprisoned without a trial.

Sir *James Crerar*, after a closure had been accepted by the House, winding the debate, stated that there had been 42 outrages in Bengal during the last two years and 22 after the enactment of the local Act. He recognised that the terrorist movement was not confined to Bengal alone but existed all over India, but the method suggested in the Bill for dealing with the terrorists was the only effective one and was the result of long executive and judicial experience. They had repeated reports from the Bengal Government that there were serious apprehensions of the breaking-up of the jail discipline there and the Government of India felt that they would be failing in their duty if they did not come to the rescue of the Bengal Government at this critical juncture. He frankly admitted that the transfer of the detenus from Bengal did entail serious hardships to the accused but the Government had done their best to mitigate these hardships in the past and if the Bill was accepted by the Assembly he gave an undertaking that those efforts would be continued. Lastly, Sir James Crerar appealed to the House to face facts and discharge their responsibility in the same way as the Provincial Council had done.

The House divided and accepted the motion of Mr. S. C. Mitra for circulation of the Bill by 64 votes to 48 to elicit opinion by the end of March. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS.

*21st. JANUARY:—*The Assembly held sitting for half an hour to-day when two Bills were referred to Select Committees, one was passed and the fourth introduced without a debate.

On the motion of Sir George Rainy, the House referred the Indian Merchant Shipping Act Amending Bill to a Select Committee.

Sir George Schuster next moved for the consideration of the Bill to give effect to the international conventions for the suppression of counterfeiting of currency, but told the House that if they desired a Select Committee on it, as he gathered from the notice paper, he had no objection to it. On the motion of Dr. Ziauddin, the House referred the Bill to a Select Committee.

Sir George Rainy next moved for the consideration of the Indian Posts Act Amending Bill which was passed.

The House next allowed Sir Lancelot Graham to introduce a Bill to define and amend the law relating to partnership. Detailing the history of the Bill, he said

that, in pursuance of the resolution of the Government of India on 24th March 1930, a special committee with the Law Member as Chairman, was appointed to amend and bring up-to-date the law relating to partnership. The Bill before the House, he said, followed the recommendations of that Committee.

#### MR. CHETTY ELECTED DY. PRESIDENT.

22nd. JANUARY:—The election of the Deputy President was the only business before the Assembly to-day. The chairman announced that there were only two candidates and Mr. Amarnath Dutt having withdrawn Mr. Shanmukham Chetty had been unanimously elected Deputy President.

26th. JANUARY:—When the Assembly met to-day after the week-end recess, there was general satisfaction in the lobbies at the statesmanlike announcement by Lord Irwin regarding the release of Congress leaders, and it was held that this made both an adjournment motion and a joint all-party resolution in the Assembly improbable.

#### GRANT TO HINDU UNIVERSITY.

Replying to Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh regarding the payment of grants-in-aid to the Benares Hindu University, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain said that a non-recurring grant of Rs. 15,00,000 payable in three instalments, viz., Rs. 3,00,000 in 1929-30 and Rs. 6,00,000 in each of the years 1931-32, had been sanctioned in 1929 for the Benares Hindu University. The first instalment was paid in September, 1929. The payment of the second instalment was deferred pending the receipt of certain information which had been called for regarding the financial and general administration of the University.

#### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT.

Replying to a question of Mr. Sant Singh, Sir James Crerar said that those convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience up to the end of December, 1930, were 54,049, while those undergoing imprisonment at the end of December were 23,503. The provincial figures respectively of those (1) sentenced to imprisonment for Civil Disobedience offences, and (2) now undergoing imprisonment are as follows:—Madras 3,998 and 2,110; Bombay 9732 and 3,833; Bengal 11,463 and 2,973; U.P. 7,606 and 1,555; the Punjab 3,561 and 1,349; Bihar and Orissa 10,899 and 4,980; C. P. 3,861, and 2,139; Assam 1,089, and 291; N. W. F. P. 761 and 337; Coorg 6 and 4, and Delhi 1,073 and 953. The casualties among the public during April, May, June and July due to firing were 101 killed and 427 wounded. The figures after July were being collected.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS.

Eight official Bills were next introduced. Mr. Young, Army Secretary, introducing a Bill amending the Cantonment Act explained that its object was to remove certain minor defects which have come to light since the 1924 Act had been passed.

The Army Secretary introducing the Territorial Force Bill pointed out that the present Act did not empower the Government to prescribe extra voluntary training for persons enrolled under the Act.

The Bill amending the Auxiliary Force Bill, which was next introduced, was intended to empower the Government to make rules for the grant of pay and allowances to persons who may be required to undergo military training but not liable to perform military service.

Sir George Rainy introduced the Vizagapatam Ports Bill providing for the transfer of certain powers from the Madras Government to the Government of India as the port was a major port.

The Army Secretary introduced a Bill giving effect to the treaty of limitation and reduction of the naval armament.

Sir George Rainy introduced a Bill giving effect to the Tariff Board's recommendations for the development of gold thread industry and restoring the duty on silver plate to 30 per cent *ad valorem* from April 1, 1931.

He also introduced a Bill giving effect to the Tariff Board's recommendations connected with railway materials made of steel.



Sir George Schuster introduced a Bill amending the Income-tax Act, by which an official trustee may be appointed sole trustee of private provident fund.

#### NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

27th. JANUARY:—Eight non-official Bills were introduced to-day after short speeches. Mr. Bhupat Singh had two Bills intended to prohibit the export trade in cattle meat and Indian cattle by providing six months' imprisonment for any one who commits this offence.

Sir Hari Singh Gour introduced a Bill incorporating a new clause in the Bar Councils Act, so that the King's counsel means a person so appointed from among the legal practitioners in India.

Sir Hari Singh argued that the inclusion of the King's counsel and giving them seniority over all barristers was based on the assumption that some Indian barristers would be granted English silk and that failing that the Government of India would take steps to establish Dominion silk as was the practice even in the smallest of Crown colonies. Four years had passed since the Act was passed but that assumption had not been realised with the result that under the existing law English and colonial barristers were raised to the rank of King's counsel, though much junior to their confreres in India had become entitled to rank above them and the latter were penalised by the sole fact of their having practised in India. The creation of Dominion silk appeared the only course possible. Sir Hari Singh Gour hoped that this would be a step in the direction of developing an independent Indian bar.

#### SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT

Sir Hari Singh Gour also introduced a Bill amending the Special Marriage Act of 1872 providing for the contract of civil marriage by persons who may so desire—a disability which at present is merely territorial. He emphasised that such marriage should be optional and would leave intact the existing personal laws which control performances of marriages.

#### ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh introduced a Bill to abolish the punishment of death for offences under the Penal Code. He made it clear that the Bill was not intended to affect any statute of the British Parliament applicable to India nor affect discipline in His Majesty's forces. He added that the plea that capital punishment acts as a deterrent is not borne out by the experience of modern States.

#### DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGES

Sir Hari Singh Gour introduced a Bill to remove certain doubts regarding the dissolution of marriages of persons professing the Hindu religion. It provides, notwithstanding any law or custom to the contrary, that a Hindu wife shall be entitled to obtain a declaration of the invalidity of a marriage or its dissolution for any of the following reasons:—(a) impotency of husband, (b) his inebility and (c) the fact that he was suffering from sanious or ulcerous leprosy.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh introduced a Bill to amend the Criminal Procedure Code so that in cases of orders under sec. 144 which are restrictive of the rights of free speech and association of public meetings, the orders shall be based on evidence duly recorded and that *ex parte* orders shall not have force for more than 43 hours.

Finally, Mr. Gaya Prasad introduced Bill to omit clause B. of sub-section (1) of sec. 5 of the Telegraph Act under which there is a restraint put on the freedom of communicating information. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### PROTECTION TO GALVANISED IRON AND STEEL

28th. JANUARY:—The main business before the Assembly to-day was the consideration of a Government resolution Sir George Rainy moved a resolution that the increased import duties imposed by the notification dated December 30 last on galvanised iron and steel pipes and sheets till the 31st March, 1931, be continued till the 31st March, 1934 and not reduced unless in the meanwhile the Government were satisfied that circumstances have changed.

Mr. B. Das had tabled an amendment that increased protection be granted but subject to the satisfaction of the Assembly annually that genuine efforts were being made by the manufacturers to reduce the cost of production and increase in their output.

*Sir George Rainy* moving the resolution made it clear that he was not asking the Assembly to agree to the proposal on any ground connected with the cost of production but merely on the ground that the fall in prices had been so serious that unless action was taken it would be difficult for the manufacturer to maintain his production. Unless action was taken now the prices would become lower than the cost of production alone. If the amendment of Mr. Das was adopted there would be difficulty in the investigation of Tata's cost of production and further there would be uncertainty in speculation which would not be in the interests of either traders or manufacturers.

*Mr. Das* moving his amendment, regretted that the volume containing evidence before the Tariff Board was not available to the members to appreciate the allegations of Mr. Trivedi that only a few representations were received. The company's heavy cost of production was due to the absence of Indianisation and to the employment of Germans, Americans and Englishmen in the superior departments. An assurance was given in 1926-1927 in the Assembly that the superior departments in the Tatas would be Indianised, but that assurance had not yet been given effect to. By extending protection till 1934 the executive Government were taking enormous powers and judged by the past experience there would be no improvement in the position. Mr. Das did not object to protection but why should it be for three years without the Assembly ascertaining the steps the company would take in the desired direction? If the Tatas became a national concern by Indianising the superior staff, then it would deserve all the protection needed.

*Mr. Shammukham Chetty* asked the House to accept the experts' figures given by the Tariff Board and agree to give a protection of Rs. 27 per ton to the Tatas but the Commerce Member's proposal was to impose duty on 300 tons of imports with a view to protect 25,000 tons of home produce or, in other words, he wanted one and a half crore taxation with a view to help the Tatas to the extent of nine and a quarter lakhs. Mr. Chetty commented: "This, Sir, foreshadowed the budget position of the country and is the first of the taxation proposals. (Applause.) If the Government has no money to pay bounty then impose just the amount of duty which will yield nine and a half lakhs a year and not impose one and a half crore extra taxation for three years."

*Sir George Rainy* who had consultations with Sir George Schuster wound up the debate and with the consent of the House amended his own resolution so that increased import duties on galvanised and iron steel pipes and sheets be continued upto the 31st March, 1932, and that before that date the Government should make enquiries in order to ascertain whether the system of bounties must not be substituted wholly or in part for increased duty. He admitted that final considerations had greatly weighed with the Government of India in arriving at a previous decision to extend protection for three years but in view of the feeling expressed that the protection which the industry needed should be given in the manner which imposed the smallest possible burden on the consumer—a consideration which would always weigh with the Government whatever be the constitution of the Government of the day—he agreed to amend the resolution.

The resolution as amended by Sir George Rainy himself was carried without a dissentient voice. The House then adjourned.

#### The Round Table Conference Resolution.

**29th. JANUARY:**—The galleries were crowded when the Assembly met to-day to discuss the non-official resolutions including one on the Round Table Conference by seeking the publication of papers. Mr. K. C. Roy moved:

"The Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to publish papers connected with the Round Table Conference."

Mr. Roy said that his simple formula was a well-known parliamentary form to elicit a debate similar to the formula which had been practised in the House of Commons. This was not the only reason. The very conception of the Round Table Conference belonged to the Assembly, and its realisation belonged to the Governor-

General and His Majesty's Government. The question was first raised by Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar and Pandit Motilal Nehru—for whose recovery they all prayed (applause)—made an important speech in which he declared that they would fight till self-government was achieved and did not want responsible government to be handed to them tied in a bundle. Sir Malcolm Hailey, one of the most brilliant parliamentarians, drew a fine distinction between Dominion status and responsible government. That distinction was completely wiped out by the Conference. The Conference had, in fact, tied responsible government in a bundle, and handed it to them. Mr. Mac Donald had made a clear declaration for Dominion status. Mr. Roy then added: "India will accept no other status. When I attended the Imperial Press Conference I found that the only solution for India was responsible Government and the immediate grant of Dominion Status. That consummation had been fairly achieved through the Viceroy's effort, through the gifted Premier and through the choicest delegates of the British parties and the honourable men who went from India as delegates." They might say that the blue book had not yet arrived but why sit idle meanwhile? To-day's debate would find an echo in the House of Commons among people deeply interested in the transaction of the Conference.

Mr. Roy next referred to the achievements of the conference. Firstly, Provincial autonomy was a settled fact. There was to be a Federation with responsibility. "I welcome the idea of a federation, but if the federation fails to come into existence, is responsible Government at the centre to wait till then?" (Cheers). That is an unwise decision of the conference. Why make the grant of responsible government contingent on a federation?

Mr Roy next referred to the guarantees. He was not afraid of them, and said: "When I was in London in connection with the Montford Reforms, they all talked of safeguards. The Montford scheme bristled with them. Where are they? We did not discuss about the army from the Commander-in-Chief down to the Tommy. Time will wipe out these safeguards." Referring to specific safeguards, Mr. Roy said that the Governor-General must have power to intervene where there is a breakdown. India had no eternal relations, while the Viceroy must have power in respect of paramountcy. He was sure Lord Willingdon who had considerable colonial experience would use the exceptional powers with justice and fair-play and use them to the minimum extent.

Mr. Roy criticised the Army scheme, and held that it involved solution of the Civil Government from the Military. We must establish the supremacy of the Civil Government over the Army and create, through our own statute, an Army Council, having British and Indian element on it, so that the defence Minister may be hoped to involve a national army." He assured the Government that no Indian would deal with the defence question light-heartedly, and he had full trust in the capacity of his people. As regards Finance, Indians would never disown honourable obligation and debts and the position regarding India's credit would not be worse than to-day when they had brilliant British finance members. As regards the Reserve Bank, this Assembly alone must create it. He did not like Mr. Moore's observation the other day that its creation was a condition precedent to responsibility in the centre.

Mr. Roy emphasised that the Bank should be created for commercial, financial and economic considerations only (Applause). He assured the Services that when Parliamentary life was favoured, the Services would receive the most honourable place in India.

As regards the communal question, Mr. Roy said that the only man in India, who could solve it was the Viceroy, and he hoped that after the delegates returned from England, a conference would be held under the Viceroy's presidency. He held that the scheme enunciated by Mr. MacDonald would revolutionise the whole system. "Then the Home Member will not bring up repressive legislation without feeling the strength in the country, nor would the Industries Member have to take the Secretary of State's sanction for a change in the stores purchases rules. What we want is a sovereign Parliament. Are we going to have one? The Parliament of Britain has extended us the olive branch. Let us grasp it and build on those foundations." (Applause).

#### AMENDMENTS NOT DISCUSSED.

After Mr. Roy's speech, the President said that most of the amendments on the order paper were out of order and invited the members' views, in order to decide the procedure.

Sir Hari Singh Gour and Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty agreed that Mr. Roy's

was only a technical motion for papers in order to raise a general debate, but there was a keen desire on the part of non-officials to discuss all the issues arising out of the Round Table Conference labours. Mr. Shanmukham therefore requested the Leader of the House to state when the papers would be available, and agree to give an official day so that the debate might be postponed till then.

*Sir George Reiny* stated that the Government expected by air mail the first consignment of the White Paper on the 2nd. February and the second consignment on the 9th. February. Steps would be taken to print immediately and make the papers available to members. If it was the general desire of the House, then the Government would endeavour their best to allot a day. At the same time, *Sir George Rainy* asked the House to remember that the latter half of February was already allotted for railway budget discussions. Still the Government would do their best to give an earliest possible day.

The President then asked the House to discuss only on the general terms raised by Mr. Roy's motion and not on the amendments on the order paper.

Mr. *Sadiq Hassan* (Punjab) said that the Round Table Conference should have been held seven years ago when the Assembly demanded it. When Mr. *Sadiq Hassan* was proceeding, *Sir Hari Singh Gour* suggested that discussion be adjourned in view of *Sir George Rainy's* assurance to allot a Government day.

The President : There are only two ways open to the House now; either to pass the resolution or have the discussion stand adjourned because a mere assurance from *Sir George Rainy* was not enough.

At this stage *Sir Hugh Cocke* moved that the question be now put.

The motion for closure was carried and Mr. Roy's resolution was 'put and adopted without any dissentient voice.

#### DEMAND FOR CALLING OFF REPRESSION

The Assembly next discussed Mr. *Sadiq Hassan's* resolution for the discontinuance of the policy of repression and adoption by the Government of a sympathetic and conciliatory policy. Mr. *Hassan* gave an account of police excesses in various parts of country, and said that though he deplored terrorist crimes, he regarded the attack on women as cowardly and held lathi charging and thereby causing deaths as brutal. India could not be reconciled by the way *Sir R. Craik* was doing in the Punjab. To-day, the normal laws of the country were replaced by abnormal laws, and more than sixty thousand persons were in jails. Although the release of Congress leaders was a move in the right direction, that alone could not be conducive to unbiased consideration of the declaration of Mr. *MacDonald*. General amnesty was absolutely essential.

Mr. *B. R. Puri* welcomed repression as it moulded India into a United nation, but warned the Government that every lathi blow on a woman was a nail in their coffin. The police during the last six months had not respected sex and age and deeply though he deplored violence by Indians in certain parts of the country, he felt that Government were responsible for all that. Laws had been created in India to penalise the love of country-made things of which Englishmen felt proud. He welcomed the change of heart as shown in the release of Congress leaders, and demanded the release of other prisoners of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Mr. *B. Das* praised the Viceroy for the bold gesture of conciliation of the Congress by releasing Mr. *Gandhi* and 29 other leaders, but regretted that the civilian members of the Service had not shown a desire to follow that path. He asked why on the very day the Viceroy announced the release of Mr. *Gandhi* and other leaders, Mr. *Subash Chandra Bose* was arrested in Calcutta in connection with the Independence Day, as if the Independence Day was not observed throughout India. Mr. *B. Das* doubted if any of the three Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council would have called the Congress "a great organisation" as Lord *Irwin* had done. He urged the release of every political prisoner, and even Moplah prisoners for that alone would restore tranquility in the country and bring about an atmosphere for the dispassionate consideration of the Premier's statement. Mr. *Das* criticised the action of the C. I. D. Police and created laughter by quoting from Mr. *Montagu's* diary to show how *Sir Sankaran Nair* and Mr. *B. N. Basu* were shadowed, because Mr. *Basu* wired to *Sir Sankaran Nair* that he had despatched "sweetmeats" for the dinner which *Sir Sankaran Nair* was giving to the Viceroy at Madras. The Police

understood sweetmeats to mean bombs. Mr. Das finally suggested that to adjust themselves to the spirit of the times, the members of the services should be allowed to retire on proportionate pensions.

*Sir James Crerar* agreed that the return to conditions of tranquility was the greatest and most urgent need of the hour. The policy of the Government must be viewed as a whole. The central feature of their policy had been the promotion of political progress by constitutional means on constitutional paths. In that policy they had persisted, and in the last few days, His Majesty's Government and the Government of India had given convincing proofs of their desire to take India to the goal of political aspirations. The word "repression" placed the Government in an unjust light. He was sorry that some members should have attacked the police force as being inhuman and as having used excessive force. On behalf of the Government of India he wished to express gratitude and their sense of appreciation of the service and devotion to duty which the police force had displayed during the last year. (Applause). The fact that the Government exercised extraordinary powers was a matter of regret, but they had merely discharged their primary duty for the maintenance of order. He appealed to the Assembly to co-operate with the Government in the attempts to restore tranquility and not indulge in mere negative criticisms. The debate was adjourned to the next non-official day.

#### [CONSIDERATION OF OFFICIAL BILLS

**2nd. FEBRUARY:**—After interpellations the Assembly elected ten members for the committee to examine the Tariff Board's report on salt and six members to the standing committee on roads. On the motion of *Sir George Rainy*, the Bills for fostering and development of the gold thread industry and the steel industry were referred to select committees.

The House agreed to refer to select committee the *Bill amending the law relating to partnership*. The committee to consist of *Mr. Rangachariar*, *Mr. S. C. Sen*, *Sir Hari Singh Gour*, *Mr. L. V. Heathcot*, *Sir Abdur Rahim*, Messrs. *Harbilas Sarda*, *Rameshwar Prasad Bagla*, *Shahnawaz*, *Jagannath Agarwal*, *S. C. Mitra*, *Trilokinath Bhargawa* and *Sir Lancelot Graham*.

On the motion of *Sir George Rainy*, the House accepted the proposal to give instructions to the select committee on the *merchants Shipping Report Bill* by Feb. 9. The House thereafter passed *amending Bills to the Cantonment Act, the Indian Territorial Act and the Auxiliary Force Act*. *Sir George Rainy* moving consideration of the *Vizagapatam Port Bill* said the port was nearing completion and it is expected that by the end of 1932 ocean-going steamers would be able to enter it. It was not possible to continue the present arrangements of administration for long and the Bill was the first step towards the transfer of powers to the Government of India. Replying to *Mr. Raju*, *Sir George Rainy* announced that although no port trust existed at present it was the aim of the Government to constitute one when the port was completed and hand over its administration to it. The House passed the Bill.

*Mr. Young* next moved that the *Bill to give effect in British India to the treaty for limitations of naval armaments* be taken into consideration.

*Mr. B. Das* felt that the Bill was unnecessary as long as the military expenditure in India stood at 40 per cent. of the total revenues. He held that the Indian delegates to the international conferences did not represent India.

*Sir Hari Singh Gour* said that their grievance was not against the Bill but against the signatories to the treaty who unlike the self-governing dominions did not represent the people of India.

*Mr. Young* said in the Dominions also the delegation represented the Government and not the people. The House passed the Bill.

On the motion of *Sir George Schuster* the House passed the *Indian Income Tax Act Amendment Bill* and then adjourned.

#### THE CIVIL MARRIAGE BILL

**3rd. FEBRUARY:**—The Assembly met to-day for the consideration of non-official Bills.

*Sir Harising Gour*, moving consideration of the Civil Marriage Bill, said that to-day marriages between communities were governed by usage and lacked inter-

national status. When Indians migrated to other parts of the world they were handicapped owing to the non-registration of marriages. It was the duty of every civilised Government to enact law for registration and non-denominational marriages. Civil marriage was the only good marriage in the world as it had the sanction of the State behind it. Referring to Mussalmans, the mover said that they could not marry even the followers of the scriptures like Jews and Christians under the present law though it was followed by the Quran, but such marriages would be permissible if the Bill was passed. Dr. Gour wanted monogamous marriages both among Hindus and Mussalmans. Concluding, Dr. Gour said that the Bill tended to a unification of the Indian race without interfering with anybody's religion.

Raja Bahadur *Krishnamachariar* opposing consideration of the Bill, said that he was content to live in the same marriage status of his forefathers and hoped his children after him would follow the same traditions. Proceeding, the Raja Bahadur said that the Bill would strike at the root of the Hindu and Moslem society and would have the effect of declaring that religion was not the basis of marriage. The law should only be altered when there was a general demand from the community for a change, but to-day none had demanded alteration of the present law. The Bill, he added, would create general unrest in the country and even if it was permissible under the rules, it should not be allowed to pass.

Mr. *Masood* opposed the Bill from a purely religious point of view and said that marriages between Musalmans and members of other communities which will be regarded a void were being legalised under the Bill. It would create difficulties regarding succession among the Musalmans.

Mr. *Yakub* also opposed the Bill saying that the Moslem community which would be affected by the Bill strongly opposed the measure. If the Bill was passed, there would be a social revolution and sensational marriages leading to divorces and unhappiness in society. It was claimed by Sir Harisingh Gour that the Bill was monogamous in its policy. The Moslem religion also did not allow polygamy and only permitted four marriages under certain conditions.

Mr. *Jaganath Aggarwal* did not think that the Bill endangered either the Hindu or the Moslem religion. For if that was so the Hindu religion would have been swept away by the identical Act of 1923. That Act had neither opened the flood gates of matrimony nor had it endangered society, but had only given liberty of conscience to those who believed in the contractual form of marriage and legalised their children. Mr. Aggarwal admitted that there was much to be said for the Moslem opposition to the Bill, but even under the Quran, certain marriages were permissible which were illegal in India and the Bill, if passed, would give relief to those persons who wanted to contract such marriages. The speaker appealed to the House to pass the Bill, which would promote nationalism and give a higher status to women in the country.

Sir *B. L. Mitter* frankly told the House that he was opposed to the Bill. It was the fixed policy of the Government, he said, not to interfere with the personal law of any community unless there was a strong demand for a change from the community concerned. Examining the Bill from that criterion, the Law Member said the Bill would affect Mussalmans, Christians, Jews and Parsees. Christians did not need the measure, while it was opposed by all other communities. Examining the case of the Mussalmans in particular, he said that the Bill would take away most of their valuable rights which they enjoyed under their personal law. It would, for instance, affect the Moslem right of marriage, divorce, dowry, legitimacy, guardianship, succession, inheritance and wakf and it was unwise to force a measure on an unwilling community when they were anxious to safeguard their interests in future constitution. Sir *B. L. Mitter* said that the basic principle of the Bill was to introduce monogamous marriages in the country. This, he claimed, was not so, as the Bill did not make other marriages illegal but only provided penalties if such were contracted. Lastly, he said that the claim for international status was taken away by the optional clause in the Bill. He added that the Bill was a revolutionary measure which would destroy the foundations of society. They had two ancient codes in India for the Hindus and the Mussalmans and he appealed to the House not to play with them.

After the Law Member's speech the House accepted the motion for closure.

Sir Harisingh Gour felt surprised at the opposition and wished to withdraw the

Bill, but the House amidst cries of "No, No" insisted on voting it down and accordingly recorded the Bill.

#### SECTION 144 AMENDMENT BILL

*Mr. Gaya Prasad* moved for reference of the Bill to a select committee to amend sec. 144, Criminal Procedure Code, so that no magistrate could issue *ex parte* orders without evidence being duly recorded, that no such order should hold good beyond 48 hours and an appeal should lie to the sessions court against all such orders. He quoted from Sir Surendranath Benerjee's book *A Nation in the Making* about the circumstances in which a conference at Barisal was entered into by a district superintendent of police and ordered to disperse unless there was a guarantee from those assembled that they would not shout *Bandemataram*. Mahatma Gandhi visited Muzaffarpur to enquire into the relations between the indigo planters and the ryots at Champaran and this section was applied against him. Recently in the Madras presidency the wearing of Gandhi caps was forbidden by the district magistrate of Guntur and in many places the putting up of tri-coloured flags had been prohibited. Peaceful processions in connection with picketing had also been prohibited. Mr. C. R. Das was prevented from entering Mymensingh because it was feared that as a result of his visit students taking examination in a school might be lured away. It was to limit such gross abuses of this section that he sought the amendment.

Sir James Crerar said that the section had been in the Statute Book for 50 years and if its necessity was recognised 50 years ago it was recognised more recently from time to time. He asserted that there had been no grave abuses of the section, although he conceded that there might have been cases in which the use of this section might have been avoided. He also contested the view that the section was being used for political purposes; while the policy of the Government had been not to interfere with the legitimate activities but to protect the general public in pursuing lawful avocation and maintaining tranquillity. In fact the section had been of valuable assistance in cases of apprehended danger. Moreover, in times of communal feeling, this section had been a valuable insurance against the occurrence of disorders. Such a valuable weapon the Government could not part with. Moreover, as a result of the amendment made in 1923, all orders under this section were subject to review by the High Court.

Further discussion on the Bill was postponed. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### DEMAND FOR CALLING OFF REPRESSION

*5th. FEBRUARY:*—The adjourned debate on *Sheikh Sadiq Hassan's* resolution urging the discontinuance of the policy of repression attracted a large number of visitors to the galleries to-day.

*Hajee Abdullah Haroon* moved a rider to the resolution of Sheikh Sadiq Hasan which made the release of political prisoners conditional upon the Congress discontinuing the Civil Disobedience movement. Hajee Abdullah Haroon said that the resolution of Sheikh Sadiq Hassan was rather a sentimental one which left out of consideration the Government point of view. If the Congress had flagrantly disobeyed the laws of the land, Government had also beaten the record by promulgating Ordinances. The release of the Congress leaders was a move in the right direction which had elicited from the Congress willingness to co-operate under certain conditions. It was now the turn of Government to take the next step and release all political prisoners not guilty of violence. In doing this, they should not forget the large number of prisoners convicted under the Frontier and Moplah Regulations. It was a sad commentary on the support that Mussalmans had given that martial law was withdrawn from Peshawar after only six months while martial law had been withdrawn from Sholapur after about forty days. It was due to the powerful agitation on behalf of Sholapur while Martial Law continued in the Frontier because Mussalmans had not agitated against it.

Hajee Abdullah Haroon concluded with a warning both to the Congress and Government not to let go the present opportunity for restoring peace in the country as otherwise the situation would go out of their hands.

#### MR. AMARNATH DUTT'S AMENDMENT

*Mr. Amarnath Dutt* moved an amendment to Mr. Sadiq Hassan's resolution urging the release of all political prisoners. He said he wished to make it clear

that the release must be of all such prisoners including those being proceeded against in Meerut. He declared that the policy of repression was not conducive to peace and instanced the arrest of Mr. Subash Chandra Bose who was leading a peaceful procession.

Mr. Arthur Moore: Had not the Mayor of Calcutta taken the oath of allegiance?

Mr. Dutt: Our first allegiance is to God and to the country just as Mr. Arthur Moore's first interest is to his own country and not to the country in which his lot is cast.

Mr. Dutt declared that the Police actions in Midnapore showed how the Police had behaved. "You repress non-violence by violence. Whose blood will not boil over what happened at Midnapore?"

Sir Fazl-i-Hussain asked the House not to discuss local incidents which the Legislative Councils were competent to discuss. These Councils were as representative as the Assembly or even more. The House was concerned with matters of policy affecting the welfare of India as a whole.

Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, taking a bird's eye view of the past year, said that there had been four schools of thought, namely, those for independence, those for Dominion Status, those for Dominion Status with safeguards and the fourth conservatives wanting little change. The body of political opinion represented by the first three schools of thought gave their moral support to the Congress movement even though they did not approve of particular Congress activities. It must also be acknowledged that, even if our destiny was in our hands, the determination of the next step of advance rested with the British Parliament. Therefore, he held that political agitation was justified in furtherance of the constitutional rights till the British Parliament had stated what the extent of that step was to be. Now the Premier had made a full statement which had received support from all schools of thought, except the Congress, which had not expressed a definite opinion on it. What had been actually achieved to-day was achieved by India as a whole, and not by one political party in India. But the party other than the Congress were satisfied with the success of their efforts and did not wish to go on with the struggle. He referred to the opinion expressed by the "Tribune", the "Leader" and the "Hindu" that the Premier's statement offered a valuable basis for discussion.

A voice: What about Bengal?

Sir Fazl-i-Hussain: I am sorry that though Bengal led political thought thirty years ago, it is not in the forefront now that the country has achieved manhood. My position is that all schools are strongly for treating the Premier's statement as practically closing the struggle. This House had a right to make it clear to the Indian public that it considers that the Premier's statement has concluded the first stage of the war for reforms, because we find that the British Parliament means business. I do claim for the British Parliament that they have in their policy gone further than the Government of India and further than any authority till now has gone.

Continuing the Education Member said: "A stage has been reached. Political advance is determined not for ever, but for the time being. The matter therefore is simple."

Mr. Ranga Aiyar: How can you discuss peace when the Government is still delivering lathi blows for which the Madras Council censured the Government the other day?

Sir Fazl-i-Hussain said: These matters should be better left to the local Councils, and I am glad that the Madras Council discussed them. The matter is very simple. In case the Congress considers the Premier's statement is adequate and won't hold peaceful picketing and won't take out innocent processions, there would be no need for interference. I assure the House we do not like repressive measures. They disgrace the Statute Book. We members of Government are not inhuman, and not worse than any one of you (Laughter).

Sir Hari Singh Gour: Who is to be judge of their necessity?

Sir Fazl-i-Hussain: Let the President or his Deputy be the judge. The other day when Mr. Shanmukham Chetty's house was picketed he was accused of being unchivalrous but who was to be the judge whether it was peaceful. It pains me to say that to bring the womanhood of India and children into this struggle is a nail in the coffin of the future of the Indian nation, just as you say every lathi blow is a nail in the Government's coffin. Let us consider the situation dispassionately. Let us forget yesterday and think of to-day and to-morrow. Let us begin the new era



promised by the Premier's statement. Let every public spirited Indian make it plain to the Congress that they have had their moral support all along but henceforward if the Congress persist in their conduct of what they call peaceful picketing and innocent processions, inviting the authorities to intervene to counteract intimidation which lies behind them—intimidation of men pursuing their peaceful avocations, intimidation of boys going to schools, thereby prejudicially affecting the youth of the country,—they Congressmen will have no support whatsoever and I make it plain to them that India wants peace to start on future reforms in a good and quiet atmosphere and that those who stand in the way of the creation of that atmosphere will bear a heavy responsibility.

*Sir Abdur Rahim*, on behalf of the Independents, gave general support to Sheikh Sadiq Hassan's resolution for the abandonment of repression and for conciliation and stressed the fact that Hajee Abdulla Haroon, though in his amendment did not mention repression, had yet condemned the policy of ruthless repression. Sir Abdur Rahim regretted that Sir Fazl-i-Hussain's speech left him no wiser. However, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain had condemned Government ordinances, when he said that an ordinance was a hateful thing. Ordinances were not laws, because they had not the essential attribute of law—definiteness. Ordinances were merely Executive orders. What did the Ordinances and the use of section 144 mean? There were still twenty thousand persons in jail, including the leaders of the people. Occurrences like the recent arrest of Mr. Subash Chandra Bose were bound to inflame the people, and that was certainly a repression which could not be justified.

Proceeding, Sir Abdur Rahim traced the present situation to the blunders of the Government over the appointment of the purely white Simon Commission and asked: "Are you not going to grant political amnesty even now when you have realised the urgent need for a change of policy? Is it even political expediency that so many thousands of people should be in jail when you have released their leaders? It will be very difficult for Mahatma Gandhi to bring about the proper condition of things in which the constitutional future of the country could be properly discussed unless all these men are released. If I were a Congress leader and I had been released, as Mr. Gandhi has been, I would have felt the same thing which Mr. Gandhi and his friends who have been released, now feel, while their co-workers are in jails. There is a general complaint and widespread belief that in many cases the police had taken the law in their own hands, and ill-treated people, sometimes very mercilessly indeed. This situation requires a change of policy." Concluding, Sir Abdur Rahim vehemently pleaded for release of prisoners in the Frontier and the prisoners of the Malabar rebellion.

*Sir Hugh Cocke* (European Group leader) supported Haji Abdulla Haroon's amendment. Alluding to lathi charges, he said as one who had been in Bombay several months, many citizens, including several respectable Indians, had expressed the opinion that the police had been too far too lenient. The conduct of the police of Bombay was, said Sir Hugh Cocke, beyond all praise. (Cheers in official and European benches). Sir Hugh asked why no member had referred to the stone-throwing by crowds which was the cause of lathi charge in many cases. Were the police, he asked, to give lathis to the crowd, and ask them to use both stone and lathis against policemen? Sir Hugh Cocke admitted that there might have been mistakes in the past but the House must face the situation to-day in the light of the Premier's announcement and remedy the state of affairs in India which none was in favour of continuing. If civil disobedience was withdrawn then, as a matter of course, other things would follow. But if the Government were to release political prisoners without an undertaking from Congressmen that civil disobedience would stop then they would be making themselves the laughing stock of the world.

*Sir Hari Singh Gour*, on behalf of the Nationalists, supported the original resolution of Sheikh Sadiq Hassan for a policy of conciliation, and opposed the amendment of Haji Abdulla Haroon. He asked the Government to take courage in both hands and release the political prisoners. There might be some risk involved in that action, but it was worth taking in the interests of restoration of peace so essential to the country. Civil Disobedience was already dying down and if there was general amnesty now, the situation would at once ease and the atmosphere necessary for a sympathetic and dispassionate consideration of the Premier's declaration would be created. Let it not be forgotten that the bulk of the country supported the Congress movement which was to draw the attention of the Government to the demands of the people. Terrorist crimes

had nothing to do with the Congress movement, which was throughout meant to be peaceful. It was perfectly reasonable on the part of the Congress leaders to demand the release of the rank and file if they were to consider the Premier's Declaration. Sir Hari Singh Gour asked whether the Government were going to hold the Premier's Declaration in abeyance without discussion till a general amnesty was granted.

*Sir George Rainy* pointed out that the declared object of the Congress was supersession of the present system of Government, and its replacement by another. Its chosen method was defiance of the law and something of violent resistance. But non-violence had been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Disturbances of the gravest character had occurred, and even when violence was not in question methods had been employed involving extreme hardship to traders, Government servants and the population generally. When such a state of things arose, it was the duty of the Government, indeed of any Government, to take steps to prevent it in order to protect the citizens and their servants in pursuance of their avocations. If this was repression, then the policy of the Government was repression. But that was the only policy for any Government to adopt. But there had been another policy that was to help India's early attainments of her aspirations. The Viceroy in the Autumn of 1929 had declared Dominion Status as the logical issue of the 1917 declaration. Following that, there was the Round Table Conference and the Premier's announcement. As to when further steps would be taken to bring Indian and British opinions in contact on the issues arising from the Conference, that was a matter resting with His Majesty's Government. Meanwhile the Government had a twofold duty; one of furtherance of His Majesty's Government's policy of bringing Indian opinion to bear on the results of the Conference and the other of maintaining the established authority so that they might hand over the administration with the machinery unimpaired to any new Government. The London Conference had thus cleared the way for a settlement by discussion. The struggle from now onwards lay before those who believed that India's aspirations could be most satisfactorily and rapidly settled by argument and persuasion and those who still wished to tread the arid path of agitation and civil disobedience.

Proceeding, *Sir George Rainy* supporting *Haji Abdulla Haroon's* amendment, explained that the qualifying words in that were important, for the Government could not consider the release of those convicted for violence. The amendment further restricted the release of those non-violent prisoners who were convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement. Surely, it would never be possible to condone terrorist crimes and the Government could not make terms with terrorists. The Government would approach the question of amnesty from the point of view that both they and the Assembly were at one in the matter of bringing about a restoration of peace, so that there might be a proper atmosphere created for working out the new constitution. But, the speeches of the Congress leaders, newspaper articles and the resolutions of the Working Committee suggested that Government action had been misconstrued. The question was whether those who were engaged in the movement were prepared to abandon the methods that they had followed and turn to the path of co-operation. The Government should be satisfied that those who had been carrying on the movement were prepared to take the path opened by the Round Table Conference. Then only could the Government agree to grant amnesty. A Settlement which would leave the Congress to carry on its activities to picket liquor or cloth shops or organise non-payment of taxes or defy the law would be no settlement at all. The Government could not by any action of a conciliatory nature compel those who believed that the goal could be attained by subversive methods and not by co-operation to abandon those methods and try other plans. The responsibility here did not lie with the Government, but elsewhere (Hear, hear). The spirit was more important than formulae, and the Government of India had already given an earnestness of their spirit for civil quiet, but peace could only be achieved by the parties making a reciprocal contribution to its achievement (Applause).

*Mr. Arthur Moore* said that the Assembly was a House of co-operators and constitutionalists. The acceptance of *Haji Abdulla Haroon's* amendment would mean their dissociation from violence and support to Government. The attitude of double appeal which the amendment contained was much becoming of the House.

Tracing the history of the civil disobedience movement *Mr. Arthur Moore* said that but for *Mr. Gandhi*, India would have been much near her goal, and the

reserve powers of the Viceroy would have become obsolete by now. The Viceroy gave two opportunities to the Congress to come to an understanding:—one on the 23rd December 1929 when the Viceroy gave an interview to Mr. Gandhi and others, and the other through the peace talks of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayaker. But the attitude of the Congress showed that they were incapable of grasping the situation. Even to-day, after his unconditional release, Mr. Gandhi was already directing his energies to breach of the salt laws and if ever Mr. Gandhi was incarcerated again, the responsibility for such action would lay on his own shoulders. Mr. Arthur Moore said that Mr. Gandhi to-day urged that no constitutional advance should be made in the country unless his 11 points were first conceded. Such a position was untenable for it was not wise to burden and fetter the future Government of India. The abolition of the C. I. D., for instance, should be left to the new Government. Mr. Arthur Moore, in conclusion, said that he had a mandate from his constituency which laid down that there should be no constitutional advance in India until Mr. Gandhi's movement was called off. And it was a very reasonable demand, he said. He suggested the Government making an announcement that there would be full provincial autonomy in two months, but during this time the Civil Disobedience movement should be called off. Mr. Arthur Moore supported Haji Abdulla Haroon's amendment.

*Mian Shah Nawaz* said that both repression and the Civil Disobedience movement should be called off as the former had embittered feelings in the country, while the latter had ruined the economic fabric of India. If both Mr. Gandhi and the Government were hankering for peace, a formula could be found by which repression and the civil disobedience movement could be called off simultaneously. He suggested the Viceroy calling the Congress leaders in a conference, and telling them that he would at once release political prisoners and withdraw the Ordinances if they called off the movement. The Viceroy should also make it clear, that if the movement was not called off, it would be resisted to the utmost capacity of the Government. *Mian Shah Nawaz* said that none could doubt that repression did exist in the country. The whole object of a policy of conciliation was to wipe away the traces of bitterness and the Government after the release of the Congress leaders should go the whole hog by releasing all Satyagrahis.

The Government, *Mian Shah Nawaz* observed, should also issue instructions to the provincial Governments to go slow. For, to-day, the work of Lord Irwin's conciliatory policy was being ruined by some of the Provincial Governors. The speaker felt that the imprisonment of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and the lathi charges in Madras were cases to the point. In conclusion, the speaker said that he was not in agreement with the amendment. He urged that his suggestion for the Conference should be laid before the Viceroy.

*Mr. Ramkrishna Reddy* said that if there was a conciliatory policy, there would be no more Civil Disobedience Movement, and asked if it was a sin to preach boycott of foreign cloth and prohibition. It was because the Government opposed Mr. Gandhi's original economic policy that this trouble arose.

*Maulavi Mahomed Yakub* regretted the language of certain speeches of non-officials as also of Mr. Winston Churchill and the speech of Mr. Arthur Moore, nor did he agree with *Moulavi Shafi Daudi* that the murderers should be put on a par with the noble hearted young men who were non-violent and had been deprived of their liberty in the service of their country. He acknowledged the conciliatory language of the Government spokesmen and assured them that *Sheikh Sadiq Hassan's* resolution did not amount to condemnation of the Government policy. He feared that the statement made by Mr. Gandhi and others had not made the position easy for the House. They too should have made some gesture and said they were prepared for a truce. He wished for some understanding that the activities of both sides would be simultaneously stopped. He did not support *Haji Abdulla Haroon's* amendment and was doubtful of the wisdom of making a recommendation to the Governor-General in Council. "I know what the Viceroy's feeling is, but when it comes to the Governor-General in Council you do not know what will become of it. (Laughter). They do things too late."

Closure was being applied at this stage when *Dr. Gour*, who had conversations in lobbies with *Sir George Rainy*, moved for postponement of the debate as each side having had its say, wanted time to reflect. *Sir George Rainy* agreed and the House generally concurred. The Assembly then adjourned.

## TRIBUTES TO PANDIT NEHRU

9th. FEBRUARY :—There was a gloom cast over the Assembly when it met to-day. The normal agenda was not taken up and Sir George Rainy, Leader of the House, moved a condolence resolution on Pandit Motilal's death expressing the sorrow and the grief of the Government of India and associating with it His Majesty's Secretary of State. He said : We have met to-day under the shadow of grief that India has suffered by the removal of Pandit Motilal Nehru, who for the last ten years held the foremost place in the public life of the country.

As it was the general desire that the House should adjourn without transacting business as a tribute to the memory of the departed leader he accordingly adjourned the House.

## MERCHANT SHIPPING AMENDMENT BILL

11th. FEBRUARY :—The House met to-day to transact official business. Sir George Rainy presented the select committee's report on the Merchant Shipping Amendment Bill and the bill to foster the gold thread industry in India and give protection to the steel industry.

## ELECTION TO DELHI UNIVERSITY COURT

Sir Fazli Hussain then moved for the election of four elected members to the Court of the Delhi University. After a debate the motion was agreed.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Sir George Schuster moving consideration of the Public Accounts Committee Report said that ill-luck had been dogging in the footsteps of the discussion of these reports last year. It could not be taken up while in Simla. It was postponed because the members' minds were busy with other subjects of compelling interest, but discussion of the report was the most important part of the Assembly's work and it would be more so in years to come. The Government's function was really more to listen than to make speeches.

## DEMAND FOR DUTY ON VEGETABLE GHEE

12th. FEBRUARY :—The Assembly met to-day to discuss non-official resolutions, Mr. Bhupat Singh moved :—

"That pending legislation on the lines of the English Food and Drugs Act in the central and provincial legislatures, customs duties be levied on the questionable commodity which goes by the name of Vanaspati or vegetable ghee or vegetable oil."

The mover said that vegetable products were lacking in vitamins and were injurious to health. He suggested the article should be coloured to prevent its being used as an adulterant.

Sir George Rainy said the Government never gave any undertaking to the House to impose a duty on vegetable ghee or introduce legislation. They had promised to make enquiries. This they did and all the local Governments with the exception of the Central Provinces had informed them that the article was not injurious to health and had a definite food value. The drastic proposal to levy high duties would lead to the Indian ghee being adulterated with more injurious substances as the country could neither produce sufficient ghee nor oil to meet the demand. It was a matter for the local Governments to introduce legislation to prevent adulteration of ghee and if they ever desired the central Government to legislate on the subject the Government of India would not hesitate to move in the matter. Government for the present could not accept the resolution as they did not regard it right or proper to impose a duty on an article which was perfectly uninjurious to health and had a definite food value as also assisted the poor man to reduce his budget.

Both Mr. Das and Sir Hari Singh Gour felt the reply of the leader of the House disappointing, as the question was not whether vegetable ghee had a food value or not, but that to-day its free importation in the country perpetrated a fraud on the public who under the impression of buying pure ghee were actually buying a counterfeit article.

Sir Hari Singh Gour asked whether Government would stop or not if brass was imported in India and sold in the name of gold.

The resolution was pressed to a division and carried by 58 against 39 votes. All the other resolutions on the agenda paper were not moved and the Assembly adjourned to discuss an adjournment motion.

#### DECLARATION OF BURMESE ASSOCIATIONS UNLAWFUL

At 2-30 p. m. Mr. *Tun Aung*, a member from Burma moved an adjournment motion to discuss the Burma Government's order declaring unlawful the General Council of the Burmese Association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Mr. *Tun Aung* moving his motion said that the General Council of Burmese Associations was one of the pioneer political associations in existence for the past decade. It had been against seeking election to the Councils and been working from outside on constitutional lines. During its working, it split up into three parties. Now it has been declared unlawful under the Ordinance.

This Association agitated in the province against the separation of Burma, as that would not be beneficial to the province. The Association was thus similar to the Indian National Congress, except that it would not go to great extremes. The Burma Government had justified their action in a communique, but how did they reconcile this with their previous statement that the rebellion was due to economic distress.

He continued: "The fact of the matter is that the Association is primarily responsible for the delay in the disposal of the question of separation in England, because of certain frantic messages it sent during the Conference session, and the Governor had to come back without his cherished hopes being achieved. That is how the Ordinance has been introduced and promptly applied to this Association. There is more in this than meets the eye. If the repressive action is not discountenanced by this House, I shall not be surprised if all Associations and parties engaged in political movement will be silenced by this Ordinance and the history of India would be repeated in Burma. (Non-official Applause). A weapon of this nature is dangerous and more so when left in the hands of a man who has an axe to grind."

Mr. *Aung* contended that greatness has been thrust upon the pretender to the Burmese throne. The Government had not been able to prove any connection between the executive of the Association and the rebellion, while the agitation against the capitation tax was legitimate and had been expressed in the Burma Council as well.

*Sir James Crerar* wished the matter had been left to the local Council to discuss. The local Government had taken action in the exercise of its own discretion.

*Sir H. S. Gour*—Were you never consulted?

*Sir James Crerar*.—The Local Government informed us that an action of this kind would, probably, be necessary. I will read to the House fuller extracts from the communique issued by the Burma Government on the subject. After reading these extracts, which showed how the Government felt that the G. C. B. A.'s activities were a danger to the public peace, *Sir James Crerar* said the action was taken under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and not under the Ordinance which was solely against terrorist activities. While it was true that the executive of the Association was not directly connected with the rebellion, its prominent office-bearers were fully cognisant of it, and the leaders of the rebellion were in all cases prominent members of local association affiliated to the main Association. The Home Member's suggestion that the action was directed against the movement against separation of Burma is entirely remote from the facts. The Government of Burma have no intention by the action they have taken to restrict in any way a constitutional movement for or against separation. The action was taken on the ground that there was a definite connection established between the rebellion in three districts and between the local associations of the General Council of the Burmese Association and because they were confronted with a very serious situation in the province. There was a serious apprehension that attempts had been made to provoke rebellion in other districts of the province. The misery already inflicted on the inhabitants of the districts where the rebellion broke is beyond description. If the Government had not taken prominent action a situation of incalculable danger would have supervened. The situation is far from being free from danger. And I contend that the Local Government are fully justified in the action they have taken. (Applause.)

*Sir Hari Singh Gour* supported the motion. He said if there was any individual member or members of the General Council of Burmese Association who were guilty of interfering with the administration of law or a danger to peace, they should have been dealt with under the ordinary law or detained or deported and there was no justification on the grounds mentioned by Sir James Crerar himself for declaring as unlawful the whole body of the General Council of Burmese Associations. The Government of India should not take shelter under the local Government and treat this as a purely parochial question. So long as the Government of India were responsible for law and order in Burma which was an integral part of British India, this Assembly had a sacred duty to discuss this momentous issue affecting the political rights of the people of Burma and assist them. So long as the people of India were concerned they should send a message of good wishes to the people of Burma and help them in their struggle for liberation.

*Sir Abdur Rahim* on behalf of the independents spoke in the same strain as Sir Hari Singh Gour and emphasised that by the Burma Government's action a whole range of political organisations had been suppressed, although there was no suggestion that the rebellion was incited by the G. C. B. A. This Association was a lawful, ordinary, legitimate political organisation engaged for some time past in opposition to the move for separation of Burma from India, and there was no valid, legal ground given for its suppression.

*Mr. E. F. Baum* (Burma official) contended that the Association was an extremist body and was to a large extent responsible for Burma rebellion. It was wrong to suggest that the Burma Government's action was prompted by a desire to suppress any agitation against the separation of Burma. Everybody, who had served for any time in Burma, knew that the majority of the people of Burma were solidly for separation.

There were cries of 'question' from the Nationalist benches when Mr. Baum referred to the Burma Legislative Council's decision favouring separation. Mr. S. C. Mitra reminded 'that was when the Nationalists had left the Council'.

Mr. Baum continued, in any case the question of separation had been settled by the Round Table Conference.

*Dr. Gour.*—Only conditionally.

*Mr. Baum.*—The people of Burma are a most loveable race, but they are exceedingly inflammable people, and that makes political agitation all the more dangerous.

*Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer*, in a speech full of excitement, supported the motion. He asked, supposing one member left some explosives under the seat of Gladstone in the House of Commons, was the whole House to be condemned? They all knew how the Burma Government had acted as an ugly propagandist on the question of separation of Burma.

Sir Lancelot Graham, interrupting, asked: 'Is Mr. Ranga Iyer reflecting upon the conduct of the Governor of Burma?'

*Mr. Ranga Iyer.*—I am not making any reflection on his conduct but I am accusing the system of Government which deputed Sir Charles Innes on what appeared to be an ugly propagandist venture on the separation question which has an ugly imperialist motive behind it so as to convert Burma into an outhouse of British Imperialism.

*Sir George Rainy* said that in spite of the speeches, it was a long way to Burma and difficult to get acquaintance with the problem they were discussing. There was no covered plot to prevent the expression of opinion against the separation. The British Government and the Government of India could never be accused of manoeuvring in this matter.

*Mr. Ranga Aiyer.*—Can the hon. member deny that they lent their support to separation and that the Governor, Sir Charles Innes, went on that mission?

*Sir George Rainy.*—The Governor went on leave.

*Mr. Ranga Aiyer.*—Did not he send a telegram to the acting Governor of Burma congratulating him on separation? Do you understand the implications of that telegram?

Sir George Rainy regretted that there was so much suspicion on the matter and preposterous allegations had been made. But suspicion was a double-edged weapon which might raise a doubt that the opposition here was being conducted from an opposite motive. The issue was simple that a *prima facie* case had been established when the members of the Association were found to be promoting rebellion. None had challenged that.

The closure of the debate was at this stage applied and granted.

*Mr. Aung*, replying to the debate, said that the Burma official member had said that the separation question had been already settled. That was not so. 'When the people found that separation was not being asked by them, but was being given by the Government, they came to their senses'. (Laughter and applause.) He contended that all who had been found associated with rebellion were not members of the Association.

When the division took place Dr. Ziauddin, Mr. Yamin Khan, Mian Shah Nawaz and Mr. Anwarul Azim remained neutral, while the last-minute vote of Mr. Ankelsaria with the Government brought the voting to a tie at 42 each side. The House cheered the result for two minutes after which the President said he would stand for the *status quo* and rejected the motion. The House then rose for the day.

#### SECTION 144 AMENDMENT BILL

14th. FEBRUARY:—A comparatively thin House resumed the discussion on Mr. Gaya Prashad Singh's Bill to amend section 144, Criminal Procedure Code.

*Mr. Ankelsaria* moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion by Aug. 31. He said that in the face of general appeals all round the country for preventive legislation, the Bill before the House was ill-conceived and ill-thought of. The essential condition for the application of section 144 was the necessity for immediate action and if a magistrate failed to give adequate reasons for the proclamation of the section the High Court had revisional powers. Referring to the Bill, the speaker thought it absurd to restrict the operation of the section to two days, as mischief-makers would keep quiet during that period and resume their mischief with redoubled force at the expiry of the two days.

Proceeding, the speaker said that 70 years ago when the section was inserted in the Criminal Code there was no civil disobedience movement, nor picketing of liquor shops. The exigencies of the hour demanded that the section be made 70 times more rigorous. The country, he said, was getting thoroughly disgusted of the Congresswala and the apathy of the Government is tending them to take the law in their own hands. If the Bill was passed it would mean sympathy with the forces of violence and disorder.

*Mr. Hazelett* opposing the Bill said it would seriously affect the maintenance of law and order in the country. Speaking with 31 years' administrative experience, he admitted that the section had been misapplied in several cases, but so was the whole of the criminal law of the country. (Loud opposition cheers.) But why, he asked, they should tinker with section 144 alone? They might just as well try to amend the whole criminal law of India with a view to make it 'fool proof'. Mr. Hazelett felt the Bill was unnecessary as sufficient safeguards existed for the guidance of magistrates. The present time was highly inopportune for amending the section. To-day, he said, there was a party in the country with the openly avowed object of subverting the Satanic Government whose representatives sat on the front benches of the House. Further, they on the Government side wanted to hand over a well contented and prosperous India to the incoming constitution and the Bill would seriously weaken the hands of the security services on whose shoulders lay the duty of maintaining law and order.

*Sir Abdur Rahim*, leader of the Independent party, supported the motion for a select committee. He said there was no doubt regarding the very wide and vague language of section 144. There had been uncertainty in its application, and as its application had recently aroused so much opposition, it should be amended and more clearly defined. He assured the House that a member of the Assembly would do anything to weaken the Government's authority to prevent disorders, but he was looking forward to a time when there would be provincial autonomy, and they should not leave any weapon in the hands of Government whereby they might prevent an expression of political opinion. Such an expression of political opinion would become more necessary than now, while sec. 144, if it remained as wide as it was, might enable a party in power to use it against its political opponents. While

his party did not approve of the entire details of the Bill, it approved of the principle that the application of the section be restricted strictly to the prevention of commission of crime and breaches of peace.

The discussion was not concluded when the House rose.

### The Railway Budget 1931—32.

*17th. FEBRUARY:*—The Assembly met to-day to hear the Railway Budget statement of Sir George Rainy, which took over an hour to deliver.

The Railway Estimates showed that the Railways were working at a loss for the first since the railway revenues were separated from the general revenues. The net result this year is expected to be a loss on the commercial lines of 3 crores of rupees as against a gain last year of 6 crores.

Owing to general trade depression and the results of the Civil Disobedience movement, the total traffic receipts from commercial lines, including a crore of rupees extra for the full year of the Southern Punjab Railway purchased in January 1930, are estimated at only 43½ crores or seven and a half crores lower than last year's receipts. Both the passenger receipts and goods receipts show a large decrease. The traffic has declined considerably in practically all commodities.

The total working expenses are expected to be nearly one crore less than last year though half a crore more has been credited to the Depreciation Fund under the rules to cover depreciation on increased capital at charge and another half a crore is required for the working expenses of the Southern Punjab Railway for the full year.

These items have been partly counter-balanced by a credit of 48 lakhs from the Depreciation Fund on account of correction of past erroneous adjustments. The reduction in expenditure is a result of measures of economy introduced by the railways throughout the year.

Much progress has, however, been made during the year in schemes for improving service conditions of lower paid employees and revisions of pay, estimated to cost more than a quarter of a crore, have been introduced on the East Indian, the Great Indian Peninsular and the Eastern Bengal Railways.

The cost of repairs and maintenance shows a reduction of one crore owing to special efforts made to economise expenditure preserving, however, the standard of maintenance necessary to secure safe passage of trains and guarding against deterioration of railway property. The total cost of operation is similarly half a crore less and is directly due to reduction in traffic mileage. Interest charges are 2½ crores more, partly as a result of increase in the rate of interest charged on Railway Capital.

#### BIG LOSS FROM COMMERCIAL LINES

The final result of 1930-31 is anticipated to be a loss from commercial lines of 293 lakhs. The loss in strategic lines of 219 lakhs brings up the total loss on all railways to 512 lakhs and contribution to general revenues of 574 lakhs. 1086 lakhs will be taken from previously accumulated reserve leaving a balance of 5½ crores. The Depreciation Fund balances will be increased by 4 crores to 16½ crores.

Assuming modest improvement in traffic and minor alterations of rates and fares, the estimates of traffic receipts on account of commercial lines in 1931-32 are 99½ crores or nearly 6 crores higher than in the current year. The working expenses are expected to be three-fourth of a crore lower in spite of an increase of 37 lakhs under the Depreciation Fund for expenditure during the current year.

The Railway Board realise that unremitting attention to details of every item of expenditure, however small, will be necessary to secure this reduction and that to keep expenditure within the limits imposed will require constant supervision by the Railway Board, the Agents and principal officers and ungrudging co-operation from every railway official.

The interest charges rise by 80 lakhs but surplus profits paid to the companies are likely to be down by 48 lakhs.

The final result of 1931-32 is expected to be a surplus from commercial lines of 317 lakhs or 6 crores more than in the current year. The balance left after deducting 196 lakhs for loss in strategic lines is 121 lakhs representing a gain on all



lines during 1931-32. This is insufficient to meet the contribution of 536 lakhs to the general revenues and the Railway reserves will again be drawn upon to the extent of 415 lakhs. The balance left at the end of the year will then be 1½ crores. The Depreciation Fund will, however, be increased by 5¼ crores to 21¼ crores.

#### PROGRAMME FOR 1931—32

The capital programme for the railways in 1931-32 is still more restricted than in the current year in which the total expenditure will be 23½ crores of which 9 crores will be from the Depreciation Fund. The Railway Board explain that from the reduced sum which it was possible to place at their disposal, it has been their first duty to provide adequately for the maintenance of the lines in condition to carry traffic safely and economically and for the completion of the works already begun including the lines under construction. An amount of 290 lakhs allotted for the new construction will, they expect, enable them to open all lines now being constructed for traffic except the Sagaing Bridge in Burma, the Tangla-Belsiri Railway in Assam and the portion beyond Sultanpur-Zafarabad Railway.

On open line works also the expenditure has practically been confined to amounts required to carry to completion, as quickly as possible, the work already in progress to keep the tract in proper condition for safe and efficient movement of traffic and to purchase only such rolling stock as is necessary to cope with the reduced traffic at present offering. Actual purchases of rolling stock have been reduced by redistribution of the existing stock between the various railways.

The Railway Board have found themselves unable, in view of the high cost of borrowing at present, to propose the inception of any large new scheme, the completion of which would commit the Government of India to heavy expenditure in future years, the only exception being in the case of the Narbadda Bridge on the B. B. and C. I. Railway of which the girders require urgent renewal.

The total expenditure in 1931-32 on the works in the programme will be 21¼ of which 8¼ crores will be met from the Depreciation Fund. Materials required to the extent of 2 crores will be found from the existing stores. The balance and actual money required on capital account is only 11¼ crores.

#### AMENDMENT OF SEC. 144

Further discussion was then resumed on Mr. Gaya Prasad's Bill to amend section 144, Cr. P. C. Maulvi Mohd. Yakub, opposing the motion, said that after hearing the speeches he had come to the conclusion that it would not be discreet to support the measure. Section 144 was meant for taking prompt action in case of emergency and if the amendment moved by Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh was accepted by the House it would take away the very essence of that section. Mr. Yakub said that they often abused the Government for ignoring public opinion, but the mover of the Bill in pressing the motion was committing the same mistake.

Mr. Gaya Prasad, replying to the debate, said that he also mentioned cases of the wearing of the Gandhi cap and the displaying of national flags being banned under this section as instances of the misuse of the section and asked if there were not High Court decisions.

Sir James Crerar, winding up the debate, exhibited a summary of cases in which during the last four years section 144 had been used in very serious riots that took place in, among other places, Calcutta, Lahore, and Delhi and always with effect and that in all these cases action taken had been appreciated by many influential sections of public opinion. Sir James Crerar concluding announced on behalf of the Government that he was prepared to support the motion of Mr. Anklesaria (for circulation for eliciting opinion by Aug. 31,) making it clear, however, that he did not consider that the local Governments would find themselves in a position to take a view on the Bill other than that taken by the official benches. Still they agreed to circulation as it might be to the advantage of the House to obtain opinion larger and more comprehensive than the opinion of the ordinary citizen. If the Bill was to be referred to a select committee, then the Government would have to make strenuous efforts to maintain the existing provision.

The circulation motion of Mr. Anklesaria was carried by 51 votes to 50 amidst cheers on both sides of the House.

#### ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The next Bill of Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh for the abolition of capital punishment was given short shrift after the speech of the Home Member, when the motion was rejected without any further speeches and without division.

Sir James Crerar considered the Bill drastic and reminded the House that the controversy over it had not yet ended. The Indian law was more elastic, as it provided an alternative sentence to death, whereas in England there was no such alternative sentence in the law.

#### BAR COUNCILS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Sir H. S. Gour moved for the consideration of the Bill to amend the Bar Councils Act. He explained the statement of objects and reasons, which he had appended to it.

Sir Lancelot Graham moved for the circulation of the Bill for eliciting opinion by August 31. He said that the Bill proposed to take away privileges from a class of eminent practitioners and confer them on a class which did not exist. Without ascertaining the opinion of the legal profession on so many clauses, it was dangerous to rush through the measure. The circulation motion was agreed to.

#### MORE BILLS INTRODUCED.

Six non-official Bills were then introduced before the Assembly adjourned. These were a Bill of Sir Hari Singh Gour for creating a new offence of marital misbehaviour when the wife is below 15 years of age and fixing the age of consent at 18; a Bill by Mr Gaya Prasad for the repeal of part 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act; a Bill of Mr. Amar Nath Dutt for the repeal of the Bengal Regulation; a Bill by Mr. Amar Nath Dutt to amend sections 4, 9, and 14 of the Bar Councils Act; a Bill by Mr. Harbilas Sarda to secure the share for Hindu widows in their husbands' family property; and, lastly, a Bill of Mr. Amarnath Dutt to amend 461, Cr. P. C., relating to Habeas Corpus.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS PASSED.

18th. FEBRUARY:—The Assembly met to-day to pass a number of minor official bills. Sir George Rainy moved the consideration of the *Merchant Shipping Amendment Bill* and announced the Government's acceptance of two suggestions made by the select committee, firstly that the word 'Indian seamen' be replaced by 'Indian seamen' throughout the act by repealing and amending the bill and, secondly, that the health officer of each port should be appointed by the Governor-General in Council.

The House passed this Bill without any discussion as also the *Gold Thread Industry Protection Bill*.

The House next passed without any discussion the *Steel Protection Bill* and all the excess grants for 1928-29 and the supplementary demands for grants.

#### Discussion on Railway Budget

19th. FEBRUARY:—The first stage of the Railway Budget commenced in the Assembly to-day when a general discussion was started by Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.

Mr. Ranga Iyer, initiating the debate, felt that he could not congratulate Sir George Rainy because the speaker wanted to fight him for introducing communalism in railway service. He wished the Government would rather adopt the policy followed in all other civilized countries of the world. Mr. Ranga Iyer believed in efficiency in all branches of the services and held that if communalism was once introduced therein then good-bye to all efficiency.

Dr. Suhrawardy: Why do you ask for Indianisation because that too will affect the efficiency of services?

Mr. Ranga Iyer: If the member was opposed to the nationalisation of the services he could have developed that argument in his note of dissent to the Central Committee's report but the speaker believed that apart for affecting adversely efficiency in the service, communalism was a most vicious system which would not only recoil on the present generation but also on their children and children's children. He felt those in power to-day in the Government of the country wanted to leave a deadly poison behind when the reins of the Government were about to be handed to the people of India. Proceeding, he said why should the Government favour the Mussalmans only. If they wanted to introduce communalism in the services they should give representation to all minority communities in India.

Mr. Anwarul Axix said that the civil disobedience and boycott movements had affected the railway finances badly but the situation might be slightly retrieved if the movement of coal was encouraged by reducing the freight as suggested by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas last year. Alluding to Mr. Ranga Iyer's remarks

on communalism the speaker quoted Pandit Malaviya's speech in the Assembly when the Pandit had favoured increasing the number of Muslims and he quoted also the Government's acceptance of the principle that in no branch of Government service should there be over-weightage of any one community or province. Sir George Rainy had not committed any crime by promising an enquiry into the number of Muslims in the railway service. Mr. Anwarul Aziz concluded by emphasising that efficiency was not the monopoly of any community or class or creed.

*Doctor Ziauddin* subjected the budget to a detailed scrutiny and severe criticism. He agreed that an increase in fares and freights was not possible and might prove suicidal and thought that by reducing the freight tariff there might be some revenue because agricultural produce would then move. Proceeding, he suggested the abolition of the Railway Publicity Department which merely did publicity encouraging European and American tourist traffic which really did not bring sufficient profit and reduction also in the number of special officers in the Railway Board of whom there were at present no less than 25 costing five lakhs of rupees.

*Mr. B. Das* held that the present Railway Budget had a deficit of eleven crores and not of five as was shown in the statements presented to the House two days ago. The speaker referred to the efforts of the Government of India to take away the control of the Assembly from the Railway department and said it was fortunate that the Round Table Conference had reversed their calculations. The Government of India should have created a portfolio for transport instead of tagging on the Railways to the Commerce department. Proceeding, Mr. Das said that last year they urged for the appointment of a retrenchment committee, but they were told that the Railway Board itself was doing the retrenchment work. Their experience of the Railway Board was quite contrary and he urged for the immediate appointment of a retrenchment committee which should effect economy all round, but specially from the top on the grade scale. Referring to the deficit in the Budget Mr. Das said that much had been made of the civil disobedience movement in India and trade depression. But the real fact was that the foreign countries were either becoming independent of Indian raw materials or were buying elsewhere. It was idle to think that if the civil disobedience movement was called off to-day the Railway income would at once jump up to its former level. They should face facts that rice and jute were no longer required by America. The remedy lay in the reduction of the working expenditure. If the Cabinet Ministers in the Great Britain could forego certain percentage of their salaries why should the Cabinet Ministers in India insist on the terms of their contracts. If they have love of this country at heart they should also follow the example of their countrymen in England. Indianisation and local production of Railway appliances, he said, would lead to real economy.

*Mr. Ismail Ali Khan* felt that loose estimates of works were often presented to the House and when works were in actual progress the Assembly would be forced to grant more money. He urged for a closer scrutiny of the accounts and presentation of correct estimates for works and also for better facilities for third class passengers.

*Mr. Hoon* drew a picture of an Anglo-Indian employee of railways who owing to the spoon-feeding policy of the Government in the past was a most gloomy figure in that branch of public administration. The speaker said that any community wanting special treatment to-day should be ready for that fate. He also pleaded for cheaper methods of working the Indian Railways.

*Mr. Tun Aung* (Burma) pointed out the absence of Burmans on the Burma Railways. Coming to India he said he found that Mussalmans were most favourably treated by the Government and though he bore no grudge to them, he pleaded for the employment of Burmans on the Burma Railways and for justice to his countrymen. The speaker criticised the expenditure of Rs. 150 lakhs on the Irrawady Bridge and said that the bridge might be a piece of Engineering marvel, but it would not give service in any proportion to the expenditure incurred on it.

*Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chowdhury* feared that signs portended to the fact that State management of the railways, which had been accepted after 15 years of hesitation was to be declared a failure because of the hopeless bungling of the system by a few European officers. He pleaded for a re-examination of the financial agreement and the capital expenditure policy of the railways.

*Mr. Jagannath Agarwal* suggested that at least in the case of future entrants to the railway service, there must be a lower scale of salary fixed as the present level was unparalleled in the history of the world. Now that the railway finances had been separated and the railways were working as commercial concerns or corporation, why

should they not cut their coat according to cloth as any commercial firm would do and, thus, give a lead to other departments of the Government of India?

The railways should regard the third class passengers, who formed 88 per cent of the traffic, as the largest class of customer and provide fan and other facilities, as otherwise it would be found difficult to compete successfully with the road motor service which was quicker and more convenient. He suggested the reduction of long distance freights on agricultural products, as was done in the case of coal, and concluded by quoting from a book of Mr. G. T. Garrett, a retired member of the I. C. S. to show that communalism in the services, when once introduced, tended to spread in all spheres.

*Sir George Rainy*, winding up the debate, affirmed that no new policy was being inaugurated in the railway services as Mr. Ranga Iyer imagined but they were following up what was the already declared policy. Week after week in this House there were questions put on the subject of communal representation in the services. Therefore, a special enquiry had been instituted in the three railways and the result disclosed that adequate steps had not been taken to give effect to the policy.

As for the construction of waiting-sheds for third class passengers at every small station was concerned, this must await better finances, although he sympathised with those who suffered, especially in summer, for want of sheds. On the question of reduction of rates on Burma rice, the report of the Agent of Burma Railways had been just received and *Sir George Rainy* promised to examine it.

Alluding to the demand for a cut of a certain percentage in the salaries, the Railway Member emphasised his position that if for financial reasons it became necessary to make a substantial saving by reduction in the salaries, it was not possible to limit that reduction merely to gazetted officers and the upper subordinates but drag the line right down to those drawing Rs. 30.

Regarding reduction in freight on agricultural produce, this was not possible at present. Nor could the Government reduce the number of members of the Railway Board from five to four as suggested by *Dr. Zia-ud-din*.

At this stage the Budget discussion concluded and the House adjourned.

#### Voting on Railway Demands

*23rd. FEBRUARY:* - Voting on Railway Budget demands commenced on this day and the Assembly after a full debate rejected by 53 against 46 votes the motion of *Mr. B. Das* to cut the Railway Board grant by 10 per cent.

Those who were in favour of the cut pleaded that in view of the extravagance of the Railway Board, economy was justified and drew attention to what other countries were doing on similar lines.

*Sir George Rainy* declared that the larger all-India question of 10 per cent. cut all round should not be introduced in a particular department without its proper examination from a broader point of view, and maintained that while it was easy to suggest economies it was difficult to work them. He assured the House that all possible economies were already being effected.

Next day, the *24th. FEBRUARY*, *Mr. Sitaram Raju* moved a cut of Rs. 1,00,000 in the Railway Board budget, which was an attempt to retrieve the situation they had lost yesterday over *Mr. B. Das's* cut for Rs. 1,15,000 and the arguments adduced were more or less the same. The real interest attached to the voting because the non-official strength had increased by the arrival of some absent members, such as *Mr. Shanmukham Chetty* and *Mr. Jagannath Agarwal*.

*Mr. Raju* maintained that *Mr. Hayman's* figures given yesterday would need a careful scrutiny regarding the savings made through special officers.

*Mr. Parsons*, railway financial commissioner, explained that the increase in the non-voted demands in the railway budget was not due to any sinister move but was the effect of change in the Government of India Act. He assured the House that the economies they were launching would bring about a larger saving than even 10 per cent. The move to Simla could not bring a saving unless the entire office remained in Delhi. He assured *Maulvi Muhammad Yakub* that the recent designs of officials' quarters were modest. As regards the demand for reduction in the Railway Board establishment, he said the choice lay between a lesser staff and lesser control over the general managers of the railway.

On division being taken, *Mr. Raju's* cut was carried by 51 against 44, amidst Opposition cheers.

Mr. Anwarul Azim moved a cut of Rs. 100 under the Railway Board to raise a discussion on Muslim representation in railway services. The speaker referred to the announcement by Sir Alexander Muddiman regarding communal representation in the services, but felt that the figures given in the Railway Board's memorandum were mere jugglery, as even wage-earners of as. 6 a day had been included in order to inflate the totals. He quoted Lord Ronaldshay to prove the loyalty of the Mussalmans to the Government and repudiated the charge of inefficiency.

Mr. Hayman, replying on behalf of the Government, said that referring to the superior services, the best efforts of the Railway Board could not help them in finding qualified Muslims for the posts in that grade, although the qualifications for entrance were even lowered in order to reach the quota. In regard to the upper subordinate services, the Government found themselves in difficulty. Recruitment to this branch of the services was generally made by promotion from the immediate lower grade on a merit test. Unfortunately the percentage of Mussalmans in the lower grades was very unsatisfactory and unless that was remedied, no satisfactory solution could be found without doing injustice to other communities. It was, however, possible to appoint Mussalmans to the intermediate services, but Government had not come to a final decision on that question. Mr. Hayman promised to place all suggestions made by the members before Sir George Rainy and take action if necessary and possible. He counselled for patience in order to see the results of his labour during last year.

It now being 4 o'clock further discussion on the cut was adjourned till next day and the discussion of the adjournment motion of Dr. Ziauddin was taken up.

#### PESHAWAR EXECUTION : GOVERNMENT CENSURED

By 56 against 42 votes, the Assembly carried the adjournment motion of Dr. Ziauddin censuring the Government for the summary trial and execution of Habib Nur who was sentenced to death for the attempted murder of Capt Barnes, assistant commissioner, Charsaddha, as an act of revenge. Dr. Ziauddin was anxious to prevent the repetition of such miscarriage of justice.

Sir Hari Singh Gour pointed out that with the growth of responsiveness, if not responsibility, in the executive government, it was necessary that the repressive laws should be humanised and made subservient to the primary principles of justice.

Sir James Crerar quoted from the judgment of the sessions judge to show that on the accused's own admission it was a fanatical crime. The trial was not 'in camera'. The accused was unanimously held by the assessors to have been guilty and was sentenced to death and executed according to law. The Home Member concluded by saying that officers on the frontier carried their lives in their hands and there was no class of officers to whom he would more willingly pay homage than to the frontier officials. Let not the house take a decision which would be interpreted as countenancing murderous outrages.

Sir Abdur Rahim, speaking with life-long judicial experience, characterised it as a mockery of trial which had opened his eyes to the state of affairs in the frontier. The execution was unparalleled in the history of many barbarous nations.

Mr. Achesan argued that in the Frontier Province, where since 1921 no less than 12 British officials and two ladies had been murdered by persons who gloried in such acts, the conditions were extraordinary and justice had to be swift with the minimum of publicity.

Sir Cowasji said he would vote for the censure motion as a protest against the continuance of an Act under which such execution could take place.

Mr. Arthur Moore said wherever blood feuds existed in other parts of the world, the trial was summary.

Sir Abdul Qayum pleaded that fanatical religious outrages on which the Act of 1867 was based had ceased to exist and none had occurred to his knowledge during thirty years. Why not administer the Frontier Province on the same lines as other provinces ?

The motion had the support of practically every elected member and it was carried by 56 against 42 after which the House adjourned.

**25th. FEBRUARY.**—In the Assembly to-day Mr. Anwarul Azim withdrew his motion urging representation of Muslims in the services. Sir Gorge Rainy gave an assurance that the Government's declared policy regarding the minorities would be carried out.

Replying to a motion for a cut for urging Indianisation of the Railway Board,

Sir George Rainy said that an Indian was being appointed to the Board in the next summer.

A motion urging the Indianisation of the railway's by the stoppage of European and Anglo-Indian recruitment was carried by 43 votes to 40.

Sir George Rainy declared that inequality could not be adjusted by the stoppage of recruitment of Europeans and Anglo-Indians but the Agents would be asked to try Indians for various railway services.

It now being five, the guillotine fell and all the demands of the railway budget were passed. The House adjourned till the 28th when the general budget was introduced.

### Financial Statement for 1931—32

**28th. FEBRUARY:**—A full House and crowded galleries listened with unusual interest to Sir George Schuster's budget statement indicating his taxation proposals to meet over fourteen and a half crores of deficit. Sir George Schuster took about two hours to deliver his statement. The first hour was taken by explanation of the revenue position of the current year and prospects for the coming year and the only applause during this hour was when he referred to the decision to appoint a Retrenchment Committee.

The revised estimates for the current year worked up to a deficit of 1,356 lakhs. As regards the coming year, he estimated that after military expenditure by 175 lakhs and effecting various civil economies by 98 lakhs the deficit would be 14 crores and 51 lakhs which would be met by a new taxation of 14 crores and 82 lakhs leaving a surplus of 31 lakhs.

The Finance Member said that as regards her present economic adversity, India was not alone and had been through such times before. Referring to political conditions he said: "India to-day has to consider a change in political horses—just when she is crossing a stream of economic difficulties which is sweeping down in dangerous flood upon her. If this operation of changing horses is to be accomplished without disaster to India, then all who are engaged in it must work in co-operation.

#### IMPORTS DECLINE BY 18 PER CENT.

Comparing the results of external trade for calendar year 1930 with 1929 and reducing them to a common basis as regards price, the volume of exports had declined by 4 per cent, while the volume of imports had declined by just under 18 per cent. That India has been able to maintain the volume of her exports was a sign of general health in her economic condition.

Referring to retrenchment he said that when the heavy burden of new taxation was being imposed on the country, the members might legitimately claim some means of satisfying themselves as to the possibility of still further and more permanent economies in expenditure. Should the Assembly so desire, Government would appoint a retrenchment committee of five non-official members elected by the Assembly and two Government officials, one of whom would be the representative of Finance Department.

#### RETRENCHMENT IN CIVIL EXPENDITURE

The primary task of this committee would be to investigate the possibilities of retrenchment in civil expenditure. He added that no substantial economies would be possible in military expenditure without changes in the composition and strength of forces in India which had already received special consideration at the Round Table Conference.

#### PROPOSED CUT IN SALARIES

Sir George Schuster, dealing with the pay and condition of the services paid a glowing tribute to them and stated that administration had been carried out in India, on the whole, at a very low cost. As regards the suggestion for a cut in salaries, the matter required a uniform policy of both the Central and provincial Governments but even if there were a 10 per cent cut in the officers' salaries it would produce a saving of 160 lakhs only of which the Central Government would get 36 and each province 14 lakhs on an average. He announced that there would be a conference in Simla with the Provincial Governments' representatives to consider the possibilities of revising the terms of service for new entrants but to meet the present emergency the income tax was being raised and this would fall unerringly and most heavily on Government Officials.

## PROPOSED TAXATION

The taxation proposed is an increase of Income Tax and Super Tax, ranging from two to five per cent on all incomes, bringing in an estimate of five crores. The present taxable minimum of 2,000 is not lowered. Customs duties are increased by a surcharge of two and a half per cent on the present customs ten per cent schedule, five per cent surcharge on the fifteen per cent schedule including cotton piecegoods and ten per cent on the luxury schedule. Duties on wines and spirits are raised from thirty to forty per cent and beer will pay sixty-six per cent more. Sugar of all grades will pay one rupee four annas per hundredweight, motor spirit two annas per gallon and kerosene nine pies per gallon. There is a two annas increase on every ounce of silver bullion.

The Finance Member said that the requirements of the Home Treasury next year would be thirty-three and one third millions sterling.

There would be a rupee loan of fifteen crores and there would be the conversion of the 15 million sterling loan in England. Concluding, the Finance Member said that the change of ratio from 18 to 16 pence would be fatal to India's financial welfare. He stressed the necessity for co-operation and said: "We are in a sense in the position of managers of a business for which a change of management is under discussion. We must co-operate during the period of preparation. I have tried in these proposals to measure the needs fairly and to meet them, fully guided, above all things, by the purpose of handing over a sound business to my successor."

In the course of his speech introducing the Budget the Finance Member said:—

Apart from the effects of the economic crisis, the situation in India has been aggravated by special factors which are only too familiar—internal disturbances and the uncertainty caused by the prospects of fundamental constitutional changes.

So far as the total volume of India's external trade is concerned the main course of events has been determined by world economic conditions. Exports have kept up well in volume, and the total imports have not declined to a degree appreciably out of proportion to the drop in the value of the exports. On the other hand, certain classes of imports have shown major variations from the normal—notably cigarettes and cotton piece-goods,—but, as to the latter, it is necessary to remember that a part of the variation might have been expected as a result of the higher import duties imposed last year.

On the other hand, although the course of external trade may have been mainly governed by economic causes, internal trade has suffered disastrously as a result of political disturbances. Unnecessary losses to private traders must have been very great, while enormous sums of money must have been diverted from productive purposes. This kind of effect is seen in Provincial budgets, but there must be much more which does not appear in any public accounts.

The visible balance of trade in favour of India (including private imports of treasure) for the first 9 months of the current financial year was 34.43 crores comparing with 41.62 crores for 1929, 39.76 crores for 1928, and 33.07 crores in 1927. The balance was therefore not strikingly worse than the average of the last few years and was actually better than in 1927.

As against this, of course, the value of trade has declined enormously—exports of merchandise for the 9 months being down by 61 crores, as compared with last year, and imports by 56 crores.

The volume of exports declined by less than ½ per cent. (to be exact 4 per cent), while the volume of imports declined by just under 18 per cent. This greater decline in the volume of imports was natural. The country pays for its imports with its exports and since, as already pointed out, the price of the goods India exports fell much more than the price of goods which she normally imports, the same volume of the former could only buy a smaller quantity of the latter.

Export of raw jute, on the nine months to date, show a fall of nearly 12 crores— a decline in value of 54 per cent, and in quantity of 29 per cent. Cotton exports for the nine months are up to last year's level, but show a decline in value of 24 per cent. There is no doubt that Indian cotton is steadily gaining ground in the world's markets. For 1930 the total exports were 727,000 tons as against 702,000 in 1929. This increase is extremely satisfactory in times, like the present, of diminished consumption throughout the world. Many manufacturers, especially in Lancashire, are now adapting their mills so as to substitute Indian for American

cotton. The new Lancashire combine—the Lancashire Cotton Corporation—whose mills a year or two ago only took about 10,000 bales a year of Indian cotton, hope shortly to be taking upto 4,000 bales a week and eventually more than double this quantity. But the strength of the Indian cotton position depends on its price. It is being bought because it is cheaper than American cotton.

I expect that we shall lose as much as 9½ crores under Customs, of which cotton piece-goods and jute contribute 3,45 lakhs and 85 lakhs, respectively. To the extent that duties are specific, we are hit by the reduction in the volume of imports and exports. To the extent that the duties are *ad valorem*, revenue automatically falls even if the volume of imports is maintained at the former level. Under Taxes on Income, I expect that we shall lose 2.20 crores notwithstanding the fact that the assessments have reference to the incomes of the previous year. The revenues of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department have also been seriously affected by the prevailing conditions and the working of the Department is expected now to result in a loss of no less than 1.36 lakhs against 48 lakhs anticipated a year ago. The deterioration on the Finance heading is in a large measure due to the ways and means operations of Government which I shall deal with later. The main items of deterioration as compared with the budget may now briefly be summarised as follows :—

Important revenue heads, viz., Customs, Taxes on Income, Salt and Opium (net) 12.10 lakhs. Posts and Telegraphs (including the Indo-European Telegraph Department) 89 lakhs. Finance headings, viz., Debt Services, Currency and Mint 1.36 lakhs. Other heads 5 lakhs. Total 14.42 lakhs.

As the final budget estimates showed a surplus of 86 lakhs, the revised estimates work up to a deficit of 13.59 crores.

#### CUSTOMS AND TAXES ON INCOME

I calculate that we must face a fall in tax revenue, as compared with the current budget estimates, of no less than 13.16 crores. In order to make clear the main features, I need only now refer specially to the large heads of Customs and Taxes on Income.

For Customs I estimate total receipt of 46.64 crores, which is 8 crores worse than the budget estimates for the current year, but 1½ crores better than what we now expect to realise this year. It would certainly not be safe to count on getting more than this having regard to the low level of prices and the diminished purchasing power of India.

For Taxes on Income I estimate receipts of 13.50 crores which is 4½ crores worse than the current budget and 2.30 crores worse than what we expect to realise this year.

These two head alone account for a deterioration of 12½ crores. Apart from this, there will be the normal drop in opium revenue, due to our policy of reducing exports, and other minor deteriorations which make up the figure of 13.16 crores which I have given as total loss on tax revenue as compared with the current budget estimates.

#### POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

I come next to the prospects for the great commercial undertakings—Posts and Telegraphs and Railways. As regards Posts and Telegraphs, business is badly affected by the current depression, and we must face a net deficit of 1.41 crores in the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Departments, or, adding capital expenditure charged to revenue, of 1.52 crores. The budget estimate for the current year was bad enough, but the revised estimate under the head as a whole is 80 lakhs worse than that.

The actual Railway contribution is estimated at 5.36 crores instead of 5.74 crores in the current budget, so that here we have a deterioration of 38 lakhs.

Taking these figures together with those for Posts and Telegraphs, the total deterioration on our main commercial undertakings is 1.18 lakhs.

First there is a loss of profit to the Government from currency, partly owing to the decreased volume of currency in circulation, which is a necessary result of the general fall in prices and the decreased commercial activity, and, partly owing to lower rules of interest on the Gold Standard Reserve. The former, under the headings Currency and Mint, accounts for a net deterioration of 2.27 lakhs, and the latter, under the heading interest receipts, for a deterioration of 54 lakhs.



Secondly, there are higher charges on Interest on Ordinary Debt due to increased rates of interest payable on new loans and to the borrowing necessary for covering the deficit in the current year. Under this head, however, the net deterioration is only 1 lakh.

Thirdly, there is an increased charge, under the heading Interest on Other Obligations, of 16. This increase is accounted for by the large liability for bonus on cash certificates, which is 22 lakhs higher this year.

Lastly, there is the automatic increase, in the provision for Reduction and Avoidance of Debt, of 78 lakhs.

To sum up—the total deterioration under the Finance headings is 3,76 lakhs, of which 2,81 represents the diminution of profits from currency in circulation and 95 increased net charges for debt, of which no less than 78 is due to the automatic increase in the Reduction and Avoidance of Debt provision.

Comparing the forecast for next year with the current budget, we lose—

13.16 crores in Tax revenue.

1.18 crores on Commercial Departments, and we are worse off by 3.76 crores on General Finance headings. This means a total deterioration of 18.10 crores as compared with the budget estimate for the current year. As those estimates provided for a surplus of 86 lakhs, the net deficit, on the basis of the current year's figures for all the other items, would be 17.24 crores. This is the gap which we have to fill either by cutting down expenditure or finding new sources of revenue. To this task I must now turn.

I propose to deal first with military expenditure—and here I am glad to say that we can put forward a substantial reduction of no less than 1,70 lakhs, bringing the figure (exclusive of the Territorial Force grant) to 52½ crores.

A further small saving has been provided for in the Territorial Force grant, bringing the total military saving to 1,75 lakhs.

Although the Civil expenditure of the Government reaches apparently a large figure, the handings of normal administrative expenditure, which alone offer a straight-forward task, are really confined to those shown in the accounts as Civil Administration and Civil Works, together accounting for about 16 crores. Even in this reduced total, when one gets down to the actual task, the scope for action is further limited. Thus about 3 crores out of this total represents expenditure on the North-West Frontier Province.

As the receipt is 54 lakhs and the provision items is 53, that gives me 1 lakh in hand to be added to the net saving of 97. Adding the resulting figure of 98 lakhs to the saving of 1,75 lakhs on the Military budget, we have a total of 273 lakhs to put against the deficit of 17.24 crores with which I started.

This therefore reduces the gap to 14.51 crores. and this is the sum for which we must provide by new taxation.

We propose that, if it should be the desire of this Assembly, there should be constituted a Retrenchment Committee consisting of five non-official members to be elected by the Assembly and two officials to be nominated by His Excellency the Governor-General, one of whom would be a representative of the Finance Department.

The primary task of the Retrenchment Committee will be to investigate possibilities of retrenchment in the Civil expenditure of Government as examined in this Report. But this work must be co-ordinated with other steps in a comprehensive plan. Retrenchment in its fullest sense involves a wide range of subjects, some technical and others which now form part of the whole constitutional issue which is before us. For such subjects, in certain cases, other agencies must be employed, and with these the work of the special Committee of this House, if appointed, must be co-ordinated.

#### INCOME TAX

In a case of national emergency some sacrifice may be demanded, some action is now called for, and what we propose is as follows:—

First, so far as concerns a sacrifice to meet the present emergency, we consider that this can be most fairly put upon all classes in the form of an increase in the income-tax—a measure which will not select the particular class of Government officials for bearing a special burden.

Secondly, as regards measures for the future, it has been decided to hold a Conference on this subject in Simla, as early as possible after the Delhi session, with representatives of all the Provincial Governments, at which the possibility of revis-

ing the terms of service for new entrants into the services will be explored. The field for discussion at this Conference will of necessity be governed by the constitutional aspects of the question to which I have already referred.

#### NEW TAXATION

Of the new taxation proposed this year, my view is that some at least will be permanently needed, or at least cannot be abolished unless substitutes are found. This general idea will be found to underlie my proposals.

My plan for new taxation is all confined under the heads of Customs and Taxes on Income, for these are the only two sources ready to our hand for providing sums of the magnitude now required.

I will deal first with Customs. My proposals fall into two distinct classes. I have first singled out a number of items on which it has seemed that the substantive rates can fairly be changed, and secondly, I am proposing a schedule of surcharges on other items. The heads in respect of which I propose alterations of the substantive tariff itself, are : liquors, sugar, silver, bullion, betel-nuts, spices and exposed cinematograph films. 'The liquor duties' are to be enhanced appreciably; the duty on beer and the like is at present undoubtedly low relative to those on other alcoholic beverages and will be raised by about 66 per cent above the present level, while those on wines and spirits (except denatured spirit and spirit used in drugs and medicines) will be raised by between 30 and 40 per cent. As regards "sugar" this is a special case which I must deal with separately. The duty on "silver bullion" I propose to increase from 4 to 6 annas per ounce. I must reserve for a later stage of my speech my remarks on our general policy as to our silver holdings. The other items mentioned will be transferred from the general rate of duty (now 15 per cent. 'ad valorem') to the "luxury" rate at 30 per cent.

We have at a stroke added to the 10 per cent. schedule a surcharge of 2½ per cent schedule one of 5 per cent and to the "luxury" or 30 per cent schedule one of 10 per cent. By far the most important of these surcharges is that of 5 per cent to the general or 15 per cent on the general revenue schedule of 15 per cent. We propose for this purpose to treat the basic duty of 15 per cent on cotton piece-goods on the same lines as general 15 per cent. schedule and to place the surcharge of 5 per cent on these goods also. The surcharge on the 15 per cent schedule is expected to yield 90 lakhs for cotton piece-goods and 2,63 lakhs for other goods.

#### KEROSENE AND MOTOR SPIRIT

Coming now to the schedule of non-protective special duties here we have made additions appropriate to the general scheme, and I need only mention specially the surcharges that I propose to levy upon kerosene and motor spirit. Both customs and excise duty on kerosene are to be raised by 9 pies per gallon, while motor spirit is to bear a surcharge of 2 annas per gallon.

#### SUGAR

Finally, I must explain my proposals as regards sugar. The case of sugar is a special one. I have included it in the list of items on which the basic rate is to be changed, but, in a sense, our proposal is actually in the nature of a surcharge.

#### TARIFF BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tariff Board's Report will, I understand, be almost immediately available to Honourable Members. In the meanwhile, I must explain what are their recommendations as regards sugar duties. Summarised, the Board's recommendations are :—

- (1) A basic duty of Rs. 6-1-0 per cwt. on all classes of sugar, including sugar candy, to be imposed for 15 years.
- (2) An additional duty of Re. 1 per cwt. on all classes of sugar to be imposed for the first 7 years.
- (3) Power to be taken to add 8 annas per cwt. to the duty at any time if the landed price of sugar at Calcutta ex-duty falls below Rs. 4 per maund.
- (4) No protective duty on Molasses.

Comparing these proposals with the present rates of duty, the position is as follows :—

Leaving out of consideration, for the moment, the lower grades which are of minor importance, the Government would, if they adopted the Tariff Board's recommendation, who have to raise the duty on sugar of 23 D. S. and over from its present rate of Rs. 6 per cwt. to Rs. 7-4-0 i. e., to impose an additional duty of Re. 1-4-0 per cwt., while they would further have power to add an additional 8 annas per cwt. to the duty if the landed price at Calcutta falls below Rs. 4 per maund. I may say that at present the price is hovering just about this level.

My own proposals for revenue purposes had been very close to this, for I had actually contemplated an extra duty round about Re. 1 to Re. 1-8-0 per cwt. What I have now included is an increase of Re. 1-4-0 per cwt. on all grades of sugar. This, as I have said, must be regarded purely as a revenue measure pending consideration of the Tariff Board's recommendations. But Honourable Members will see that it is not inconsistent with those recommendations.

The combined effect of all these proposals as regards Customs duties will be to produce an additional revenue next year of 9.32 crores. We shall also obtain about 50 lakhs more from the increased import duties on galvanised pipes and sheets which the House discussed on 28th January last. This will raise the additional yield to 9.82 crores.

Incidentally, the new duties, which will operate from 1st March, and the increased duties on galvanised pipes and sheets, which came into force on 30th December, will add to our revenue for the current year a sum estimated at 88 lakhs, thus reducing the current year's deficit to 12.6 crores.

#### MINIMUM STANDARD NOT TO BE LOWERED

I must now deal with Taxes on Income the other head on which I must mainly rely for help to fill in the gap.

My proposals as to "income-tax" are as follows. The taxable minimum income for income-tax—Re. 2,000—will not be lowered. The rate of tax on the lowest zone, up to Rs. 4,999 will be raised by 4 pies. The rates of higher grades up to Rs. 39,999 will be raised in some cases by 5 pies, in some cases by 6 pies, and in the highest of these grades by 7 pies. At present the highest rate is reached at Rs. 40,000. It is now 19 pies. I proposed a rate of 25 pies on income for Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 99,999, and a maximum rate of 26 pies on incomes of Re. 1 lakh and over. The estimated yield of these increases is 5.07 lakhs gross or, deducting 53 lakhs on account of increased refunds, 4.54 lakhs net.

In addition to this, I propose certain changes as regards super-tax. At present all assesses except Hindu undivided families are allowed a deduction of Rs. 50,000 in computing the income liable to supertax. This will be lowered to Rs. 30,000 except for Hindu undivided families and Companies, which will be allowed, as at present, a deduction of Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 50,000 respectively.

In the new zone, Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 50,000, the super-tax rate will be 9 pies. Above Rs. 50,000 the graduated scales will be increased by 2 pies throughout. The flat rate for Companies will be one anna as at present. These changes will yield, it is estimated, 46 lakhs. Then the total estimated Taxes on income will be 5 crores.

In the Explanatory Memorandum will be found a statement which shows exactly how these proposals will affect income-tax payers at various levels of income. Briefly, they will add a extra charge of about 2 to 5 per cent. on all incomes. The rates of additional tax have been so adjusted as to produce, in the final result, an evenly graduated scale of burden increasing as the income increases, and this object must be borne in mind in interpreting our proposals.

The total yield from the proposed changes in Customs duties and Taxes on Income thus amounts to 148 crores, as against which the gap to be filled is 1451 crores, so that I am left with a small surplus of 31 lakhs.

From this balance I wish to preserve the possibility of making certain grants for beneficial purposes.

It is particularly the desire of the Government to support schemes for the encouragement of the sugar Industry, and there are certain schemes which may require a provision of 5 to 10 lakhs next year.

Then, again, there is the question of the establishment of a Central Committee for Jute, which Government also are most anxious to promote. This matter is now under discussion between the Government of Bengal and the various jute interests in Calcutta. The financial basis of the plan would be that Government should make some reduction in the rate of the jute export duty, and legislate for a corresponding amount to be levied as a cess for financing the Jute Committee. The total sum contemplated as required for this is estimated at about 5 lakhs annually and in order to enable the Committee to undertake useful work from the outset, the Government would be prepared to make a proportionate grant at this rate as soon as it is actually needed—pending the passage of the necessary legislation for the imposition of the cess.

The increase of 2 annas an ounce which we are proposing is estimated to produce 75 lakhs from the import duty and 7 lakhs from the excise or 82 lakhs in all.

#### Round Table Conference Debate

**2nd. MARCH** :—After the presentation of the Budget the Assembly had a special sitting to-day to discuss the Round Table Conference papers.

*Sir George Rainy*, in moving that the Parliamentary papers in connection with the Round Table Conference be taken into consideration, said that he had no intention of making a speech. His function was that of a local magnate who starts a football match by kicking the ball off. He, therefore, contented himself with making a simple motion.

*Diwan Bahadur Rangachariar*, speaking on behalf of the Nationalist party, reviewed the political history of India up to the London Conference and appealed to all parties, including the European group and the Treasury benches, to realise that sincerity and speed should be the watchwords and that they must build the future constitution on the foundations of the decisions of the London Conference, so that India might be a part of the British Empire.

Mr. Rangachariar was glad that, notwithstanding the gloomy forebodings of the year 1930, the conference had produced, if not entirely satisfactory results, at least a foundation which could not but be considered satisfactory. In fact the year 1930 had been an eye-opener to him and he hoped that it was the same to the Government also. He traced the growth of the national movement from a body passing loyalty resolutions and prayerful petitions into an active force, as a result of which the Minto-Morley Reforms gave place to the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution, with dyarchy in the provinces and irresponsible government at the centre. The result of it was that the members of the legislature did not vote out of a sense of responsibility as to the results of their voting upon the fate of the country. He alluded to his own resolution for Dominion Status constitution moved in 1921 when Pandit Motilal Nehru moved an amendment asking for a Round Table Conference. The amended motion was carried. That was in spite of the opposition from the Civil Service. He referred incidentally to the distinction sought to be made by Sir Malcolm Hailey between responsible government and Dominion Status.

Proceeding, he said that if a Round Table Conference had been conceded immediately there would not have been much of an agitation in the country. On the other hand, the purely white Simon Commission was appointed, driving even the Liberals and the Moderates into the camp opposed to the Commission. Fortunately, the noble Christian who presided over India's destinies (Lord Irwin) announced in October, 1929, that India's goal was Dominion Status and that there would be a conference to discuss the problem. But the Viceroy whittled down this announcement when three months later he said that the beginning of a journey was quite a different thing from its end. There were fears expressed that the hydra-headed representation of India at the London Conference might be such as to accentuate differences at the conference itself. But thanks to the noble-minded statesmanship and patriotic endeavours of the delegates (he was willing to own them as delegates though they were not elected) in the free atmosphere of London and the freedom-loving company of the people of England, the delegates spoke with one voice—the princes and chiefs and peoples of India—all regarding themselves as Indians first and last. There were practical conclusions before the country whereupon they could build the structure of the future constitution.

If a conference had been held in 1924 or immediately thereafter all the political troubles which were witnessed since then would have been avoided. The position to-day was that there was civil disobedience still, on the one side, and repression, on

the other—such a repression that the voices of the Moderates and the Liberals were stilled. He asked the European commercialists and the Government to learn the lessons of the past and be prepared to adopt the Secretary of State's watchwords—Sincerity and Speed—and proceed with the task of building up the future constitution with a single desire to promote the happiness of the millions of India.

Mr. Rangachariar warned the Government that armoured cars, bombs and *lathi* charges would not prove of any avail. No Moderate could have any sympathy for the Government when people were beaten and dragged like dead dogs along the streets. They must now rivet their attention on evolving a scheme which would contain elements that would help the constitutional growth of India and not retard it in any manner. Concluding, Mr. Rangachariar asked the Assembly to give their general approval of the Conference's decisions and proceed in course of time to set up a committee to sit with the future conference in a spirit of comradeship.

*Sir Abdur Rahim* joined Mr. Rangachariar in paying a tribute to the work of the delegates. The impression created by them on the British public was valuable. 'I would like to leave the past alone. The most remarkable thing is that the British Government's policy now is that the responsibility for the Government of India will be transferred from Whitehall and Westminster to Delhi and that all the three British parties will implement the declaration of the Prime Minister. I frankly admit that reservations and safeguards are necessary for the transitional period but this is not to be interpreted in the terms of the preamble of the Government of India Act. We acknowledge the public debt, but are determined to have a form of government in no way inferior in status to that of the other Dominions. There must be safeguards at present as regards the army and foreign relations, but let me assure my European friends that we Indians, as shown by history, are not narrow-minded towards foreigners. (Applause.) The Moghul kings voluntarily gave trading rights to foreigners. We do not want to interfere in any way with their freedom to carry on trade. Subject to India getting every opportunity to develop industries in this country there would be no objection on the part of any Indian to maintain commercial and trade relations with Great Britain.

'I regret the question of minorities is not completely settled, but a great deal has been done and I, as the leader of a non-communal party, assure that that question will be finally and conclusively dealt with. *Sir Abdur* specially pleaded the case of the North-West Frontier Province, and said that while India did not wish to turn Burma away from the Union, it was for Burma to decide.

He hoped that the Congress, which was the most influential political party, would join the second stage of the Round Table Conference. He appreciated greatly the hospitality shown to the Indian delegates in London and hoped that when the British deputation came to India, India would extend to them similar hospitality.

*Mr. Shanmukham Chetty* said that the work of the conference must be assessed in the light of the financial safeguards and equality of trading rights. The safeguards proposed were (1) the Governor-General's over-riding powers; (2) that a Reserve Bank must be provided somehow in the constitution; and (3) that the previous sanction of the Governor-General should be made necessary for the introduction of any measure for amending the Indian Paper Currency Act. *Mr. Shanmukham Chetty* said:—'If these overriding powers are to be exercised only till the Reserve Bank is established I have no objection, because till the Bank is established we have no machinery to carry out any financial reforms, but if these powers are to be there even after the Bank is established, then take away from our Parliament its sovereign rights and a constitution that provides such safeguards will not be worth looking at. *Mr. Chetty* quoted in this connection from a statement of *Lord Reading* which indicated that the safeguards were intended to apply till the bank was established, but later *Lord Reading* had added an explanatory foot note which indicated that the safeguards were intended to operate even after the bank was established, so that even if the future Indian Parliament thought that the exchange ratio should be changed it could not do so without the previous sanction of the Governor-General.

*Mr. Chetty* mentioned another signal of danger in the Government of India despatch, which put forward the monstrous proposition that the Reserve Bank of India should work on the lines approved by the Bank of England and be indicated to by it. 'Even the bank of a vanquished country will not accept such a condition. Co-operation we agree to, and also that the bank should be free from political influences either from the Indian or the British side.' (Applause.)

Mr. Chetty also contested the view taken by a leading Indian delegate in London that the Colonial Acts provided for the veto in favour of the British Treasury. "Is it contended that the Finance Minister of Australia, if he wishes to raise a loan in New York, will have to take the permission of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer? Certainly not."

Sir Cowasji Jehangir dissented from Mr. Chetty's view.

Mr. Chetty maintained his point, and, continuing, referred to the demand for equality of trading rights. "If that means that Europeans are to get an assurance that their property and existing rights will not be confiscated, that assurance we give whole-heartedly. But if that proviso is meant that every Tom, Dick and Harry can come to India and do what he likes in India, we will not concede that right. (Applause). This principle has been accepted by successive Imperial Conferences. One of the Dominions has even gone to the extent of confiscating the property of its Indian subjects. We will not do anything of that sort, but we will not be a party to mortgaging the economic and fiscal interests of India. (Applause)."

Reverting to the control over the loan operations of India, Mr. Chetty asked when the Finance Member to-day did not have such a control, why should the future Finance Member face it? Our Finance Member has raised loans last year which we consider ruinous to the credit of India, and yet has not the Finance Member claimed the fullest discretion to act in the interest of India?

Mr. B. Das wanted to have a complete picture of the scheme and objected to mutual complements being paid in a hurry. First of all, he complained that the Government were responsible for Congressmen not participating in the Conference. He refused to be a party to the establishment of a Reserve Bank being made a condition of the grant of financial powers. As for the princes, he could not understand these praises being showered without knowing when the princes would be mere ornaments or active members in the Federal Parliament and whether the Indian States would be represented on a population basis and, further, whether anything would be done for the subjects of Indian States before the princes joined the Federation. Without these he feared the Indian princes could not be qualified for election to the Federal Legislature, and at any rate he objected to British India allowing itself to drift into stagnation and deterioration by association with the autocratic princes. Mr. Das pleaded for the separation of Orissa, and, concluding, paid a tribute to the Viceroy, but he pointed out that unless Congressmen were induced to join the second conference there would be no peace either in India or Britain.

After a few more speeches the Assembly adjourned till the 5th, to hold the general discussion of the Budget.

#### General Discussion of Budget

5th. MARCH:—The General Budget debate was initiated by Haji Wajuddin who opposed taxation on silver, kerosine, betel and spices and welcomed that on luxuries. He was against higher taxation on incomes up to Rs 5,000 and wanted a Retrenchment Committee to consist of elected members only.

Mr. Yamin Khan said that the Finance Member had laid his cards on the table and should receive their support. He pleaded for the constitution of Honorary Militia to bring down the expenses of the Government.

Mr. Dumasia declared his opposition to the whole budget. The present situation was due to the Government's extravagance and the 18 d. ratio. The Finance Member deserved their sympathy.

Sir Hugh Cocke criticised Mr. Dumasia's line of argument. He said that one member had asked the Finance Member to cut the coat according to cloth but if the cloth was not long enough to go round, would he leave some part naked?

Referring to the liquor and other taxes proposed, Sir Hugh Cocke said that he did not deplore them provided they were sound from the point of view of producing revenue. He held that the Retrenchment Committee to be really useful must get down to the inner working of Government Departments. Thus a small expert committee was really what was required. He was glad that the civil administration expenditure which had risen so substantially was now reduced and hoped further reduction would continue. He particularly felt that increase of income-tax on incomes of say five, ten and fifteen thousand by eighty centum would hard hit men with family and reminded the Finance Member that in England such persons received relief according to family members. He was sorry to find that no action has been taken this year on the demand of the commercial community that profit and loss of

a number of years should be calculated for the basis of income-tax. He approved of the proposal to reduce salaries for new incumbents in the Services. Finally, he complemented the Finance Member on the fair budget and hoped that the settlement, which they were glad had been reached, and which would be published to-day would bring about more peaceful political conditions in the country and produce better results for the budget than even the Finance Member anticipated.

*5th. MARCH* :—Resuming the discussion on this day Mr. *Harbilas Sarda* complained of educational and other backwardness of Ajmer-Mewara and regretted that while Delhi and the Frontier were making progress his constituency was kept in a backward condition. He regretted that there was no legislative council for Ajmer-Merwara and asked for a larger treatment in the matter of representation to the Central Legislature and adequate treatment of educational needs.

Mr. *R. D. Dalal* spoke largely of the deplorable condition of the rural masses and referred to Red Cross work among the villagers and paid a tribute to the Viceroy and Sir George Schuster.

Dewan Bahadur *T. Rangachariar*, Leader of the Opposition, said that the inherent defects in the system of public finance were responsible for the increased expenditure. The Finance Members of the past used to levy no more than one-sixth of a man's earnings and what was taken was returned in the shape of benefits. These principles were not to be found. I suggested the publication of year books and quarterly books giving statistics governing the life of the people, as in many other countries. He deplored the heavy taxation when industry was yet in infancy. In some cases the Government were taxing a man to the extent of seven annas in the rupee. Speaking for himself, he earned in Madras and remitted to Tanjore for payment of revenue. He complained that, by the heavy taxation of all sources, nothing was left for the future Finance Members whose lot will be unenviable.

He warned Sir George Schuster to regard himself as a servant of the people and not of the Government of India and apply himself to the problem of placing India's finances on healthy basis.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* said that the Budget was bad because it had failed to satisfy the test that taxation should cause the least harm to the people. But the present budget had taxed the savings of the people and starved industries and trade. He took the Government to task for not appointing a Retrenchment Committee earlier, when they knew perfectly well the state of Government finances. On the understanding arrived at in 1928-29 the Government should have reduced the military expenditure below the figure mentioned in the Budget. He attributed the cause to the fact that the Government of India had no control over the military budget. He asked what the use was of spending one and half crores when the people were starving. Why should not the Air Force expenditure be reduced? Unless the pruning knife was applied to these items it would be difficult for the Assembly to agree to some of the Finance Member's demands for grants.

*Rev. Chatterjee* said that scarcity of funds should not be allowed to affect the nation-building department. He pleaded for a corporation form of local self-Government for Delhi, old and new, and suggested the creation of a Delhi Province.

Mr. *B. V. Jadhav* stressed the need for further retrenchment in army expenditure. He referred to Australia where a resolution was passed asking the Federal and State Governments to reduce the cost of administration. He appealed to the Government to voluntarily forego certain percentage of their salaries.

Mr. *Jagannath Agarwal* complained about the eighteen crores taxation when the military expenditure was the highest in the world. He took exception to Capt. Sher Mahomed's view of the Indianisation of the Army, which, he said, should not be the close preserve of any one community. Mr. Agarwal analysed the figure regarding the Income-tax increase and showed that the middle classes would be hardest hit. The Assembly at this stage adjourned.

*6th. MARCH* :—Mr. *Adbulla Haroon* pointed out that fresh taxation to the extent of 50 crores had been imposed on the country during the last ten years, and a stage had been reached when diminishing returns had set in. It was not by imposing fresh taxation but by retrenchment that budgets should be balanced. The speaker held that the Retrenchment Committee as suggested by the Finance Member would not serve the purpose. What they wanted was a Retrenchment Committee armed with necessary power, say through an Ordinance, to cut down expenditure.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty reminded the House that Sir George Schuster forecasted the raising of a loan of rupees nine crores in India and the raising of a sterling loan of six million pounds and making provision for treasury bills to the extent of twenty crores of rupees being in the hands of the public. The rupee loan for the current years was for 29 crores, 45 crores worth of treasury bill remained in the hands of the public. Thus, there was a deterioration in the position. Mr. Chetty criticised the circumstances in which the last year's rupee loan was issued, and kept open for ten days yielding only twelve crores, and held that the management of ways and means had affected the money market and therefore industry and trade. This had naturally led to depreciation in the value of the Government securities which meant loss of confidence on the part of the industrial public and resulted in the flight abroad of forty crores of capital from India. Any loss of confidence in guilt-edged securities meant that the Finance Member must resort to contraction of currency, and that reacted unfavourably on trade and industry, thereby worsening the economic depression, instead of relieving it. More important than balancing the budget was the way in which Sir George Schuster strengthened the ways and means position in the coming financial year. He wanted  $7\frac{1}{2}$  crores in India by loan and then a conversion loan of 15 millions in England. To-day the amount of Treasury bills in the paper currency reserve would not exceed five crores. Then the total volume of treasury bills in the hands of the public was 52 crores. Such a position of dependence on Treasury bills in the hands of the public, Mr. Shanmukham Chetty observed, placed the Government in the hands of bankers in the money market, and this was amply illustrated by the rate at which Treasury bills were purchased. Surely, the Government could not attribute this to the political situation. The task before the Finance Member was to reduce the rate of interest, and fund the greater part of the Treasury bills. This year Sir George Schuster had set apart 6.17 crores as sinking fund. This provision must be partly utilised to enter into the open market operations on guilt-edged securities and borrow at a cheaper rate and get a grip of the market and revive the tone in guilt-edged securities, and enable the restoration of confidence in the minds of the investigating public, instead of the Government being at the mercy of the bankers. In fact, Mr. Chetty thought that a mere declaration on behalf of the Government that they would adopt a policy of entering the open market would bring about a healthy tone in the guilt-edged market and the bankers also would be rescued thereby. Concluding, he wanted Sir George Schuster to measure the needs fully and meet them fairly and not as he had threatened to measure the needs fairly and meet them fully.

Moulavi Mahomed Yakub complained about the enhancement in income-tax rates, and pleaded for economy in expenditure on the Army and Intelligence Departments. Moulavi Yakub also suggested that the ecclesiastical department should be abolished.

Sir Vasudeva Raja pointed out the distress among the agricultural classes of India specially in Madras where the groundnut and cocoanut trades were practically ruined. He appealed to the Government to give some measure of relief to the land owning classes of the country.

Mr. Hariraj Sarup criticised the borrowing policy of the Government of India and urged the appointment of a committee of enquiry into that question.

Mr. Gunjal, speaking in Marathi, characterised the present budget as a bankrupt budget. The Government, he said, was run without any regard to the needs of the poor people of the country. He pleaded for effective popular control over the budget.

Mian Shah Nawaz objected to fresh taxation when the capacity of the people to pay was at the lowest in India. He bitterly complained that the Finance Member had suggested no remedy to give relief to the poor agricultural classes among whom he saw a spirit of revolt at present. He pleaded for an import duty on wheat. Referring to fresh taxation, the speaker held that the duty on silver and kerosene oil would seriously affect the poor people in the country. He urged the need of economy in military expenditure, and wanted the Finance Member definitely to tell every department to reduce expenditure by a certain figure.

Sir Hari Singh Gour quoted the Finance Member that no retrenchment was possible without a change of policy in the Government. The appointment of a retrenchment committee therefore would serve no useful purpose unless the new constitution which was in the melting pot was ushered in. The speaker suggested that the leaders of parties be taken into confidence with a view to tiding over the present abnormal conditions.



Mr. Jamal Mahomed Sahib did not agree with the Finance Member that the present low level of prices should be maintained in order to stimulate exports. Low prices were ruining the country and the remedy lay in reverting to the old 16d ratio.

Mr. Murtaza Sahib criticised the Frontier policy of the Government which was responsible for high military expenditure and urged humane treatment of Moplahs.

Mr. G. M. Roy held that life was higher than the constitution, and the Finance Member should give some relief to the poor without waiting for a New Government of India Act.

#### SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER'S REPLY TO DEBATE

*Sir George Schuster*, winding up the debate, said that he himself did not like this taxation budget but he could not help it. He informed Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar that Sir Arthur Salter's report on the question of forming an economic Advisory Council will be published in two or three weeks' time.

Sir George Schuster said he claimed no special merit for effecting retrenchment in military expenditure. The reduction of 170 lakhs was due to the fall in prices, and the cutting down of a part of the Army Department's building programme for which the Assembly's thanks were due to the military authorities.

Answering Dewan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar who had opposed the idea of holding a Conference of Finance Ministers in Simla, which would try to bind down the next Government as to expenditure on the services. Sir George Schuster said the whole question of services could not be discussed without discussing the constitutional issue. But that did not mean that they should sit idle. They could take preparatory steps.

On the question of silver, the Finance Member did not want to dilate at this stage, but expressed his preference for a conference with certain members of the Assembly in order to ascertain popular opinion thereon.

Sir George Schuster did not agree with the conclusion of Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty, on the ways and means position and described Mr. Chetty's suggestion of Government entering the open market to give tone to the gilt-edged securities, as a mere drop in the ocean.

Regarding the Retrenchment Committee Sir George Schuster said that if some members did not like the kind of enquiry suggested they might leave it to the Government to conduct an expert departmental enquiry, for it was the duty of the Government to stop all waste wherever it might occur. But, so far as he was concerned, Sir George Schuster thought that there was no field for retrenchment in the Central Government, because just at present that machinery was performing the double work of normal duty and the duty connected with the constitutional reforms.

Sir Hari Singh Gour interrupted: Then what is the use of the Retrenchment committee? It will only be an eye wash.

Sir George Schuster replied: But I want to convince you that there is no large room for retrenchment. We want to show that we are not concealing any methods of economy which more competent people than ourselves can discover.

Alluding to the income-tax proposal, Sir George Schuster hoped that it would not be necessary to maintain them at the proposal level after one year. But this year they had gone as far as they could to explore every alternative sources of revenue. Concluding Sir George Schuster opined that, taking as a whole, the Government of India was running on comparatively cheap lines. It is impossible for a democratic Government to run it cheaper than this, because the number of officers would not decrease. A democratic constitution would be more costly than an autocratic Government unless the scales of salaries were reduced.

The Assembly at this stage adjourned.

#### Round Table Conference Debate

**7th. MARCH** :—The debate on the Round Table Conference papers was continued in the Assembly to-day. Moulvi Mahomed Yakub complimented the sincerity and far-sightedness of the Indian delegates. The most important feature was Federation and that responsibility must lie in Legislatures in India. He disagreed with Mr Maswood that Muslim representatives at the Conference did not represent the entire Muslim community. Could any one deny the claims of H. H. the Aga Khan, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, and Sir Mahomed Shafi to speak the Muslim voice and had not Begum

Shah Nawaz upheld the position of Indian women and given refutation to the book "Mother India ?"

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that the Blue Books by themselves could not convey all that happened at the Conference but the best tribute to its labour was that Mr. Gandhi and his friends had accepted the utility of the Conference for an honourable settlement. Even if they had come back with the declaration alone of responsibility hereafter to be on the shoulders of Indian Legislatures that would have been a worthy achievement. As regards safeguards these were not only in the interest of India but in the interest of British investors who had invested in Indian sterling securities and to whom the British Government owed moral responsibility. He held that Mr. Chetty's doubts regarding the Governor General's powers were not justified.

Sir Hari Singh Gour was struck by the note of Mr. Moore which would find a response all over India. Europeans would receive the same hospitality they had received before and he was sure that with the support of Europeans the future of India was assured. Sir Hari Singh as the author of the Federation scheme which he devised in a special note he added to the Central Committee report, examined the Federation scheme of the Conference and declared that this Federation to be successful would require that political development in British India and Indian States went on harmonious lines. He had no objection to financial safeguards till a Reserve Bank was set up. He held that India's international status had been legalised by the deliberations of the Conference and paid a tribute to the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others for their share in bringing about peace. He claimed for the Assembly adequate representation in any future conference.

Mr. Yamin Khan felt that Indian Princes would be a drag on the constitution unless the States' representatives were chosen through popular franchise.

Mr. Tun Aung declared that the conference resolution on Burma was vague and had no meaning. It left the decision whether separation would prejudice their rights or not in the hands of that Power which was to part with Power. He said that separation was implied in Burma getting equality of treatment with India for which she was equally fit if not more and she did not want separation earlier.

Bhai Permanand said that the Round Table Conference was the greatest possible success. The Gandhi-Irwin settlement and the Premier's declaration were a landmark in the constitutional history of India. The greatest credit for the success of the Conference was due to British statesmanship. He deprecated communalism which was urging for Baluchistan and Sind being constituted into separate provinces and the Frontier being dealt with on narrow communal lines. The failure of the Conference on the communal issue was due to Mr. Jinnah sticking to his fourteen points. He challenged Sher Mahomed Khan's view regarding the share of martial races and said that the War had shown that all classes could fight and the monopoly must disappear.

Mr. N. M. Joshi felt that legislatures proposed at the Conference would not be large enough to provide for representation of the working classes. If this can be secured only through indirect election he would favour it. He opposed any discrimination in franchise on property qualification but would not mind uniform disqualification like age limit. At any rate they must give Labour the same representation as to capitalists. At present there were in the Central Legislature 21 capitalists and 1 labour member and 93 capitalists in the provinces and 10 labour members.

Mr. B. R. Puri said that the Round Table Conference delegates who spoke seemed to defend and uphold the work of the Conference. The House, while appreciating their labours, did not consider the outcome valuable in all spheres. And even what was achieved at the Conference was not due to the eloquence of the delegates but to the sacrifices made by the Congress last year. (Applause). Mr. Puri, replying to Captain Sher Mahomed's arguments, asked whether a statute could make martial classes. These were the products of the hour and had not India's women and children shown in this movement that they were martial ?

There was no voting on the motion for consideration of the Round Table Conference papers. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### Debate on Budget Demands

9th. MARCH :—Before the voting on Budget demands commenced, all parties in the House joined in unanimously adopting a motion by Mr. Rangachariar, leader of the Opposition, recording the Assembly's profound satis-

faction that a settlement had been arrived at between the Government and the Congress and the Assembly's earnest hope that the settlement will inaugurate a new era of healthy cooperation in securing political and economic freedom for India.

The rest of the sitting was then devoted to a discussion of a token cut under the Executive Council moved by Mr. Rangachariar, who said the cut was to convey to Government the general feeling in the country for retrenchment in all departments of Government.

The cut was pressed and carried by 69 votes against 35 after various members had condemned the extravagance of the Government departments, allowances under the Lee concessions coming in for a great deal of criticism.

**10th. MARCH** :—The Assembly held a very interesting debate on the army estimates on a token cut moved by Mian Shah Nawaz, on behalf of the Independent party.

Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar launched the main attack on behalf of the Opposition in a speech of an hour and a quarter and charged the military authorities with extravagance and lack of financial control and questioned the delay in settling the capitation charges and other disputes with the British Government. They would not agree to a retrenchment committee unless the army estimates were included for examination on business merits.

Mr. Moore while holding that the army estimates were breaking their back did not support the cut, as he wished to wait for the Howell report which might offer a solution.

Mr. Young defended the army budget and stated that an Indianisation scheme was being immediately taken in hand and an Indian Sandhurst could be located in a temporary home by 1932 and given a start.

Sir George Schuster said that the British Government had agreed to reference of the capitation charges to arbitration.

Mian Shah Nawaz's cut was carried by 66 votes. The remaining Army department vote was passed and the House adjourned.

#### PROTEST AGAINST INCOME TAX LEVY

**11th. MARCH** :—After interpellations to-day Mr. Heathcote, representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, moved on behalf of the European group a cut of a hundred rupees in the income tax demand. He said he might have hesitated in making criticism of the income tax proposed if those had been put forward by an Indian Minister responsible to the House, but as these had been put forward by the British Finance Member he would submit frankly that these fell unduly heavily on the European and Anglo-Indian communities. The incidence of taxation should be commensurate with the ability to pay and as Europeans' standard of living in India was higher than Indians, there should be a differentiation in favour of Europeans in some such way as those provided for the Hindu undivided family.

After several speeches the cut was carried by the House by 59 votes against 52.

#### INHUMAN FRONTIER REGULATIONS

Mr. Yamin Khan moved a cut of one hundred rupees to raise a debate on the retention of regulations in North-West Frontier Province. The speaker selected four regulations, namely the Murderous Outrages Regulation, the Safety Regulation of 1922, the Regulation for Safeguarding Public Safety of 1931 and the Frontier Crimes Regulation. The Murderous Outrages Regulations, said Mr. Yamin Khan provided punishment of death with forfeiture of property, of transportation for life with twenty lashes a week and forfeiture of property for attempted murder. It also provided that in case a suspicious man was killed even before attempting to murder his body may be tried and disposed of in any way the Magistrate chooses and, if such a body was convicted the property of the head man will be forfeited. This, the speaker said, was inhuman and a Regulation, which allowed this practice, should be repealed. He presumed that the Safety Regulation of 1922, which was existent for seven years, had already been repealed.

Referring to the Public Safety Regulation of 1931, Mr. Yamin Khan said that it provided acquiring of any house and land for making roads or barracks without deciding the question of compensation before taking possession.

Lastly the Frontier Crimes Regulation, he said, had worked havoc in the Frontier and should be repealed.

Mr. Acheson, replying to the debate, made the following announcement : "Government recognise the reality of the doubts felt by the members of this House in regard

to the necessity or propriety of a body of law, which is applicable only to the North-West Frontier Province and they accept it as a natural and indeed healthy sign of times that with the approach of a representative Government in that province there should be a growing desire that so far as conditions will permit there should be no discrimination between that province and other parts of India (Applause). The Government themselves have no wish to keep on the Statute Book any law, of which the necessity is not established and while the House will understand that they are not able to prejudge the necessity of this or that measure and the need for particular provisions in this or that regulations, they are prepared to subject the whole question to examination and review with the object of reaching to decisions as to what it is necessary to retain and what may, without detriment to public interest both of the province and of India as a whole, be modified or withdrawn. I am authorised, therefore, to say that it is proposed to appoint a committee with adequate non-official representation at an early date to enquire, in this light, into the whole question of these regulations.

Mr. Yakub congratulated the Chief Commissioner on his proclamation. Mr. Yamin Khan accepted the Foreign Secretary's statement and withdrew his motion. The grant was voted. The House then adjourned.

**12th. MARCH:**—The Assembly while voting demands for grants under Customs and Salt, held two interesting discussions to-day. One was raised by Mr. Hariraj Sarup by a token cut of Rs. 100, criticising the Government for failure to prevent the dumping of wheat and sugar in India. The non-official members who spoke, all supported the motion. Sir George Rainy said he would not be able to announce the Government's decision on the questions raised before the session was over. He warned the House that so long as India remained an exporting country, the chances of protecting agricultural produce were few and protection was a game which could be equally played by the other countries as well. The Government had increased three times the duty on sugar in the past five years and he hoped to place before the Assembly in the next session in Simla proposals regarding the Tariff Board's report on the sugar industry. The Opposition parties joined and carried the cut by 48 votes against 39.

Mr. Anwarul Azim and Mr. Harbaksh Singh raised the question of Muslim and Sikh representation in the Customs services. There was for a time a somewhat heated discussion, but both the motions were withdrawn after Sir George Schuster had stated that whatever the principle involved, any Government responsible for the administration of the country would have to face this difficult and practical question of representation of various communities and claimed that the Government policy of reserving one-third of recruitment for adjusting communal inequalities was the best solution.

Mr. Amarnath Dutt, by a cut, urged the stoppage of all imports in grains in India.

Sir George Schuster stated that the Government had been carefully considering the question of low prices of agricultural produce during the last 12 months. If the Government had not taken any drastic action it was merely because they were convinced that it would have done more harm than good and the solution of the problem lay not in the control of prices but in finding new markets.

The motion was withdrawn and the demand for Customs passed.

**13th. MARCH:**—To-day being the last day of voting for granting the general budget, it evoked little or no interest among members and, before the House rose for lunch, six demands were voted without any cut.

Mr. B. Das, by a cut, discussed the debt position of the Government of India and asked the members whether the way in which it was managed at present was just and desirable.

Sir George Schuster entered into an elaborate defence of the Government position. He asserted that there was no foundation for Mr. Maswood's statement that the policy of borrowing was in the British interests. There was no preference given to any British manufacturer in regard to the purchase of materials.

Proceeding, Sir George Schuster said: "It will be a bad day for India if she ceased to occupy the rare and privileged position she now occupies of borrowing in London. If we had not the sympathetic support of the Bank of England and the financial circles of England, we should have been in an extremely difficult situation during the last few months". (Hear, hear).

Sir George Schuster endorsed Mr. Shanmukham Chetty's view that the position

of the debt of India was extraordinarily favourable and explained that was indeed unique for out of 1200 crores of total debt less than two hundred alone represented non-productive investment. He hoped that the India of the future would be able to maintain this position.

Mr. B. Das before withdrawing the cut warned that any debt incurred not for the good of India should be allocated to England.

A little liveliness was introduced when Mr. T. Rangachariar moved a cut to raise the question of hill journey allowance and to reduce the period and extent of the Simla exodus. He said that at the time of the national economic crisis through which the country was passing at present, the Government of India should set an example by sacrificing their stay in the hills. The motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Sitaram Raju next moved a cut in order to draw the attention of the Government to the practical exclusion of Indians from the Political and Foreign department. He was supported by Mr. Rangachariar, Sir Abdur Rahim and Mr. Mody.

Mr. Acheson, replying, said that the allegation that Indians were not trusted in the Foreign and Political department was absolutely unfounded. The Government, he said, were recruiting 25 per cent. of Indians every year ever since the Lee Commission reported. The motion was withdrawn.

The House was still engaged in discussing the demand for the Political and Foreign department when the clock struck five. The guillotine was applied and this and all the remaining demands were then passed. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### SEPARATION OF BURMA

*16th. MARCH* :—The proceedings of the Assembly were enlivened to-day by Mr. Kyaw Myint raising the question of Separation of Burma.

Sir George Schuster having introduced the *bill amending the Income-tax Act* for subjecting the income received from outside British India to the tax in certain circumstances and Mr. Shillidy having introduced a *bill amending the Factories Act*, the Finance Member moved the consideration of the Finance Bill. Mr. Myint moved for postponement of the consideration for one day in order to discuss the Burma question.

The Burma Member said that owing to Burma Government's propagauda and repressive measures, the Legislative Assembly was the only forum where a Burman could give expression to his honest opinion on the question. The Burmans, who had asked for separation, had asked for it only with Dominion Status. But even the separationists were now becoming afraid of it. He urged a referendum under the Government of India's supervision to ascertain Burman opinion. Voting for this motion would mean voting for such referendum and for adherence by the Assembly to the principle that it was for Burmans to decide whether to remain in the Indian Federation or to separate. The vote would also be an expression of the Assembly's concern at the manner the question of separation was being hurried through.

Mr. B. Das said that British imperialists wished to make Burma their fortune-hunting ground.

Mr. Rangachariar, speaking from his recent experience in Burma, urged for free expression and not repression of Burmese opinion. Sir Abdur Rahim endorsed Mr. Rangachariar's views.

Sir James Crerar, asked by the party leaders to state the Government's views on the question, said it was impossible for the Government of India to pronounce deliberate views on a complex and intricate matter which was seized by the Round Table Conference. No doubt certain communications were received from His Majesty's Government but they had not reached the stage for pronouncement of the Government of India's opinion. Sir Abdur Rahim asked whether so far as the Government of India were concerned the question of separation was left open. The Home Member refused to be cross-examined.

After lunch, Mr. Munshi asserted that His Majesty's Government had issued specific instructions to the Government of India and Burma to proceed with preliminary work to give effect to the settled decision of separating Burma.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that British Indian and Indian princes's delegates had kept the question open and the Conference was not committed to the reply given by Mr. Benn to Major Graham Pole. Sir Hari Sing Gour twitted the Conference delegates for not making the position unambiguous in London.

Mr. Moore agreed that the matter should not be rushed but thought that the non-

cooperating section of the Burmese were responsible for the present situation. Mr. Ghuznavi said the question of separation was no longer open.

Mr. Puri was entirely opposed to the separation.

The motion of Mr. Miat was put to the vote and carried without dissent.

#### The Finance Bill Debate

*17th. MARCH* :—The discussion of the motion for the consideration of the Finance Bill was taken up to-day.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad complained of inadequate financial provision for education, specially for primary education. There were 17,000,000 boys of school-going age, of whom only a small percentage received education. It meant that the education of the rest would cost Rs. 4,50,00,000. Then there was the question of the education of girls. Regarding secondary education, Dr. Ziauddin complained that there was neither system nor policy.

He next criticised the Government's policy relating to silver duty, exchange ratio and reverse councils and concluding urged a reduction in the salaries of Government officials in order to bring down the Government expenditure.

Mr. Krishuama Chariar ventilated the grievances of the agricultural classes. He felt that nothing tangible had been done so far to improve the methods of cultivators. Commissions and Committees had come and gone adding to the administrative machinery advisers and advisory councils but leaving the cultivator poorer than he was before. What use could there be of the talk of village uplift when the people had not enough to eat? The speaker specially urged for a proper enquiry into the methods of assessment of land revenue, for, he said, Bardoli was the sample of the conditions all over India.

Mr. Rajaram Pandian criticised the enhanced duty on kerosene and suggested a 20 centum duty on hides and skins in order to balance the budget.

Mr. Raghbir Singh pleaded for a reduction in the taxes on income and urged for the removal of the duty on silver, spices and betel nuts.

Mr. Jagannath Agarwal gave figures to show that the yield from income-tax had gone up from Rs. 2,50,00,000, in 1911 to 18,00,00,000 in the current year and suggested that courts should be entrusted with appeals of law and fact in income-tax cases.

Mr. B. Das suggested that the proposed retrenchment committee should investigate whether higher salaries given by the Lee Commission could now be reduced on account of the fall in the prices. The committee should also enquire into the case of the allowance of special officers in the Army and Railway departments and explore the avenues of economy in the P. W. D. which he styled as a public waste department. Mr. Das felt it a dangerous practice for the Government to indulge in mounting up the expenditure on the non-voted side as India was getting nearer to the transfer of control to the popular side.

Mr. Sant Singh criticised the military budget and also the Government's policy in respect of the reforms which had driven out of the House patriots like Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Malaviya and explained the lot of the Indian agriculturist under the present constitution. He had not concluded his speech when the House rose.

*19th. MARCH* :—Resuming discussion over the Finance Bill to-day, Mr. Muhammed Moazam declared that a large number of British troops were useless for the purpose of internal security and were never used and the Army could be cut down by one-sixth, thereby enabling them to make a saving of 25 crores. He also urged an export duty on raw hides and skins.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetty thought that the Finance Member could effect a saving at least in respect of allowances granted to public servants. Why could not the Government of India follow the example of New Zealand where a 10 per cent cut in salaries was carried. He characterised as 'most unfair' the manner wherein the kerosene duty was levied and suggested that it would be better to utilize the opportunity to equalise the excise and import duties which would bring in a revenue of 70 lakhs on excise and 15 lakhs on import. He urged the establishment of a reserve bank and hoped that the Finance Member would, for the sake of his reputation and of the Government of India, take it up at an early date. The only safeguard that the House wanted was that the reserve bank should be under Indian control.

The Government's currency policy had caused great misunderstanding and mis-

apprehension. While every other country in the world was expanding its currency the Government of India was contracting it. Confidence could come only by having a proper machinery to regulate the credit and currency of the country. As regards the need for gold reserves to build up a reserve bank, he said that the Government of India had done very little compared with other countries in getting rid of its surplus silver. He asked the Government of India to sell its silver stock as soon as possible but if the United States of America wanted them let the Government of India ask the United States to give her gold loan against silver stocks and this gold could be used for a reserve bank.

*Sir Abdur Rahim* said that the non-official side of the House was convinced that there was scope for economy both on the civil and the military side. He reminded the Finance member of the Viceroy's address at the Chamber of Princes that taxation shall be as light as circumstances permit, easy of collection and proportionate to the demands of the taxpayer to pay. *Sir Abdur Rahim* proceeded: That is the advice which all Governments will do well to bear in mind. We feel that no further taxation can be imposed without a serious encroachment upon the bare means of subsistence of our people.

*Sir Abdur Rahim* said that India did not face such a serious danger of foreign invasion as was made out and the air force should have led to a proportionate reduction in other arms. He attacked the heavy expense of the High Commissioner's office where there were many unnecessary jobs. The Government had not taken notice of the public demands. All their departmental organization meant placing lawyer upon lawyer so that responsibility could not be fixed anywhere. The commissioner's posts had not yet been abolished and leave allowances were very generous.

*Mr. Rangachariar* said the House would refuse to share responsibility with the Government of India for the entire taxation. His party had decided to refuse supplies to the extent of six crores. As to how they should do it was a matter of detail which could be examined and they would fill the gap temporarily to the extent of nine crores. This six crores would represent only a four per cent cut in the expenditure. Could not the Government bring that about? Only the will to do it was wanting. He attacked the various departments in turn and asked the Commerce department why was it that a key industry like tanning was not being protected. How was it that Indian affairs were known in London earlier than in India? They found the Premier talking about the Khujuri plain roads about which India knew nothing. Why should not each Government department prepare a note of its activities and circulate it to the members? Why should they wait for questions being put? If they did this all series of enquiries which took a communal turn would disappear as all the statistics would be available. As regards the Kerosene oil duty he did not agree with *Mr. Chetty's* scheme, but wished the poorer consumer to benefit by the re-arrangement of duties. He favoured an import duty on wheat.

Referring to the Home department he said that the police had committed excesses. He was glad *Mr. Gandhi* had not pressed for an enquiry but the Government must learn lessons from the past. On the other hand he found that a magistrate who kept his district quiet and orderly was ignored while a magistrate who passed a foolish order under sec. 144 and had been castigated by the High Court had been made C. I. E., (Applause). Was that the way to create confidence in the Government? This mentality must go. Get your magistracy to obey your laws. Then again there was no department of government which admitted the responsibility of finding the economic condition of the people of India and their earning capacity. Your Education Member won't let the Madras Council pass a certain land revenue legislation. His department had no information regarding the number of Indians settled in South America. Do you wish us to vote money for a Government which is so ignorant? (Applause). You have your yearly Indian book which criticises the legislature for doing its duty. We do not want such books, but we want information. We want facts. Here is the Law department where *Sir Lancelot Graham* does not summon us till January. Why do you enact an Ordinance when you can call us to a session? You are only waiting for the Assembly session to be over to do certain things. (Cheers). Why all this hush policy? When you appointed the Lee Commission to increase the salaries of the services why can you not appoint a Low Commission to lower them? (Applause).

*Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar* took the Government to task for the unseemly and discourteous manner in which those who were responsible for the Army Department

treated the House for when Sir Abdur Rahim, leader of the Independents, was speaking on military expenditure not only was there not the Commander-in-Chief to hear the speech but not even the Army Secretary was present. Mr. Mudaliar was protesting against this treatment when Mr. MacWorth Young, Army Secretary, entered amidst cheers. And Mr. Mudaliar reiterated his complaint so that in future at least this discourteous treatment would not recur. Regarding the Finance Bill Mr. Mudaliar congratulated the Finance Member on the valuable and constructive support he had received for meeting his deficit budget from Mr. Anklesaria who had spoken of a unitary form of Government and hoped that the Finance Member would always turn to that quarter for such constructive suggestions.

Proceeding Mr. Mudaliar quoted a series of instances from the latest Gazette of India to show that at a time when the Finance Member was searching for economy and retrenchment the Government of India of which he was a member was freely and ungrudgingly giving increased allowances with retrospective effect and that at a time when prices were said to be falling. One of the instances referred to the increase of Rs. 1,500 in the leave allowances of the Governors of provinces and Mr. Mudaliar asked: 'Is this not another illustration of the unexamined search for economy by the hard-pressed Finance Member?' Mr. Mudaliar kept on giving instances for about 40 minutes and then proceeding he complained of the fact of the non-voted expenditure increasing in the budget. He referred to the Vizagapatam harbour construction and doubted if it was productive expenditure. He warned against the Government drawing the inference that India was protectionist merely because the Assembly out of a sense of responsibility was agreeing to the increased duty under customs. He also protested against the Finance Member going to the Council of State and giving vent to his feelings without answering to the criticisms levelled in this House.

Speaking of the Council of elderly statesmen, Mr. Mudaliar reminded the Assembly that he was only the other day an elderly statesman and said, if I had the alternative of choosing between His Majesty's guest and an elderly statesman I would prefer the former.

*Mr. Ranga Iyer* :—You were His Majesty's guest at St. James.

*Mr. Mudaliar* :—I was a guest of His Majesty's Government whilst in England.

Concluding Mr. Mudaliar opined that the receipt side of the budget was underestimated and said: 'Ours is an attitude of responsibility and the Government should show its sense of responsibility by laying its cards on the table and I say that it is with a full sense of responsibility and with every desire to help the Government that we would adopt the course we shall adopt with reference to the Finance Bill.'

*Sir Hugh Cocks* defended the Government members who were attacked by Mr. Mudaliar and said that it was fair to give notice if the Opposition wished to make any important speech. The speaker liked Mr. Rangachariar's suggestion that the Finance Member's contract be extended by ten or fifteen years to have his abilities at the disposal of the country and he also welcomed Mr. Chetty's suggestion for the reintroduction of the Reserve Bank Bill. He emphasised that the questions of reintroduction of the Reserve Bank Bill and duty on kerosene were serious matters and could be disposed of summarily as they involved the reversal of a policy long pursued. He criticised the rumbling discussion lasting for three days and urged more party cohesion. He assured support to the Bill subject to certain modifications in respect of income-tax.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* said the keen eye of Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar had missed to notice extravagance in this House itself. 'Here you have, sitting behind the Government benches members drawing big salaries. They are brilliant men in their line and are proving very useful to the provincial councils in the matter of debate. Why should the Finance Member alone have to sit for three days in his seat and go on taking notes? Why not the Government members intervene frequently and regulate the debate by meeting points at intervals? There is extravagance in keeping those members there like posts of wood.'

*Sir George Rainy* :—Is a member right in casting aspersions of fellow members?

*President* :—No member can cast reflections on his fellow members, but this has not been done by the member from Bombay.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* :—I am not casting reflections, but I say these members sit the whole of the session without saying a word. If you merely want a vote you can have your *pattivalas* to vote. Those members do not want to be in that position. They do not like it. It is the system of government which is extravagant.



Sir Cowasji said when they wanted to impose as high a taxation as in the European countries the taxpayer in India was entitled to ask whether he was getting any additional amenities in return for the extra tax. His party was prepared to help but the Government must economise and show signs of co-operation.

Mr. Sahani said that he was glad to get an opportunity to speak as he felt the usual practice was to give preference to the Government benches and Mahomedan and European non-official speakers. He criticised the Government for not sending a Sind representative to the Round Table Conference. As Mr. Sahani was proceeding some members asked him to withdraw the remarks against the President.

President :—'If the hon. member would look into the official records he would find that the President had been guided by no motive and irrespective of cast or community members were given a chance.'

Mr. Sahani said if the rules required him to withdraw he would.

A voice :—You must withdraw.

Mr. Sahani then withdrew his remark.

Mr. A. Das urged the removal of the grievances of the Ballia and Ghazipur districts in the United Provinces.

Mr. Sarma deplored that the debate was a mere repetition of the general discussion debate. The house at this stage adjourned.

20th. MARCH :—The chief interest in the Assembly to-day centered round the introduction of *Wheat Bill* and the *Salt Bill* and the debate on the Finance Bill. The House agreed with only one dissident to give leave to Sir George Rainy to introduce the Wheat Bill. Thereafter the debate on the Finance Bill was resumed and Mr. Amar Nath Dutt initiated it.

Mr. Amarnath Dutt referred to the distressed state of Midnapur and proceeded to quote from a proscribed account of the disturbances given by a non-official committee.

A lively discussion followed when Mr. Sarma suggested that a proscribed document could not be so used in the House.

The Law Member, Sir B. L. Mitter, said that a proscribed document could be legitimately quoted if such action was intended to object to the policy of a Government department but not for the purpose of reproduction in the proceedings of the House.

The President thereupon permitted Mr. Amar Nath Dutt to quote it.

Mr. Dutt read passages where ill-treatment to women was mentioned and said, 'When Ravan ill-treated Sita he lost Lanka. Now that you are permitting ill-treatment of our women your days are numbered.'

The House rose for lunch and when it reassembled Mr. Sadig referred to the Frontier Province's backwardness and condemned the action of that administration in not allowing Pandit Malaviya to go and distribute relief after the disturbance.

Sir George Rainy said that the debate had covered a wide range but held the view that they were getting closer to business than they had been doing in previous years. (Applause) He referred particularly to the points raised by Mr. Jamal Muhammed and Mr. Rangachariar regarding the tanning industry. He said the past scheme of protection had been a failure. The industry was not worried regarding the domestic market but the export market and it was difficult to protect such an industry unless the Government and the Legislature were prepared to do it in the form of direct financial assistance. One of the difficulties was that the raw material produced in India was not a monopoly so that if an export duty was to enable the local industry to buy cheaper material than the foreign users of the Indian raw material might look to other sources of supply.

He agreed with Mr. Jamal that the position was different in respect of goat skin where India had something approaching a monopoly. America took 90 per cent. of goat-skins while the United Kingdom took 90 per cent. of tanned skin. America did not however hit India in the United Kingdom. He therefore felt that there were great difficulties in using export duty as a means of protection and so far as past experience showed he did not see how these difficulties were to be overcome but he recognized that goat skins in particular raised a question which deserved examination and he would see that there was such examination and that full opportunity was given to the tanners of South India to represent on the subject.

Referring to Sir Cowasji Jehangir's remarks regarding official backbenchers, the Leader of the House said that there was difficulty in anticipating what the Opposition members would say and in utilizing the eloquence of provincial members but wherever possible this was done but there were perhaps some members on the Opposition benches whose object was to deliver a speech whether it was answered or not

(Laughter.) Finally he referred to the Vizagapatam harbour. Though trade conditions did not make the prospect look as bright as seven years ago, the harbour would prove to be a perfectly sound proposition and of very great assistance to that part of India which it would serve. (Applause). In such cases it was better to acquire more land than too little.

*Mr. B. N. Misra* (Orissa) urged for the immediate appointment of a Boundaries Commission in order to group together the Oriya speaking people and give them a separate province as admitted by all authorities. He wondered why Orissa was not represented at the Round Table Conference. What was the use of making a youngster to represent entire Bihar and Orissa when there was Mr. Madhusudan Das with age and experience and ability. Mr. Misra spoke highly of the martial spirit of Oriyas and stated to the cheers of several sections of the House that his great grandfather was the commander of the Kalinga forces and that the military spirit was not dead even though the British Government in order to provide employment for their own people had deprived them of arms.

*Sir Fazl-i-Hussain*, speaking in an undertone, said he had not participated in the debate earlier because he hoped that after the second reading speeches he and his secretary would examine all points concerning his departments. But he intervened to-day because pointed criticism had been made that the members of the treasury benches were not taking any interest in and were indifferent to the debate. If there was at least dyarchy in the centre possibly there would have been some contact between some of the executive councillors and non-official benches and criticism from the latter would have been less. However, he assured Mr. Rangachariar who had criticised the Government of India for not approving of the Madras Revenue Settlement Bill that the Government of India was as zealous of the autonomy of the local legislatures and local Governments as he himself. Only last year they had the Malabar Tenancy Bill passed by the local council and the Government of India steadily refused to interfere. Alluding to the remarks about retrenchment Sir Fazl-i-Hussain repeatedly assured that there was not one inch of economy which had not been attacked. In fact he often regretted that he had in consequence to hold up many schemes which had been approved. Whether there was further room for economy in the Army Department he could not say, but methods of economy there also were stringent. He begged the House to understand that no member of the Government liked to approach the outgoing Viceroy to certify any part of the Finance Bill. He hoped that all sections of the House would co-operate in coming to a businesslike arrangement as to how to face the present deficit and thus satisfy the country.

After Messrs. Sykes and Osman had spoken the closer was applied and granted and the *Finance Member* was cheered as he rose to reply to the five days' debate. He said that the House seemed to be weary after such a long debate but he would deal fairly and fully with the arguments advanced on the other side. He complimented the House for having dealt with the issues on the merits which has been peculiar to this year's debate. The hon. members who remember last two year's discussion will find that there is now in the discussion on this question an atmosphere of reality which has not been present before. I think the constitutional changes which are coming have cast their shadows and have already influenced the tone of discussions in this Assembly.

The *Finance Member* first dealt with the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. He asked me what I would do if I were in his place. I heartily reciprocated that and asked what he would do if he were in my place? (Laughter and applause.) I would answer his question by being frank and even indiscreet. If I were in the hon. Member's place what I would do is this. I would try to find out what the Government really can do. Then I would concentrate all my efforts on forcing them to do something to achieve the following objects, something to show to the public that the representatives of the public have asserted themselves, something which would really mean giving a concrete pledge that the Government are in earnest, something perhaps, if that is possible, to relieve any features in the taxation proposals which are really unjust and something at last (and here I am going to be indiscreet) something to give a jolt to the machine of Government which will bring home to all who are working it that they are involved in a desperate economic crisis and to make them feel that they have got to face realities.'

Sir George Schuster continued: "That's the sort of thing which I would do as Leader of the Opposition. I would try to find out the facts and not take my stand

on any impossible plane. I hope he will reconsider his position. It has been alleged that the Government do not take the members into my confidence. I have told the whole truth. I did take an occasion last week in helping the members to realise the true situation, but I regret to say a summary of what passed at the meeting appeared in the press. I feel the Leader of the Opposition deserves an apology from somebody. In the course of that discussion I suggested that the leader should meet the Army member, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. For various reasons my friends thought that at that stage nothing would be gained by that course. The reasons were, I am prepared to say, good reasons, but I venture to think that the course might be reconsidered. The offer is still open. Possibly it may be fruitful if you pursue it.'

The Finance Member next referred to the currency and exchange controversy and said that the Leader of the Opposition had asked him for his honest opinion on the subject. 'I hope my hon. friend does not suggest that what I have said publicly does not represent my honest opinion. (Laughter.) I was not speaking in haste. Possibly it is one of the subjects which has in my term cost me most anxiety and most concern because unfortunately the feeling about it has penetrated very deep and it has been a large factor in the situation, not merely in the economic situation, but also in the political situation. It has given me much thought and sleepless nights and I have arrived at my convictions after all these mental processes. I should be very pleased to spend a day with the Leader of the Opposition to explain how I arrived at my conclusions.'

Proceeding the Finance Member referred to the remarks of Mr. Shanmukham Chetty and quoted figures to show that the net reduction of expenditure in the civil side was one crore and ten lakhs. It was true that under the heading civil works the cost of building would go down but there had been no substantial fall in building prices. In fact they had not yet got direct benefit from the fall in prices. He, however, agreed with Mr. Chetty that a reserve bank was essential for India, but there must be adequate reserve before a reserve bank could be established. There could be adequate reserve either through borrowings from abroad or through appeal to the Indian national Government to provide them with gold reserve. The former procedure was not a popular move in view of the criticism of the sterling borrowing policy. The latter course could not be adopted by the present Government. In these moments of political uncertainty and when reserves were inadequate it was not possible to start a reserve bank although he thoroughly agreed that there must be a bank. Proceeding the Finance Member referred to Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar's remarks and said that the notifications in the *Gazette* to which he referred were mere formalities and no increased expenditure was involved. Both Mr. Mudaliar and Sir. Cowasji Jehangir wanted further information on certain points, but the Finance Member promised to give information later.

Sir George Schuster referring to retrenchment said that he did not believe in cuts like those effected by the Inchcape Committee or scrapping ruthlessly but wanted to simplify the whole machine and effect real permanent economy through a committee with force of public opinion behind it. As regards army expenditure, questions like strength of army, capitation charges and contribution by the Imperial Government were for the Round Table Conference. But it could be found out whether army expenditure was on a businesslike footing and whether the equipment programme could be slowed up this year. In order to discuss these with the Commander-in-Chief the Finance Member reiterated his offer to the party leaders that they should meet Sir Phillip Chetwode. (There were no cheers.) Dealing with the budget itself the Finance Member admitted that the income-tax burden was heavy, but it was not appalling for there had since been a revival in the share market and rise of Government securities. He was truly sorry for the position of the agriculturist and felt that unless the situation improved in the coming year relief in some measure might be necessary.

The Finance Member concluding made an important announcement as regards a retrenchment committee as the result of his conversations with party leaders and some members of the Council of State. He said that from his conversations it appeared that they should keep the representatives of public in touch with the Government and, secondly, for conducting a most effective enquiry into the various branches, it must be by different forms into different parts of the field of expenditure. A resolution would be moved for the appointment of a fairly large committee consisting of members of the Assembly and a few members of the Council of State and if this was carried the committee would meet in Delhi before the end of the session. The

report of Mr. Lukes, special officer, will be also published in a day or two. After setting the preliminaries the committee would adjourn and meet in Simla at the beginning of May when the Government would have a ready agenda and plans for systematic enquiries. (Applause). Sir George Schuster sat at the conclusion of 90 minutes' speech amidst applause.

The motion for consideration of the Finance Bill was then passed. The Assembly then adjourned.

**21st. MARCH:**—In the Assembly to-day, soon after interpellations, Maulvi Muhammad Yakub tried to move an adjournment of the House to discuss the loss of Muslim lives in Mochi in the Mirzapore district. The Home Member raised no objection but Mr. Permanand objected and as less than 25 members rose, leave was not granted. The House, then, proceeded to debate the Finance Bill clause by clause.

#### CONTROL ON SALT DUTY

Mr. Maswood Ahmed moved for the abolition of the clause imposing a duty on salt.

Sir George Rainy said the effect of the amendment, if carried, would be that the House would take away the control it exercises over the fixing of duty on salt and would leave the Governor-General in Council to fix the duty in the manner he liked. For deletion of the clause in the Finance Bill did not repeal the Salt Act which empowered the Governor-General in Council to levy the duty. The motion was rejected.

Similarly three amendments of Mr. Amarnath Dutt reducing the salt duty to 8 as., 12 as. and Re. 1 were rejected after Sir George Schuster had explained to the House that the policy of the Government during the last one year had to move with the wishes of the public. The Government in the Gandhi-Irwin pact had allowed the inhabitants in the salt producing districts on the coast to pick, manufacture and sell duty free salt. And in order to make India self-supporting in the matter of salt, the Government had brought forward a Bill to levy an import duty on salt.

When the President was putting to the House the motion that clause 2 of the Finance Bill stand as part of the Bill, Mr. Chetty intervening said that the clause related to schedule 1, to which several amendments figured on the agenda paper. He suggested that schedule 1 be first voted by the House. The President agreed.

The amendment of Mr. Sitaram Raju was declared out of order, as it enhanced the rate of taxation.

#### DUTY ON RAW SUGAR

Mr. Abdulla Haroon moved for a reduction of the import duty on raw form of sugar by Re. 1-4. He said India still wanted raw sugar, till the refining industry had been established in India.

Sir George Schuster said, pending the consideration of the Tariff Board report on sugar, the Government had levied the duty only for revenue purposes. The question, therefore, of protection or encouraging the refining industry did not arise. The motion was rejected.

The House also rejected two amendments of Mr. Wajehuddin and Mr. Shahni to reduce the duty on silver to 4 as. and 4as. 1 p., respectively, as also the motion of Mr. Shahni to reduce the duty on spices and betel-nut to 15 centum.

#### POOR MAN'S KEROSENE

After schedule 1 and clause 2 had been adopted, Mr. S. C. Mitra moved a reduction of 9 pies in the import duty on kerosene. The Government, he said, in order to balance their budget, were making impossible for poor people to balance theirs.

Mr. Biswas felt that a reduction of the import duty would also mean a reduction of the excise duty on kerosene, which financial considerations might not permit.

Mr. Chetty said the question whether the excise duty be abolished, could be discussed at the proper time but the question before the House for the present was whether it was prepared to raise the price of kerosene oil by 9 p. and hit the poor consumer to that extent.

Mr. Chetty said it would not affect the consumer even if excise duty was kept up at the proposed level, for the prices of kerosene were not fixed by the cost of production and a fair margin for profit but by the import prices of that oil.

Mr. Rangachariar struck a note of warning. He said at a time when the cry for safeguards was the loudest in India, it would not be wise to deprive a British concern of the benefit they had been enjoying for the last 26 years. Further, if the present difference between the import and excise duty be done away with, the only result would be that the Burma Oil Company would abolish the difference in the prices of white oil and yellow oil by raising the prices of the yellow oil. And as it was only the yellow oil which was largely consumed by poor people, the action of the Assembly might hit, instead of benefiting, the poor people. He condemned the action of the Burma Oil Company in fixing the prices of oil not by the cost of production and a fair margin of profit but by some unholy alliance with foreign importers of oil. If the Europeans in the country desired a fair treatment, they should place the interests of India in the forefront. The speaker was for cheaper yellow oil.

Sir Abdur Rahim said that he had no objection to the Finance Member collecting as much revenue as possible from customs, provided it did not hit the poor.

Mr. Rama Krishna Reddi agreed with Mr. Rangachariar that the existing difference between customs and excise should continue in the interest of the consumers. The Burma Oil Company would be hit if this advantage was not given. At the same time, he wanted that the price of yellow oil, which was consumed largely by the poorer classes, should not go up.

Sir George Rainy emphasised that the surcharge embodied in the Bill was only for one year and radical remodelling of the structure of taxation was inappropriate when the method selected was that of a temporary surcharge. The figures show that people were buying more and more white oil in preference to yellow oil. If Mr. Rangachariar's suggestion was adopted the customs duty on yellow oil would be 2 as. 3 p. and the excise duty on yellow oil would be 1 as. 3 p. This would mean a loss to the Government of Rs. 45,00,000. Moreover, if they reduced the import duty on oil, people would set to work to manufacture that oil only. The Government would, however, examine the position and if they found that the revenue position improved by the latter part of the year then the Government might agree to forego this. But at present the Government could not give up that revenue.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetty at this stage made it clear that the non-official parties were agreed that they should take a decision first on the import duty.

Mr. Heathcote of the Associated Chambers said that if the advantage enjoyed by the Burma Oil Company was removed, it might be forced to find a market elsewhere. The debate had not concluded when the House adjourned.

**23rd. MARCH :—**In an atmosphere of tense excitement, to-day, Principal Sahani of Karachi, a member of the Nationalist Party, refused to withdraw unconditionally his remarks on Saturday against the President, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoolah, alleging partiality to certain sections of the House.

The member having refused to withdraw, the President left the matter to the House, whereupon Sir George Rainy moved that the remarks referred to be expunged from the proceedings of the House which motion was adopted.

The discussion of the Finance Bill was then resumed.

Mr. Rangachariar moved an amendment to that of Mr. S. C. Mitra so that clause A be included to consider the excise duty together.

The President ruled this out of order.

Dr. Ziauddin speaking on Mr. Mitra's amendment said that it was the duty of the Government to impose an excise duty on oil produced in Burma.

After lunch, Messrs. Rajaram Pandya and Joshi supported the amendment in the interest of the consumer. Mr. Joshi added that the best solution would be for the Government to acquire oil interests and nationalise it.

Mr. G. A. Dass said Sir Gilbert Layton's financial scheme had also supported their point of view.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said under no circumstances should they put extra money into the pockets of importers at the cost of the consumers, the taxpayers and an indigenous industry. They must also be equally determined to see that the excise proposals of the Government were also eliminated.

Mr. Jehangir Munshi characterized as overdrawn the definition of Mr. Moore that the Burma Oil Industry was national. He, however, wished the House to consider that by its vote it must disprove the unfounded charge that this House did not

keep in view the interests of Burma. It should show to the European commercial interest in Burma that so long as they remained a part of India they would get a fair deal, but that they could not possibly expect any such kindly treatment once they ceased to be part of British India.

Sir Hugh Coeke said his group was prepared to vote extra taxation under both the heads.

Sir George Schuster appreciated the clear and logical line of argument of Mr. Munshi and said the House should not take decision which might bear an aspect of discriminatory legislation against a British controlled company and at a time when the question of separation of Burma was under consideration. The two duties must, therefore, be considered together. If one was reduced so must the other be. He asked the House to consider the proposed tax as to whether it was fair in the interest of the country as a whole. He said that carefully compiled statistics showed that a poor family of five agriculturists consumed 3.7 gallons a year, which meant that as the result of the extra duty they would bear one quarter of an anna extra taxation a year per family and the burden in the case of a well-to-do agricultural family would be one anna a year. On the other hand Government would, by putting such an insignificant burden on the people, get Rs. 157 lakhs as revenue. The argument of burden on the poor man was thus purely sentimental. Moreover, if they reduced this tax Government could not give relief over income tax, where some sections were really hard hit.

The Finance Member next informed the House, that though he could not disclose official information, Mr. Heathcote had given him figures showing that the Burma Oil Company paid in the form of Indian taxation yearly three times the sum it had distributed yearly in the form of dividend. Then again the company gave considerable benefit to the country by way of employment and purchase of indigenous stores. He made a final appeal to the House to realize that of all the taxes proposed this one produced revenue with the least burden on India as a whole and hoped the House would not accept the amendment.

*Mr. Rangachariar*.—Supposing we carry this amendment, will you still persist in increasing the excise duty?

*Sir George Schuster*.—I refuse to answer that. Sir,

The House went to vote and while voting was on, there was considerable excitement in the Opposition ranks as some members, including Mr. Rangachariar and Sir Hari Singh Gour, had remained neutral, and thus a split had occurred. Some members remarked: 'We will have revenge. We won't support these exploiters. We will form a People's party. We won't support them over the income-tax proposal.' When the division figures came there were for the amendment 47 and against 54 votes, and the amendment was rejected amidst official applause.

#### PRICE OF YELLOW OIL.

Mr. K. P. Thampan moved for exemption of yellow oil from the import duty.

Mr. Ramkrishna Reddi supported him, and said that any increase in duty was thrown on the price of yellow oil, as the B. O. C. dared not increase the price of white oil on account of competition.

Sir George Rainy said while it would be possible to enter into a binding agreement regarding keeping down the price of yellow oil with Indian domiciled companies, it would not be possible to enter into such agreement with companies domiciled abroad and if they kept up prices the Government would lose an income to the extent of Rs. 45 lakhs and the consumers would not benefit. He promised to place the results of his detailed examination of the question before the end of September.

The amendment was lost by 33 against 56 votes, several Independents and Nationalists, including the front benchers, remaining neutral.

#### POSTAL RATES

Mr. Amarnath Dutt proposed a reversion to the old postal rates in the case of envelopes and postcards. This was supported by Mr. Ranga Iyer and Mr. C. C. Biswas. But the amendment was rejected by 33 against 46 votes.

Mr. S. C. Sen's proposal for three pice envelopes was also rejected. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### Execution of Bhagat Singh & others

24th. MARCH:—The Assembly met to-day in a very agitated mood and the question time was rapidly gone through. All members were in their seats when Mr.

Rangachariar, Leader of the Opposition, rose and, in grave tones, read out a statement on behalf of his party announcing their decision to walk out as a protest against the execution of Bhagat Singh and others. Mr. Rangachariar's statement was as follows :—

"It is with feelings of profound sorrow and deep indignation that I rise to make a statement. We view with grief and resentment the action of the Government in having carried out, last night, the sentence of death passed on Bhagat Singh and two others by the special tribunal so long ago as 7th October last. The facts relating to that trial are well-known. For reasons which it is unnecessary to recapitulate it was a trial behind the back of the accused, under a special procedure sanctioned by an Ordinance which this House always protested against. The vast majority of the public firmly believe that Bhagat Singh at least was not concerned with the particular crime for which he was convicted and sentenced to death. The volume of public feeling in the matter has been made manifest in manifold ways to the Government and the public fervently hoped and earnestly expected that the Government would have recognised the force of public opinion conveyed to them by that great saint of India. The Government have flouted and have done the thing which we fear will lead to more serious consequences. Not only that, the Government have by this disregard of public opinion invited and are inviting serious trouble to themselves and the country. Justice tempered by mercy would have redounded to the credit of the Government, but, alas, wise counsels find no echo in the hearts of the Government. A peaceful atmosphere, which is so essential now, is seriously jeopardised. We resent this most strongly and we are in great grief and we shall not be able to take part in to-day's proceedings in the Assembly."

Mr. Rangachariar thereupon declared that he would wait to here what the Government had to say on the subject before they walked out. Sir James Crerar then said :—

"I must in the first instance emphasise very strongly that the Government cannot accept the view that the prisoner concerned in this trial did not have a fair trial. The Government are convinced that they had a fair trial and that every opportunity was given to the defence to produce evidence.

"As regards the provisions under which the trial took place I need hardly remind the hon. members that the question was considered by the highest tribunal in the Empire. The hon. members are well aware of the circumstances connected with this case, which excited very deep public feeling in various directions. I do not think my hon. and learned friends opposite would be inclined to question that the original crime which necessitated these proceedings profoundly shook the public throughout India.

*Voices.*—Speak up, we can't hear.

Mr. Amarnath Dutt.—We have not come to hear that. We must walk out at once.

Sir James Crerar.—The Government are very sensible of the feelings. But in view of the facts which I have stated and having regard to the fact that after a very careful and minute examination of the proceedings they came to the conclusion that the trial was fair and the sentences were just and though it is always a great satisfaction to the Government when they are able to exercise clemency, I must add that in this case they had no doubt whatever that they will fail in their duty to India and the maintenance of law if, in these circumstances, they had not enforced the law.

Sir George Rainy.—I would only add one sentence. I would remind the Opposition that the action which they contemplate would mean the abdication of their constituencies at a time when the most important public business is before the House.

*A Voice.*—We know our business. We don't want these sermons.

The Nationalist members then walked out in a body.

Sir Hari Singh Gour alone wavered for a minute, but he too later followed them. Three Independents, Messrs. S. C. Mitra, D. K. Labri Choudhury and Sadiq Hussain joined the Nationalists while other Independents remained in their seats.

A protracted discussion then followed a motion of Sir Abdur Rahim that the House should adjourn for the day in view of the Nationalist walk out. The President having ultimately ruled for continuance of the discussion of the Finance Bill. Sir Abdur Rahim and Sir Cowasji Jehangir walked out.

The Assembly then proceeded with the postal rates.

Mr. Haji Wajihuddin then moved an amendment in which he wanted the same postal concession to printed advertisement and other matter meant for circulation. About half a dozen members spoke briefly, after which Mr. Sams said that he would go over the matter.

On this assurance the amendment was withdrawn and the clause relating to postal matter was passed.

#### DISCUSSION ON INCOME-TAX PROPOSALS

25th. MARCH:—The Assembly to-day proceeded with the discussion of the Finance Bill. Mr. Sahani (Nationalist) moved that the schedule regarding income-tax be removed from the Income-tax Act.

Sir George Schuster did not reply and the House rejected the proposal.

Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, Leader of the Nationalists, moved that the schedule embodying the proposed increase in income-tax and super-tax be substituted by the existing rates. He said that the amount involved was five crores which the Government could find by retrenchment. He expected a revival of trade and increased railway traffic due to the changed political conditions, notwithstanding the blunders of the Government. The existing burden of income-tax was already heavy on trade and the professions, if not on salaried servants. He had no objection to increased income-tax, but he did object to increasing taxes beyond the bearable capacity of the people. If the Government wanted to make a cut in the salaries of their servants, they should do so directly and not indirectly. The Assembly had no other weapon for forcing the Government to have regard for public opinion than this amendment.

Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar supported the amendment and elaborately criticised the system of administration of income-tax law.

Sir Abdur Rahim did not fully agree with the amendment. He, at the same time, agreed that there was room for retrenchment being made, particularly in military expenditure. Let retrenchment be in non-essential services, but not in an essential service like Civil Aviation.

Sir Hugh Cocke warned the Assembly against forcing the Government to leave a large uncovered deficit when the Provincial Governments' budgets were already deficit ones. He asked how many were the assesseees affected by this schedule.

Sir George Schuster: One tenth of one per cent of the population, or 326,719.

Sir Hugh Cocke: That is a very small number. The vast majority of the population are not affected by this. I suggest that the House should not vote for Mr. Rangachariar's amendment, but for something more business-like and more workable.

Moulvi Mahomed Yakub said that the agriculturist was already heavily taxed to the extent of 50 per cent of his income from lands. He asked why the capitalist should be spared.

Mr. Rangachariar's amendment for the status quo in regard to the level of income-tax, was lost by 59 against 35 votes.

#### SIR COWASJI JEHANGIR'S AMENDMENT

Sir Cowasji Jehangir then moved an amendment which proposed that the Income-tax rates proposed in the Finance Bill be reduced by four pies in respect of incomes between Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000 and by three pies for incomes between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 20,000 and by two pies in respect of income of Rs. 20,000 and upwards. He estimated that his amendment would mean loss of revenue to the extent of 234 lakhs over income-tax and 29 lakhs over super-tax. He asked the House to pass the amendment and force the Government to retrench.

Sir Hari Singh Gour charged the Finance Member with making yearly promises and not carrying out retrenchment.

Mr. Arthur Moore said that the heart of the European Group was with Mr. Rangachariar's amendment, but their head was against it for proposed cuts in revenue must be of practical application. His proposal for reduction of two pies would mean loss to the Government of 91 lakhs, but he would amend it and give up altogether the proposed increase up to five thousand income and the loss of revenue thereby would be 130 lakhs. This the Government could face.

Mr. Jagannath Aggarwal characterised the Finance Member's remedy as drastic and poisonous.

Mr. Jamal Mahomed held that income-tax had begun to be a tax on capital.



Mr. Jog while regretting the defeat of Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar's amendment, hoped that they would now join to support Sir Cowasji.

Sir George Schuster, replying, said: "I find that our main difficulty is to distinguish what we can regard as the true voice of public opinion speaking to us through the representatives of the public. I have tried to distinguish what I may call the true voice in the interest of the tax-payer in general and of those who are hard hit in respect of their own pocket."

The Finance Member said Sir H. S. Gour's criticism was not justified, as a crore of saving had already been made. That was a substantial effort to fulfil last year's promise. At the same time he recognised that the lower classes deserved consideration, but so far as Sir Cowasji's proposal went, he said: "You have already voted ten crores of taxation which will fall very largely on the poorest classes. I venture to think that a very unfortunate and regrettable impression will be created outside this House in this country and abroad if the representatives of the democratic parties, having passed ten crores of taxation on articles which daily affect the poorest class, come in and cut down super-tax and income-tax (applause from Government benches). We have been charged with making inadequate efforts to retrench, but we have done everything we could having regard to the proper interests of the country. Nevertheless, listening to the debates and appreciating the real public feeling behind them, I come to the conclusion that there were behind these criticisms, views to which we could not remain entirely deaf, and we worked out to see how far we could go to meeting those views."

Sir George Schuster announced that in disregard of the Commander-in-Chief's advice, the Government had decided to slow down the programme of re-equipment, involving a saving of sixty lakh in the Army expenditure, bringing down army charges to 51 crores and 90 lakhs. They would get further economies of ten lakhs over expenditure on Census and some desirable proposals for improvement in economic statistics. These combined with budgeted surplus came to just over a crore. That represents practically the limit of what is immediately possible. Hon'ble members say: We want immediately retrenchment. The Government cannot be guided by what is desirable, but what is possible. In that sense, if I look to economics' question the omission of 19 lakhs provision over Civil Aviation is a possible economy. Then, we may get a small revenue over the Wheat Bill, and also 25 lakhs if the House agrees to pass the Bill, for income-tax on foreign investments will take effect from 1st April this year. The additional duty on salt is not to be used for central revenues. The imposition of an additional-tax on motor spirit is another possibility, though that would not be desirable. That represents the maximum which I can do, and I have nothing else up my sleeves. The only way to face the situation is honestly to try to meet it. Do not force the Government to take an unsound financial course and do not allow the impression to get abroad that the popular Assembly at Delhi, which is willing to impose taxation on the necessary supplies of the people, is unwilling to tax super-tax and income-tax (Applause).

The President divided up Sir Cowasji Jehangir's proposals regarding income-tax and supertax.

#### SIR COWASJI JEHANGIR'S AMENDMENT CARRIED

Sir Cowasji Jehangir's amendment for reduction in income-tax was first put and carried by 62 votes against 48.

Sir Cowasji's amendment for reduction in supertax was negatived by 82 votes against 34.

The clause relating to income-tax as amended was passed, and the House adjourned.

**26th. MARCH:—**The Assembly met to-day an hour earlier than usual and within quarter of an hour went through the entire Finance Bill clause by clause.

When this was done, and before the third reading was taken up, the Finance Member asked the President to communicate to the House a message from the Governor-General which, while appreciating the co-operation of the House and the point of view they had pressed regarding economy, stated that the Government could not economise more than one crore in the next year, and in the widest interest of India's credit, the Government could not ask the Assembly to leave an unbalanced budget. The Governor-General has, therefore, sent the Bill to the Assembly in the

## THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

The following is the text of the Governor-General's message: "I have given most anxious consideration to the position created by the acceptance in the Legislative Assembly of the amendment to the Finance Bill which, it is estimated, will reduce the expected revenue from income-tax for the next year by about 240 lakhs of rupees. I fully recognise that the burden of new taxation which the legislature has been asked to accept can be justified only by the most exceptional circumstances of which indeed Hon. Members are well aware. I appreciate sincerely the co-operation of Honourable Members in having already accepted the clauses imposing new and onerous taxation. I also recognise the desire of Honourable Members in discharge of their duty to those to whom they are responsible, to assure in these times the utmost measure of economy in the field of administration. But that the budget of the Government of India for the coming year should be truly and securely balanced in the widest interests of credit of India will, I am confident, be accepted as essential by the Legislative Assembly not less readily than by myself. The only question therefore at issue is how far it is possible with immediate effect, that is, so as in fact to be operative during the next year, to effect economies which will meet the reduction that has been made. After careful re-examination of all material items, I have satisfied myself that the maximum reduction which can be at once effected, mainly by postponement for a year of important schemes for military re-equipment, is one crore of rupees. To make a larger reduction than this would be to leave in effect an unbalanced budget and to take a risk which I cannot regard as other than dangerous to the essential interests of the country. I therefore feel it my duty to recommend to Honourable Members the acceptance of an amendment which will make the reduction of one crore and which, while leaving a securely balanced budget, will meet what I feel to be the genuine demand of the House on the one hand for enforcement of economy and on the other for mitigation of the burden of taxation upon the poorest classes of income-tax payers. In making this recommendation to the House I have sought to reconcile to the best of my ability the necessities of public service with the expressed desires of Honourable Members whose earnest attention I accordingly invite to the revised proposal of my Government."

*Sir George Schuster* thereupon moved the necessary amendment to the income-tax schedule which kept unaltered income-tax rates proposed in the Bill for incomes of fifteen thousand and upwards and gave relief to the lower grades. His proposal was to impose a tax of 6 pice on incomes between two and five thousand rupees, and nine pice on incomes between five and ten thousand, and one anna on income between fifteen and twenty thousand and thereafter. The original proposals remain as at present.

The Finance Member said that yesterday's vote of the House had rudely upset the balance of the various classes bearing equitably the burden of the taxation and that the proposal, which he moved in the form of an amendment, would give relief to the poorest classes of income-tax payers, though it would put the Government in a desperately tight position to find Rs. 50,00,000 by further economy in the civil expenditure, besides, Rs. 60,00,000 agreed to over the Army budget.

The announcement shocked the party leaders, who wanted an adjournment to enable them to examine the situation and also to get back members who had left Delhi in ignorance of the course adopted by the Government.

The President agreed to adjourn the House till next day.

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATION REJECTED

**27th. MARCH** :—The discussion on the Viceroy's recommended amendment to the Finance Bill was resumed.

Mr. Rangachariar, leader of the Opposition, said that they had great respect for the Viceroy and, after listening to the magnificent words uttered last night by the Viceroy, he felt that a grave responsibility lay on them in rejecting the Viceroy's recommendation. But they felt that the Viceroy had been grievously misadvised by his councillors. His party had wanted to cut Rs. 5,00,00,000, the Independents Rs. 2,50,00,000 and the Europeans Rs. 1,00,00,000. The majority of the House had accepted a middle course. But, Sir, the genius for constructive suggestions is a peculiar monopoly of the European group and instead of listening to us, the Finance Member listens to the constructive proposals of his own kith and kin. Then, again, Sir, the Finance Member assumed the roll of an apostle and protector of the poor. He was arguing for days and quoting chapter and verse to show that the

poor were not affected, and yet he began to accuse the House of ignoring the interests of the poor. I think on reflection he will realise what serious injustice he has done to us.'

Sir Abdur Rahim said that the Viceroy's message merely reproduced what Sir G. Schuster had stated. 'What new facts have you given us to ask us to change our views? I should consider myself unfit to take part in public life if within 24 hours, I am asked to change my opinion for no reason whatever. (Applause). You accused us of thinking of our own pockets. Did we propose a duty on kerosene oil? It was the Government's proposal. And did you not carry it by your official block? (Applause). And then you turn round and tell us we are unmindful of the interests of the poor. You have done nothing for the poor compared with what other Governments do. The Finance Member has talked of Parliamentary manœuvres. I would ask hon. members who voted against Government to tell us publicly the reasons that induce them now to vote with the Government. We are entitled to know what has happened within an evening to make them change opinion.'

Sir Hugh Cocke appreciated the feelings of those who still opposed the taxation proposals, but the House must face the situation as it stood. If additional taxation was to be imposed, it must be on those who could bear it. The House should not regard the Government proposals of the income-tax rate as a burden on the smaller trader. The fact remained that it was not easy to fill the gap. It was quite impossible that trade might improve as a result of good rains, or as a result of settlement of the constitutional problem. But the Finance Member must take into account certainties and not mere possibilities. Sir Hugh Cocke regretted the upheaval over the Finance Bill and suggested to the House not to force the Government to an unreasonable extent.

Sir George Schuster, at this stage, by way of personal explanation, referred to his Wednesday's speech and made it clear that in referring to the sectional interest, he did not mean to suggest their own personal interest and if his language had conveyed that impression he withdrew it.

Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, while being grateful to the Finance Member for the explanation, referred to another aspect of his Wednesday's speech when, according to Mr. Mudaliar, he adopted a high and mighty attitude as to the true voice of public opinion. Mr. Mudaliar referred to the opposition to the kerosene oil duty when the Finance Member declared that the additional burden on the consumer was only half an anna per annum. Now it did not lie in the mouth of the same Finance Member to twit the elected members by saying that they did not care for the poor and only cared for reducing the income-tax rate.

Sir George Schuster intervened, pointing out that kerosene was not the only customs article which the House had voted. There are many others which were voted without division.

*Mr. Mudaliar*—I shall omit such luxuries as wine, bear, etc. I shall take only cotton textiles. Due to the strong agitation in the country for indigenous cloth, our voting on imported cloth stands on a different footing. Last year, when there was a differential rate on British cloth, there was even a walk-out by the Nationalists. This year we showed our sense of responsibility by not even whispering about it. You give us no credit for all that and you ask whether ours is the voice of true public opinion. If you want we are prepared to go out into the country on this issue of the Finance Bill. Therefore, arguments like 'true voice of public opinion' will not frighten us.'

Proceeding Mr. Mudaliar discounted the talk of Rs. 1,00,00,000 further retrenchment by pointing out that Rs. 60,00,000 of that were to the mechanisation proposals. He referred to the 15 per cent. reduction in the salaries of the Government officials in the Dominions and demanded the same in India. He emphasised that the recommendation to the House was by the Government and not by Lord Irwin and, therefore, he urged them to stand by the original decision.

Mr. Joshi mentioned that he had often been advised by official whips through notices where he should vote, but had always consigned them to the wastepaper basket. He represented labour and would always vote independently and asked the Government if it wanted public opinion why should it not constitute a House in which all sections would be represented.

Mr. Raju said that the economy of Rs. 1,00,00,000 proposed by the Government was postponing expenditure and could not in any sense be called retrenchment.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that the Finance Member had challenged the representative character of the House. They were all elected by the Indian people. And

he was prepared to throw a challenge to the Finance Member to put facts fairly and squarely before the British public opinion and take the verdict. Let him tell the British people that he was proposing an increase of 39 per cent in the income-tax of this country and that the Assembly was prepared to grant him 19 per cent. rise. Though the Viceroy had sent them a recommended bill, they knew on whose shoulders to throw the responsibility for the action.

Sir George Rainy pleaded that this was an emergency measure and that though both sides did their best, they had not been able to bridge the gulf sufficiently. The entire Government of India took the responsibility for the Finance Member's amendment. The budget had come unbalanced by putting too much on the indirect taxpayer. The alternative now before the House was the Government's modified proposal and Sir Cowasji's proposal.

Mr. Talib Mehdi said that though he had voted previously for Sir Cowasji's amendment, he would ask the House to grasp the hand extended by the Viceroy and vote money which would be utilised to benefit the poor.

Mr. Jamal Muhammad asked the Government to withdraw the amendment.

The House thereupon divided and rejected the Viceroy's recommendation by 56 votes to 60, amidst thundering non-official cheers.

#### THIRD READING NOT MOVED

Sir George Schuster thereupon did not move the third reading of the Finance Bill and wanted the President to certify that the House had declined to pass the Bill in the form recommended by the Governor-General.

The House next elected members to the Standing Finance Committee and the Education Committee.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS VOTED

The supplementary grants were all voted.

During the discussion on the Indo-European Telegraph department vote, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar was informed by Sir Joseph Bhoru that the best sale had been made, for they got £450,000 while the book value of the assets was only Rs. 73,00,000.

#### ELDERS' LUXURY

In respect of the supplementary grant under Council of State, where the Government mentioned that expenditure was partly due to the greater concession of travelling in reserved compartments, Mr. Rangachariar put in the suggestion that the Finance Member should write to the Council of State members that in view of the financial stringency they should forego the luxury of travelling in reserved compartments.

The Finance Member agreed to forward the suggestion.

#### INTEREST FREE LOANS

Discussing loans, Mr. Rangachariar asked for information regarding the proposed loan (interest free) to the Afghanistan Government.

The Finance Member preferred this being answered by Mr. Howell, Foreign Secretary.

Mr. K. C. Neogy brought in the question of the loan to the Nawab of Dacca, while Mr. Ranga Iyer suggested that in respect of every such loan the permission should be obtained of the Assembly.

Mr. Rangachariar reiterated his objection to the Government of India giving loans free of interest, when they were passing the Finance Bill with certification.

The Finance Member promised to keep this in view.

Sir George Schuster moved for a select committee on the Income-tax amendment Bill and hinted that the Bill could be circulated by an executive order for opinion and the select committee could sit in Simla. Discussion on this was postponed till next day.

#### LORD IRWIN'S FAREWELL

28th. MARCH;—There was a unique demonstration when Lord Irwin came to take formal farewell of both the houses of the Legislature to-day. About 200 members were present and the entire Assembly chamber was crowded and the galleries were packed. There was a prolonged cheer when the Viceroy entered the chamber. He spoke for 10 minutes and said before finally taking action in connection with the Finance Bill he hoped to convene a conference of party leaders of both houses to discuss the situation.

His Excellency expressed the debt the Government felt to members who in the face of unpleasantness, risks and bitter reproaches had attended the session and so prevented a rude set-back to the continuity of Indian parliamentary progress. The whole country owed them gratitude. He begged them to educate their constituents politically. He hoped their association in the objects they had at heart would never be impaired and assured them of his abiding interest in every matter concerning the political life of India.

Thereafter the Viceroy shook hands with each member, bidding a personal farewell, and as he was leaving the chamber he was given a thundering cheer. The Viceroy then held a conference with party leaders.

#### DISCUSSION ON SALT BILL

*30th. MARCH* :—When the Assembly met to-day, the Salt Bill discussion was resumed, and Mr. R. K. Shanmukham defended the majority report recommending 4 annas duty. Mr. Chetty said there was possibly some misunderstanding on the point of the Government's intentions and asked the Finance Member to state what he wished to do with the proceeds of the temporary additional duty on foreign salt.

Sir George Schuster replied that it was proposed to give seven-eighths of the expected proceeds to be devoted to the development of the salt industry in Northern India and also to the investigation into further sources of salt supply and further means to secure steadiness of prices. The position, he said, was peculiar, for the measure was only suggested for one year. But he expressed the Government's willingness, following the procedure of the Road Fund, to introduce a resolution during the present session to carry these proposals into effect provided the House expressed its approval of the suggestion.

Sir Abdur Rahim asked if the Provinces could devote the expected proceeds for nation-building purposes.

The Finance Member said it was not proposed to impose any conditions in this connection but reminded the Hon'ble Member that the measure was only suggested for one year and it might be unsafe to count on its continuance.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetti said there was no harm in the House adding a rider to the resolution urging that the proceeds be applied to non-recurring nation-building purposes. Similar understanding was given when the House gave up provincial contributions.

Mr. C. C. Biswas enquired why the Finance Member did not make this important announcement when he moved his motion for circulation.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetty, resuming the discussion, spoke at length showing why he and other members who constituted the majority of the Assembly Committee agreed to the additional duty. The measure was one which was as much in the interests of the Bengal consumer as of the national industry of India. This was shown by their provision regarding rebate payable under the scheme.

Mr. Neogy said he would any day be exploited rather by his own countrymen than by foreigners and in protectionist matters he would not take a parochial view. But the present case was one in which he would oppose the duty, because he believed that protection should be given by bounty. The Government had done nothing to fulfil the promise of developing the salt resources. He was opposed to divert any money out of the present taxation to develop the salt supply machinery of the Government.

Mr. Morgan said he was absolutely and utterly opposed to the Bill. Some taxes were beneficial, but this was immoral. Since the 10th March the price of salt had risen from Rs. 36 to Rs. 62. At the moment, when unity and co-operation was the big question, was it logical to expect that feeling when a Bill of this kind was brought forward.

Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar said the debate was an eye opener. Bengal was the birthplace of Indian Nationalism and the speaker had learnt the lessons on Nationalism from Bengal leaders. He continued : "Ancestors of Mr. Morgan and Sir George Schuster had crushed Bengal's salt industry. Sir George Schuster is at least prepared to make amends for the past sins (laughter), but how can Mr. Neogy, descendant of the Bengal Nationalists, and Mr. Morgan go into the same lobby? I say, the price of salt in Bengal is kept intentionally low for the purpose of dumping. I ask Bengal to stand just a prick to be able to help the country to develop the salt industry. Why forget that even the proceeds of the tax are to go to your own province? Why not use these proceeds to revive the industry which had been killed so that Bengal may produce all her salt?"

Mr. S. C. Mitra regretted that Mr. Biswas was not present during most of the time when the committee of the Assembly examined the subject in detail. He had come to the conclusion that, without injuring the consumer, Bengal was getting a chance to revive her salt industry, and remove the stigma of she alone being dependent on foreign salt.

Mr. Heathcote said if the tax was in the interest of the nation, it should have been supported by all sections of the nation but it had not been.

Mr. Gayaprasad Singh doubted if the import duty would affect Bengal.

Mr. Amarnath Dutt supported the circulation.

Sir George Schuster said the debate was unusually interesting and would lead to some unaccustomed companionships in the lobby. (Laughter). He had tried to take up an impartial attitude on the Assembly Committee but would state that he had now formed an opinion definitely in favour of the bill. Mr. Biswas' facts were inaccurate and he had not quoted from the Tariff Board the whole truth. Salt was selling in Bengal at present far below the fair cost of production. They had to consider whether the Tariff Board's standardised level of price was fair and would on average be of benefit to the consumer. That was so, and it was with a view to serve the consumer the best by trying to stabilise wholesale prices that the Government were supporting the bill. He admitted they were treading on uncertain ground, but if the experiment failed they could return to the original position. He emphasised that the essence of the scheme was not to protect Aden, but to develop the internal sources of production in India. He disagreed with Mr. Morgan who said the scheme would mean the death-knell of the Federation. On the other hand, the essence of the scheme of Federation was for the constituent members to set up some tribunal of a representative character to find the best remedy on matters of common concern. Sir George Schuster gave permission to official members from the provinces to vote or not to vote, as they liked, as he wished the matter to be decided really by the popular votes.

#### BILL PASSED INTO LAW

The result was that Mr. Biswas's motion for circulation of the bill was defeated by 18 votes against 53, and thereafter the bill was taken into consideration and passed clause by clause and ultimately passed through the third reading without any debate.

#### RESERVE FORCE BILL PASSED

The Reserve Force Bill which was passed by the Council of State was then passed without discussion.

#### CAWNPORE RIOTING

The clock struck four, and the adjournment motion about the communal rioting at Cawnpore was moved by Mr. Maswood Ahmed who said it was not his intention to create communal bitterness. He said the names of those who died in this trouble would be written in letters of gold. Among those who were killed, and their number varied from day to day, the majority were Mussalman and among them were women and children. So also in respect of the injured. In the face of this, he asked what was the need of the huge army, if the police and they could not restore the peace in time? Why did not the authorities take precautionary measures, especially when they had known what happened at Benares and Agra? If the Government were unable to give protection let them go out of this country, bag and baggage. (Cheers.)

Mr. R. P. Bagla was glad that normal conditions were being restored after the visits of the Governor and the Home Member from Lucknow. It was regrettable that such a noble soul as Mr. Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi was done to death while engaged in preventing further trouble. The Government should take such steps as would lead to the detection of murder of Mr. Vidyarthi.

Haji Wajihuddin (Meerut) gave briefly the facts as gleaned by him from many sources, and said the questions were whether the local authorities had realised the critical situation and whether they took steps to cope with the situation.

Mr. Hariraj Swarup said the Government were responsible for not having been able to restore peace and order so far in Cawnpore. Adequate steps were not taken to restore order, nor were any precautionary measure taken to prevent the disturbances especially after the lessons of Benares and Agra. In fact, according to the reports, there were no policemen to be seen in Cawnpore, in the first two days of the trouble.

*Mr. Emerson*, Home Secretary, (who was especially nominated for the debate) read out at the outset the latest report received from the U. P. Government based on telephonic information 9-40 a. m., to day. It stated: "Everything is perfectly quiet. No more attacks or fires are reported. Shops are getting to open slowly. Some of the Mills have started working. The city is still very panicky, but feeling is getting better. Arrests up-to-date number 341. The casualties are: Death so far ascertained 131, 42 Hindus and 99 Mahomedans and wounded 386, 219 Hindus and 167 Moslems. Mr. Emerson expressed the Government's great regret at this tragedy, and their sympathy with the relatives of those who had lost their lives, or who had been injured and with those who suffered loss. Criticism had been made that vigorous action was not taken by the local authorities, and that these disorders should have been brought under control much earlier. He could not answer those criticisms in the face of paucity of information, paucity because the local officers were engaged for nearly a week in suppressing disorder and in doing their utmost to save the lives of innocent citizens, and they had not had time to send detailed information. But from such information as he possessed, it was clear that there was no lack of vigorous action from the outset. When the trouble started on the afternoon of the 24th in the Mall, action was immediately taken. It was stopped. Later, in the afternoon, trouble began inside the city due to the attempts of some to force Moslem shopkeepers to close their shops. This was of a local character, and was quickly brought under control. The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police went into the city. They sent 250 of their armed reserve. During the night there was sporadic trouble and the troops in Cawnpore were called out. Early in the morning of the 25th trouble was apprehended and there was no delay in sending reinforcement and 200 police were despatched from Lucknow. Two companies of the East Yorks were sent from Lucknow and they reached Cawnpore the same afternoon. And as all available men in the Lucknow Reserve had been sent, reinforcement were requisitioned from other districts. The position on the 28th March was that reinforcements from the outside districts were 567 making a total, with the Lucknow Reserve, of 872 in addition to the ordinary city force. This force was further augmented by reliefs of 250 men.

Answering the second charge that the local authorities were unable to quell the disturbance in time, Mr Emerson explained that unless all communal disorders were brought under control within the first few hours the task of controlling them became a gradual process. Raids took place between the people of two Mohallas or between two sections of the people in the same Mohalla. In such circumstances patrolling and intensive picketing were useful, but these were possible only when forces were adequate. As soon as reinforcement arrived picketing and patrolling were put into practice, and gradually the situation was brought under control.

To the charge frequently made that the Government were more ready to quell political disturbance than communal disturbance, Mr. Emerson declared that he conceived of no worse dereliction of duty on the part of a Government officer than to deliberately stand by while the lives of innocent citizens were in jeopardy. As soon as peace was restored in Cawnpore, the Government would examine all accounts in detail in order to see how such occurrences could be prevented in the future. But it was primarily for the leaders of public opinion and of all communities to maintain friendly relations between all communities and to promote goodwill and friendly feelings.

*Mr. C. S. Ranga Aiyar* said that Mr. Emerson had given them an essay on how the communal situation could be handled and his speech had shown a glaring discrepancy in regard to the bureaucratic method of dealing with law and order. He did not want to know how many Hindus or Muslims were killed or injured, but how many Indians were killed and injured. The number of lives lost revealed to him the incompetence of the present authority to maintain law and order. If there had been murder of some European, there would have been, as occurred at Sholapur, Martial Law. He asked why Martial Law was not introduced in Cawnpore. "You show all bureaucratic promptness and power when your own prestige is involved. The Congress Hospital of Bombay tells the tale of lathi charges on peaceful women and children. When our men, women and children are being butchered in the streets by hooligans, this hooligan Government abdicates. Those of the Government Benches seem to have told the Provincial Governments that they can give a long rope to the communal rioters and men who want to impair the peaceful atmosphere that has been created. There has been grave dereliction of duty. Here is a report of the most responsible newspaper the "Leader"

of Allahabad which states that in the worst affected area no policeman was visible for miles.

*Mr. Shafi Daudi* said such matters were a domestic concern, and should not have been brought before the House, but he asked why they should criticise the Government alone. Cawnpore had a grave lesson. Here there was no cow or music question involved. Here the issue was an effort of one community to dominate the other and impose its will on it. This domination must stop if they wanted peace. "The Congress non-violence is against those who have brute force, but violence is displayed against those who are considered to be helpless. (Applause). We Muslims are helpless and imbecile. It is because of these experiences that I severed my connection with the Congress. Let us change this mentality if we want peace."

*Mr. Arthur Moore* was sorry that *Mr. Ranga Aiyar* had left his seat after (Voices : What ?) after an obviously insincere utterance. He commended to the House the tone of *Mr. Shafi Daudi's* speech. (Applause). If a perfect stranger has been listening to *Mr. Ranga Aiyar's* speech, he would have thought that Europeans permitted the massacre of Indians in Cawnpore. (Voices "No No". He did not say that). Continuing, *Mr. Arthur Moore* said that, time after time, riots had broken out in towns where there was no European interest whatsoever, and troops were promptly called in to quell the riot. The European community had suffered heavily in Cawnpore. *Mr. Ranga Aiyar's* suggestion that prompt action was not taken because no European was affected, was wholly untrue. As regards the promptness of Government action they did not wish to sit on judgment as they were not in possession of all facts.

*Mr. A. Das* agreed with *Mr. Shafi Daudi* that the responsibility lay on the leaders, but asked the Government to censure the officers for not taking prompt action.

*Bhai Parmanand* agreed with *Mr. Shafi Daudi* that the matter should not have been brought before the House. He denied that the riots at Benares and Cawnpore were communal in their origin. *Mr. Vidvarthi* gave up his life saving Muslim life. He denied *Mr. Shafi Daudi's* assertion that Hindus wanted to dominate the Muslims.

*Sir James Creer* spoke for a few minutes when it was six and the motion was automatically talked out. He covered in part the ground traversed by the Home Secretary, and said that in the absence of full information, it was impossible for the Government to give an answer to all the points raised. But information was sufficient to show that the local authorities were not supine, and that they dealt with the situation promptly. One thing to be noted was that peace had been restored, and the immediate task of the authorities was to restore confidence, relieve distress and bring the offenders to justice. He therefore reinforced the appeal of *Mr. Yamin Khan* for the assistance of all enlightened men, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, in establishing peace and concord. *Mr. Shafi Daudi* had struck a note of wisdom, logic and commonsense for there was a deeper and larger problem confronting the country.

At this stage, the motion was talked out, and the Assembly adjourned.

#### THE WHEAT BILL

**31st. MARCH:**—In the Assembly to-day *Sir George Rainy* moved for the consideration of the Bill to impose a temporary duty on the importation of wheat.

*Mian Shah Nawaz* said that if the British Government could not come to the help of British agriculturist, it must admit that it had completely failed in this country. So far as the objection from Bengal was concerned, they wanted either the permanent settlement to be abolished in Bengal or be introduced in the Punjab (Applause). He warned the Government that many bogus contracts would be entered into and if the clause giving exemption to contracts was retained, the whole Bill would be useless.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* said that the two issues to be borne in mind were whether the Bill gave any assistance to the agriculturists and in doing so whether it damaged any other interests in the country.

*Mr. Hari Swaroop* urged that the measure be made more protective than it was. *Dewan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar* asked why it was that the Government did not revert to the Moghul practice of taking revenue in kind instead of cash and further what the Government had done to procure preference for Indian agricultural produce in Empire markets and what plans they had to take part in the Empire Economic Conference at Ottawa. He held that the bill before them was an eye-wash and would not help even if the clause relating to contracts was omitted.

*Mr. Talib Mehdi* declared that railway freights must be lowered and foreign wheat



boycotted. They were sitting on the edge of an economic volcano. He urged the revenue from the Wheat Bill being given to the Punjab Government.

Mr. Sohan Singh said that the distress was very acute, and the Government has shown no resourcefulness to meet it, as countries like the United States of America and Canada had done. He pleaded for a Committee of Enquiry into the whole question to devise measures for help in the future.

Mr. Biswas at this stage withdrew his amendment for circulation which was moved on the 28th. March.

Mr. Harbans Singh moved for the deletion of Clause Three, which exempts from duty wheat already ordered. Several members spoke both for and against the deletion, and eventually the amendment for deletion was rejected by 57 against 22 votes, there being 50 neutrals.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir then moved an amendment, whereby fifteen thousand tons of wheat estimated to be imported between 1st and 20th of March were to be exempted from duty. The Punjab and U. P. members generally opposed the amendment in the interests of the agriculturists, while Mr. Morgan was among the supporters. This amendment was also rejected by 50 against 26 votes.

On the motion of Mr. Morgan, accepted by the Government, the House carried without a division the proposition that a new clause be inserted that the duty on wheat flour (besides wheat), be Rs. 2 per hundredweight.

But there was opposition from both Nationalist and Independent benches to the next clause in the Bill, whereby Government was empowered to remit such a duty or reduce it to such an extent as they thought fit. To this, there was a further addition sought to be made by Mr. Morgan so that the reduction to be made by the Government in the course of the next financial year might be not such as to make it lower than the *ad valorem* duty of 20 per cent. Nationalists and Independents objected on the ground that the Legislature alone should have this power to reduce the duty, and that the Executive should not, in any circumstances, be given the power.

But the original clause, together with the addition proposed by Mr. Morgan, were both passed by large majority. The Bill, as thus amended by both the motions of Mr. Morgan, was then passed. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

*1st APRIL* :—The Assembly considered a number of important Government resolutions to-day, which had been held up owing to the Finance Bill debate.

The House agreed to by 51 votes to 12 to Sir George Rainy's proposal regarding additional payment to the Tatas in respect of rails.

Mr. Shillidy's motion asking the House not to ratify the Geneva Convention regarding the regulation of hours of work was opposed by Mr. N. M. Joshi who wanted ratification. The motion of Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh for adjournment of the discussion to the Simla session was carried by 23 votes against 16, the Government remaining neutral.

Sir George Schuster's resolution regarding the apportionment of seven-eighths of additional duty on salt to the provinces on the basis of consumption and desirability of such provinces using this revenue towards salt development, was passed. He assured the House that he would submit at the next session the exact apportionment proposed.

There was an interesting debate on the Finance Member's resolution for the appointment of an advisory committee or committees and the conduct of these enquiries. The idea was to associate some members of the Assembly with each one of the sub-committees which would conduct the enquiries in well-defined spheres.

Another Government motion appointing a committee of members of the House to consider what action should be taken when an opportunity occurred to purchase B. N. W. and the Rohilkhand and Kumaon Railways and report to the next session was passed.

The Assembly then adjourned *Sine Die*.

# THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

President :—Hon'ble The Raja of Santosh

Amidst usual ceremonies, His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson, the Governor of Bengal, accompanied by the hon. Lady Jackson, opened the new chamber of the Bengal Legislative Council at Calcutta on the 9th. FEBRUARY, 1931. In doing so Sir Stanley Jackson said that the ceremony marked an important stage of development in self-governing institutions in Bengal. The building signified something more than a meeting place for the Legislative Council. It stood as the symbol of progress of India and was a testimony that successive promises honestly made had been honestly redeemed. It provided signal evidence of the co-operation of the races, and in to-day's ceremony was seen the passing from the temporary and transitional to the permanent in legislative institutions in India.

His Excellency suggested that the duty rested upon every member of the House to study with care and as far as possible without prejudice, the statement of the Prime Minister made at the termination of the Round Table Conference. The statement embodied the conclusion of His Majesty's Government as to the lines of advance to responsibility which the future constitution for India should follow as a result of the discussions at the conference.

## PREMIER'S DECLARATION WELCOME

Resolutions welcoming the Premier's Declaration were then moved by Messrs. S. M. Bose, P. N. Guha and J. N. Gupta. The first two are non-officials while the third is a retired official.

*Mr. S. M. Bose*, moving that "the Council places on record its appreciation of the declaration of policy by the Premier" remarked that in his opinion the new principle of self-government with its corollary Dominion Status, had been established beyond controversy. He was confident it would be cordially appreciated by his countrymen. As regards safeguards which would be there during the transition period, they should watch with vigilance to see that these did not hamper the working of the new constitution.

*Mr. P. N. Guha*, in a resolution welcoming the declaration, regretted that the offer had not been accepted as spontaneously as it should have been. Mr. Guha could not understand why Gandhiji's eleven points should be made a condition precedent to the acceptance of the offer which, barring Independence-wallas, and Die-hard Europeans, were believed by a large majority to contain all for which India had been striving since the establishment of the Congress.

*Mr. J. N. Guha* in a resolution gratefully acknowledging the statesmanship and genuine sympathy with Indian aspirations displayed in the scheme called upon the Government and the members of the House to co-operate to remove all obstacles in the path of sympathetic reception by the people. He thought, of all the causes that ushered in the new era, the unloosening of the moral forces by Mr. Gandhi had been foremost. He had united India in a manner never known before, he added. Along with Mr. Gandhi's creation of moral forces, equally potent was the work of the great statesmen who laboured for the cause of India at the Round Table Conference. Finally, he asked the Local Government to fall in line with the spirit of the Government of India and asked the members to settle their differences.

*Dr. N. C. Sen Gupta* moved as an amendment that in order to enable the members to consider the Premier's statement in a calm atmosphere the release of political prisoners and repeal of Ordinances were essential. He was in possession of the House when the Council adjourned.

Next day, the 10th. FEBRUARY, when further discussions were resumed, barring a few dissentients, the Council accepted the resolution of Mr. J.N. Gupta welcoming the Premier's declaration of policy in India. The Council acknowledged "the far-sighted wisdom, broad statesmanship and genuine sympathy with Indian aspirations displayed in the scheme of the future Indian Constitution outlined by the Prime Minister, and while calling upon the Government to forthwith remove all

obstacles in the path of the sympathetic reception by the people of this province, urges upon members of this House to do all in their power to help forward the speedy completion of the structure outlined in the scheme, particularly by a satisfactory and agreed solution of the communal differences, so that the great task of building up the fabric of a liberated and self-governing India may be commenced by the Indian people with as little delay as possible."

All other resolutions on the subject were eventually withdrawn with the leave of the House. *Dr. N. C. Sen Gupta* also withdrew his amendment urging the release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of all special laws and Ordinances in view of the Home Member's assurance that as soon as they were satisfied that they could do without special powers, they would gladly abandon them.

The debate lasted for nearly four hours in course of which all sections of the House participated. *Mr. N. K. Basu* alone introduced a jarring note and, as was clear later, was supported by only a handful of members. *Mr. J. N. Basu*, a delegate to the Round Table Conference, expressed the opinion that the proposed structure would be a structure of all India in which all would enjoy contentment. The *Home Member*, intervening in the debate, explained the Government's position and pleaded "with that large section of community which has up till now adopted a policy of non-co-operation to realise that the time for such an attitude has passed and what is needed in the interest of their own province and of India as a whole was co-operation".

#### TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

*11th. FEBRUARY*:—The Government suffered the first defeat of the session to-day when, by a majority of one vote, the token grant of the hon. Sir P. C. Mitter for expenditure during the current year on account of new jails in the presidency was rejected. The decision was received with applause by non-official members. The opposition was based generally upon the alleged ill-treatment of political prisoners in and outside jails.

*Mr. B. C. Chatterjee*, leader of the Nationalist Party, remarked that they would refuse the grant unless there was a definite assurance from the Government that the civil disobedience prisoners would not be given beating as a preliminary punishment by the police before their arrest and conviction. The Bengali, he said, was tired of being treated as an alien in his own country and of being treated as less than mere man that God had made him. The speaker opposed the grant as a protest against the treatment of political prisoners in jails, both as regards their classification and the quality of the diet supplied to them, which, in some cases, was unfit for human consumption.

*Mr. N. K. Basu* was opposed to the grant as, in his opinion, the money spent on electric wires and bulbs round certain places of detention was a misuse.

*Mr. Santi Shekhareswar Roy* called upon the Government to change their mentality in regard to the jail administration and to realise that the political prisoners were not ordinary convicts but the future rulers of the country.

Replying to the debate, *Sir P. C. Mitter* pointed out the sudden influx of prisoners due to the civil disobedience movement. Before the movement started, their number was 15,000, which had since increased to 20,600. He emphasised that if the grant were refused, the responsibility for a worse treatment of political prisoners would be theirs and not his. While not claiming infallibility for the jail department, he stressed that everything possible was done by it. The department discharged an unpleasant duty in accordance with the principles laid down in the jail Code, in the face of the most difficult circumstances. Many, he was sure, would testify to the sense of sympathy exhibited by the late Lt.-Col. N. S. Simpson in dealing with the prisoners, but that officer met his death in his own office. This showed that he had done his duty well in the most trying circumstances.

#### CALCUTTA LATHI CHARGE

*12th. FEBRUARY*:—The Council granted leave to-day to *Moulvi Jalaluddin Hashamy* to move an adjournment of the business of the Council next day to discuss the "highhandedness of the police in having made lathi charges and assaults on a peaceful and unarmed procession headed by the Mayor of Calcutta *Mr. Subash Chandra Bose*, on the afternoon of the 26th January."

The House then passed the *Bengal Municipal (Amendment) Bill* brought forward by *Mr. Munindra Deb Rai Mahasai* by 65 to 36 votes.

## THE GARDEN REACH BILL

*The Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill* brought forward by Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta which had for its object the separation of the Garden Reach area from the Calcutta Corporation was next taken up.

*Dr. Sen-Gupta* in moving the bill for the consideration of the House said that such a bill sponsored by Dr. A. Shurawardy was formerly passed by the Bengal Council but it was vetoed by the Governor. The matter was brought before the House again by Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed but before it was disposed of by the House, he resigned. Therefore, the mover, who was a Member of the Select Committee, thought it his duty to bring the matter before the House again.

Pleading for the separation of the Garden Reach area from the Calcutta Corporation the mover said that the area was inhabited by poor people, who were unable to pay a high rate of taxes. It was a rural area and it was mere hardship on the people to force on them urban conditions. Besides it was by a fluke that the area came under the Corporation for, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee originally had no intention to bring the area within the jurisdiction of the Calcutta Corporation.

*The Hon'ble B. P. Singh Roy*, Minister for local Government, moved an amendment urging deferring the consideration of the Bill till July session. In urging the reasons for moving the amendment Mr. Singh said the Government had appointed the Goode Committee to enquire into the matter. The Committee had submitted its report but opinions thereon by interested bodies such as the Calcutta Corporation, the Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Port Trust had been received only a short time ago. He promised the House that he himself would bring a suitable bill in his hand but as its provision had not been yet carefully examined he could not disclose its contents before the House.

*Rai Bahadur Keshab Chandra Banerjee* regarded the separation movement as a retrograde one. He failed to understand why an area which had come to get advantage of the great public utility services of the corporation, its system of primary education and expert advice under its employ should go out of it. The budget figures of the Corporation showed that it had gone into considerable expense for the improvement of the area.

*Dr. Sen Gupta* agreed to defer the consideration of the Bill till July as urged by the Minister in his amendment. But the matter was pressed to a division. The amendment of the Hon'ble Mr. B. P. Singh Roy was carried by 73 to 37 votes. The Council then adjourned.

## CALCUTTA LATHI CHARGE

*13th. FEBRUARY:*—After interpellations, the Council took up the discussion of the adjournment motion. The House was crowded and the visitors' galleries were full. His Excellency the Governor and Sir Charles Tegart, the Commissioner of Police watched the proceedings from the Governor's seat in the gallery.

Moving the adjournment motion, *Maulavi Jalaluddin Hashemy* said that in connection with the various lathi charges that had been made, he would not hold any high official responsible. Government had already ceased to function and the Government prevailing was the Government of Sir Charles Tegart. It was police Raj and lathi Raj. The outrages of police, he continued, had led Bengalis temporarily to become violent and the responsibility for this was with the police. He would go further and say that he would hold Sir Charles Tegart, directly or indirectly, responsible for the dastardly murder of innocent men like Mr. F. J. Lowman, Mr. N. S. Simpson and others. Knowing the mentality of the Bengali, he added, that the police excesses were responsible for all these regrettable incidents. Describing the lathi charges, he said that the police, like so many mad dogs, fell on Mr. Subash Bose and charged him while he was leading the procession. The speaker remarked that the whole thing was calculated and designed and done only to make a trial of strength with the crowd. The story of brickbats being thrown, he said, was not true for if there was any such motive behind, the crowd could have made a repetition of the occurrences of Peshawar and Sholapur in Calcutta.

Proceeding, he wanted to know why Sir Charles Tegart adopted an attitude contrary to what was taken in other parts of India where the Independence Day celebrations passed off smoothly. He believed it was designed to terrorise people, as was being done by Sir Charles Tegart whom the Bengal Government have given a free hand. In the face of all this, the declarations were mere fine phrases and jugglery of words. If he had any power to shape Bengal politics, he would ask everyone to reject the offer.

Supporting the motion, *Mr. S. M. Bose* said that the police should not have assaulted *Mr. Subhas Bose* and his companions. While admitting that they were engaged in breaking the law, he said that the clear remedy would have been for the police not to assault but to arrest them at the earliest possible opportunity. He realized the difficult position the police were generally put to, but remarked that the action of the latter was unjustified. He appealed to his countrymen not to allow these incidents to be made too much of to the exclusion of all thought for the progress of the country.

Remarking that the assault on the occasion was unjustified and inhuman, *Mr. N. K. Bose* reminded the Government that the 'mills of God grind, though they grind exceedingly small.' The brickbats thrown were non-violent brickbats, he added.

*Dr. N. C. Sen-Gupta* remarked that it was a staggering outrage. The plea of brickbats being thrown was an old plea trotted out whenever the police were injured. But it was difficult to swallow it in this case.

In the opinion of *Mr. J. L. Banerjee*, the whole series of proceedings was carefully thought of and planned beforehand. This lathi charge was made to thwart the whole policy laid down by the Prime Minister and the Viceroy and no more sinister object than this could be conceived of. This method had been deliberately adopted so that the people might disbelieve the generosity and *bona fides* of the Premier's statement. If the Government wanted the people to believe in that statement, let them harmonise their deeds with the declaration. Otherwise if the spirit of that declaration was nullified by such deeds or misdeeds which they committed on the Independence Day and continued to do so, the blame would rest on the Government and on those who authorised and condoned the incident.

*Mr. B. C. Chatterji*, leader of the Nationalist party, demanded to know why *Mr. Subhas Bose* was beaten before arrest. He refused to believe that the Governor had authorised the police to beat him. He also refused to believe that the Home Member did so. Then who had done it? Let the Government find them out and let the Council know how the Government wanted to deal with them.

*Mr. J. N. Basu*, a delegate to the Round Table Conference, wondered why the Government had banned the Independence Day celebration which was allowed in other parts of India, including Bombay, which was said to be an area of greater disturbances. He thought the policy which had led to the incident complained of should not have been given effect to.

*The hon. Mr. D. R. Prentice*, Home Member, replying, said his views on the Premier's declaration and the policy to be followed had not changed and he hoped to be able to make it perfectly clear to the members of the House who were open to reason that their action throughout in connection with the events of Jan. 26 had been dictated by a desire to preserve the atmosphere for which he had pleaded on the previous occasion. He had secured a great deal of information pointing to the fact that there was a deliberate plot to have a demonstration in Calcutta on a large scale. Every effort was being made to get the mill coolies to join in the demonstration and all the information at their disposal pointed to a dangerous concentration of people in Calcutta on Jan. 26. In these circumstances the hon. member thought that no one would deny that the Government would be neglecting their duty if they had not taken steps to prohibit the demonstrations which might have endangered not only the peace of Calcutta but also of other parts of Bengal.

Continuing, *Mr. Prentice* said that one of the speakers had made an attack on *Sir Charles Tegart*. The hon. member protested against the attack and said that whatever was done in this matter was done with the full approval of the Government and the responsibility was with them. After the orders under section 62 of the Police Act had been issued, steps were taken to serve it on various people, one of them being *Mr. Subhas Bose*, because the information at the disposal of the Government showed that whatever was being done in the matter of holding demonstrations was in accordance with the directions of the Working Committee of the Congress. When an officer went to serve the order on *Mr. Bose*, the latter stated that he was going to defy it. This was an open declaration of war and the Government considered it necessary to take further steps to see whether they could not persuade *Mr. Bose* and his colleagues to drop their intention.

Efforts were made to get into touch with *Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose* and finally an intermediary was secured. There were telephonic conversations and on the afternoon of the 25th there was a meeting of various Congress leaders at which the situation was discussed. The Government went out of their way to communicate to that meeting the secret information that they had received about the intention of the

Viceroy to release members of the Working Committee. It was finally decided that one of them would go to Allahabad and try to persuade the leaders there to call off the demonstration. It was also arranged that if that mission failed, there should be preventive arrests of four, one of them being Mr. Bose. It was arranged that these preventive arrests should take place at their residence and that they should be detained until the evening when they would be released, for it was admitted that if the leaders were put under arrest there was practically no chance of any disturbance occurring. It was agreed that the Commissioner of Police should wait until 11 o'clock on the 26th before he took action.

But as a matter of fact further time was given and it was not until 1 p. m. that the Commissioner of Police acted. He then arrested three of the leaders. The fourth, Mr. Bose, was found to be not at home and in spite of the requests made to him by some of his friends he refused to return home and said that he was sitting as Mayor in the Mayoral chair to transact Mayoral business in the Corporation office. It was obviously impossible for the Government to arrest the Mayor in the Corporation office. There was nothing to show that he had changed his mind and that he still intended to defy the order openly. Arrangements were made on the Maidan and a large number of people collected during the afternoon. The area round the Ochterlony monument was generally kept clear and finally a number of women forced their way through, but they were not interfered with by the police. Somewhere about 4-20 p. m. Mr. Bose suddenly emerged from the Corporation office, accompanied by a crowd of 500, and proceeded down Corporation Street towards the Maidan.

Mr. Prentice continued that according to the report which was recorded immediately afterwards by the Deputy Commissioner of the south district, Mr. Bose was waving a large tri-coloured flag. As the procession came towards the Maidan, it was joined by about 3,000 people from all sides. At the crossing of Chowringhee Road and Corporation Street, it was stopped by constables and mounted police. The Assistant Commissioner of Police, south district, distributed six copies of the Commissioner's order to some of the people who were forming the bodyguard of Mr. Bose and explained to them that they could not go on further and ought to disperse. Instead of obeying the order, Mr. Bose rushed forward, followed by the crowd which started throwing brickbats, and the Deputy Commissioner directed the Assistant Commissioner to arrest Mr. Bose.

The Home Member referred to the judgments of the Chief Presidency Magistrate and of the High Court, both of whom had mentioned that brickbats were thrown at the police by the crowd and that Mr. Bose was arrested subsequent to this attack. No one regretted the occurrence more than the Government and he thought that all fair-minded Members of the House would realise that the Government had done everything possible to prevent it occurring and to secure Mr. Bose against the consequence of his action. But he himself had forced the occurrence by breaking the agreement which had been arrived at and acting dishonestly, both to the Government and to his fellow members of the Congress. The amount of violence used by the police was not at all excessive.

The Government, concluded the Home Member, had throughout acted in order to maintain a calm atmosphere in accordance with the spirit of the Prime Minister's declaration and if their efforts had failed it was Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and not the police who was responsible.

The closure was next put and lost by 61 votes to 37 and the requisite two hours having been over, the President, the hon. Raja of Santosh declared that the adjournment motion had automatically fallen through. The Council then adjourned to 16th.

#### THE JUTE RESTRICTION BILL

16th. FEBRUARY:—A non-official *Bill to regulate and control the production of Jute* in the province was introduced in the Council to-day which eventually decided to circulate it to elicit public opinion by March 30th.

The mover, *Dr. N. C. Sen Gupta* stated that the present economic crisis in Bengal was due to over-production of jute, and world depression had only intensified it. What was wanted was that production of jute should be systematically regulated in relation to its demand so that the cultivator might obtain a reasonably high price for their produce. The Government policy of non-interference in his opinion was inexplicable. The Bill provided for the creation of a Central Board to deal with the problem while the actual work of regulation of jute production would be done through the agency of Union Boards. Care had been taken to see that the work was

done by people's representatives and not by a strictly official agency. The Bill did not provide for compulsory restriction, but left the matter to the Government to make rules providing procedure for securing the voluntary compliance of the cultivators.

*The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur K. G. M. Faroqui*, Minister for Agriculture, supporting the circulation motion, explained that the Government had already undertaken propaganda to restrict the area of jute production. They however trusted that the situation was temporary and would soon pass away.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

**17th. FEBRUARY:**—The Council rejected to-day, by 61 votes to 37, the resolution of *Moulavi Jalaluddin Hashemy* recommending to Government that all political prisoners placed in Division III should at once be placed in Division II.

An amendment to place them in Division I was lost without a division.

There was a spirited debate over Mr. Hashemy's motion, the mover remarking that his proposition was one of peace.

Mr. Hashemy said that the clothing given to the prisoners who were not guilty of offences involving moral turpitude was totally inadequate, while the diet was unfit for human consumption. He concluded that if the Government did not accept his proposal, the speaker was sure the Government would be either facing a mutiny or hunger-strike in every jail in the province.

The present classification was objected to as being iniquitous and unjustified by a number of non-official members.

*Mr. Hutchings*, Deputy Secretary, Jails Department, speaking claimed that they maintained the prisoners at a standard as high as in the rest of the provinces and nearly three times as high as the general standard in the town of Calcutta.

#### REDUCTION OF MINISTERS' SALARIES

**18th. FEBRUARY:**—A non-official resolution proposing the alteration of the pay of Ministers to Rs. 4000 per month was lost in the Council to-day without a division.

Other resolutions seeking to reduce the salary of Ministers to Rs. 3,000 per month, and recommending to the Governor the appointment of two Ministers were similarly defeated.

The amendment of Mr. B. C. Chatterjee, leader of the Nationalist Party, recommending to His Excellency the appointment of four Ministers, within the budget provision of Rs. 1,92,000 was eventually withdrawn, with the leave of the House. Mr. Chatterjee wanted an equal number of Hindus and Mahomedans in the Ministry so as to enable the two communities to work on a united political platform for the common benefit of the Motherland.

*Mr. Abul Kasem* opposed the motion, but he said he was glad to hear the sentiments expressed by Mr. Chatterjee and declared that Mahomedans would like this principle to be followed. He asked the people at large and those in authority to see that communal equality was brought about in the provincial, subordinate and ministerial services without the least delay.

*Mr. N. K. Basu* did not approve of a settlement of Hindu-Moslem differences by a division of the spoils, which he thought was neither the easiest nor the real way of settling the problem.

On behalf of the non-official Europeans Mr. W. L. Travers opposed the motions and said that, having regard to the fact that they had two Mahomedan Ministers and one Hindu, a resolution of this kind was bound to raise communal feeling to a certain extent in the future.

Opposing the *Home Member* pointed out that the decision of the Council up-to-now was to pay the same amount to Ministers and Executive Councillors and until a contrary decision was arrived at by the House on a proper occasion in connection with the budget grant, the Government would oppose the resolution for reduction of salary. He, however, promised to communicate the proceedings of the day to the Governor for any action His Excellency might think proper, but the Government would oppose any recommendation to be made to His Excellency for a change.

#### Budget for 1931-32

**23rd. FEBRUARY:**—Presenting the budget estimates for 1931-32 to-day the hon. Mr. A. Marr, Finance Member, said that the world-wide depression in trade

and commerce and the civil disobedience movement were responsible for a drop of Rs. 93,90,000 in the revenue of Bengal as estimated in the budget 1930-31 and the prospects of the next year appeared to be even more gloomy. The extra expenditure under police, administration of justice, special tribunals, detenus and civil works had been calculated at Rs. 28,50,000. Added to that the fall in revenue under excise, land revenue, registration, forest and stamp showed a diminished closing balance of Rs. 44,90,000 as against one crore which had hitherto been considered the margin of safety. For 1931-32 the total estimated receipts were Rs. 11,17,10,000 and the estimated expenditure Rs. 12,25,76,000, showing a net excess of expenditure of Rs. 1,08,66,000. Meeting this deficit by the opening balance of Rs. 44,90,000 the Government would have still to borrow Rs. 94,67,000. (64,67,000 ?)

The Finance Member added that the increased expenditure which the Government had to face on account of the subversive political movement had made them realise early in the year that general retrenchment would be necessary. Stringent orders to effect economy were passed and the budget was thoroughly examined.

In the course of his speech, the Finance Member assured the house that the educational grant to non-Government arts colleges, which was withheld this year, had been provided in full for the next year. "Hitherto" declared the Finance Member, "a closing balance of one crore of rupees has been regarded as the minimum margin of safety. It has, inspite of drastic economies, fallen well below that minimum and next year will see even our present small margin disappear." The grant of Rs. 1,29,000 to non-Government Arts Colleges which was withheld this year has been provided in full next year.

#### General Discussion of Budget

*2nd. MARCH* :—When the general discussion of the Budget started to-day, a strong plea for the appointment of a Retrenchment Committee was put forward. While some attacked the increased grant to the Police, there were others who did not minimise the responsibility of those whose activities resulted in the dislocation of the economic equilibrium of the country.

Kumar Shibekhareswar Ray, Ex-Minister, on behalf of the landholders, brought to the notice of the house their precarious condition as having not been able to collect even a quarter of their dues from tenants. He urged the Government to come to the rescue either by arranging with the Imperial Bank to advance loan proportionate to the Government revenue or in the alternative to borrow money and advance it to the landholders at a high rate of interest, making it the first charge on the estate. The Council at this stage adjourned.

Next day, the *3rd. March*, about a dozen members participated in the discussion criticising it from different standpoints with special reference to the effect of the civil disobedience movement upon the budget.

General satisfaction was expressed on the fall of 47 lakhs in the next year's revenue from Excise and the suggestion was made for the appointment of a sub-committee to prepare a scheme of total prohibition.

Maulavi Jalaluddin Hashemy apologised to the President for issuing a statement to the press questioning the ruling of the Chair with regard to the refusal of his adjournment motion on the dismissal of the jute mill workers yesterday.

Explaining why he refused leave for Mr. Hashemy's motion, the President said that he asked the mover to convince him of three points, namely, whether the mills were outside or inside their private rights in dismissing the men, whether the mover ascribed any motives to the Government for having been instrumental in any way for inciting the Indian Jute Mills Association and whether there was any likelihood of any breach of the public peace. As none of the points were answered by the mover, the President was under the impression that the mover would withdraw the motion but he was surprised when he saw the statement. As the mover had come forward with a graceful apology he added everything had ended happily.

Mr. N. K. Basu criticised the increased grant to the police, as they, in the name of law and order, indulged in lawless acts, and even terrorised subordinate Magistrates.

Maulvi Jalaluddin Hashemy complained that, inspite of the complaints to the Commissioner of Police, gambling was going on in the heart of the city ruining poor families.

Mr. Shamprasad Mukherji, as the representative of the Calcutta University, pleaded for an early settlement of the University's claim for financial assistance as upon it its very existence depended. Provision of one lakh for the Governor's body-guard, in his opinion, was an anachronism in a democratic age.



Mr. Khwaja Salimuddin opined that the Government's policy in keeping the masses in illiteracy was making it easy for the discontented politician to exploit the masses to his advantage and the only drastic remedy was mass education.

The Council at this stage adjourned till March 17 when voting on grants commenced.

#### Voting on Budget Grants

*17th. MARCH*:—Voting on the budget grants commenced to-day when the entire demand of Rs. 41,11,000 for Land Revenue was sanctioned without a cut.

Replying to the Raja of Nashipur who, by a token cut, raised the question of giving relief to landholders, Sir P. C. Mitter, Revenue Member, announced amidst applause that in view of the economic distress, the Government would charge a nominal penalty in case of failure to pay the next *kist* in time.

Mr. B. P. Singha Roy, Minister, moving for a grant of Rs. 20,06,000 for Excise, outlined the policy of the Government in this respect. He said that for the past few years the Government had been pursuing a policy of minimum consumption of alcoholic liquor and drugs. For more than one reason it had not been possible to adopt prohibition as their goal. There was always difficulty in making a country dry by legislation and the results obtained, in other countries such as America and Bombay, had not proved quite happy.

European members applauded the Minister, as he concluded his speech.

Next day, *the 18th. March*, the Council sanctioned the entire demand of Mr. B. P. Singha Roy without a cut.

Sir Abdel Karim Ghuznavi moved a demand for Rs. 10,35,000 for forests. The demand was being discussed when the Council adjourned.

Next day, *the 19th. MARCH*, the entire demands for Forests as well as Registration and Scheduled Taxes, totalling over 31 lakhs were sanctioned without any reduction.

By a cut of Rs. 100 a non-official member led a crusade against betting and gambling on races, the "vice" in his opinion, being of British import. It was ruinous and ought to be penalised. The Finance Member, replying, maintained that the tax was intended to decrease betting and the tendency was towards a steady decline. The motion was lost.

In connection with the demand for Rs. 44,83,000 for Irrigation, Sir A. K. Ghuznavi said that Government hoped to establish in the near future a waterways trust as was recommended by the Irrigation Committee to deal with the waterways problem. The demand was under consideration when the Council adjourned.

*20th. MARCH*:—The Council voted to-day the total demand of Sir Abdel Karim Ghuznavi for Irrigation.

#### REDUCTION OF MINISTER'S SALARIES.

In connection with the demand of the Home Member, for Rs. 1,03,32,000 for general administration, the question of the salaries of the Ministers was raised.

Mr. Hasan Ali proposed to reduce the salaries by half, while Mr. N. K. Basu wanted to fix their salaries at Rs. 3,000. Both made it clear that these were purely economic cuts. Pointing out that while Ministers and Executive Councillors in the United Provinces and Central Provinces had agreed to take a lesser amount, they appealed to the Bengal Ministers to agree to the amount suggested in view of the economic distress of the country. In India, where a "half naked man" conferred with the representative of the King Emperor, it was idle to suggest that money alone helped the man to keep up his prestige and secure for them the confidence of the whole House. Discussion had not concluded when the Council adjourned.

*21st. MARCH*:—The motions of Messrs Hasan Ali and N. K. Basu to reduce the Ministers' salaries were defeated by the Council to-day.

Mr. J. N. Basu, Liberal Leader, opposed the cuts as he did not like to make any invidious distinction in the pay of the Executive Councillors and Ministers, while Mr. W. L. Travers thought that the reduction would be taken by a certain section of the people in Bengal as a vote of "no-confidence" in the Ministry.

Mr. A. Marr, Finance Member, asked the House to adhere to its previous decision for equal pay to the two halves of the Government. They would soon have a new Government and questions of pay would form an important part of the discussion

at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. He added that so long as the Executive Councillors were given a higher pay, it would not be desirable from the political point of view to cut down the Ministers' salaries.

An appeal was made by some sections of the House to the Ministers to express their views on the subject, but none of them responded.

The motions were lost without division.

**23rd. MARCH** :—The first official defeat in connection with the demands for grants was recorded to-day, when by 65 votes to 34 a rupee cut was carried, amidst applause, to draw the attention of the Government to the desirability of taking immediate steps to amend the Usurious Loans Act with a view to fixing the maximum rates of interest. Barring this, the total demand of the Home Member for Rs. 1,03,32,000 for General Administration was sanctioned.

**24th. MARCH** :—All parties in the Council, including non-official Europeans, carried a short notice motion of Mr. P. N. Guha (nominated) protesting against the proposal of the Government of India to impose a further duty of four and half annas per maund on all imported salt and to give rebate to Aden merchants. This, in the opinion of the Council, was "unjust and inequitable, and calculated to throw an unfair burden on the people of Bengal." The Bengal Government was requested immediately to urge the Government of India to abandon it.

Mr. P. N. Guha said that this additional duty would penalise Bengal alone to the tune of 35 lakhs annually. Bengal's grievance with regard to salt would never be removed unless the salt industry was revived. Uttering a note of warning, he said if the price of salt was further raised, Bengal ryots were not likely to remain idle, but would revive the agitation started twelve months ago, and manufacture their own salt.

Mr. C. G. Cooper, on behalf of the non-official Europeans, supporting the motion, said that the recommendation of the Assembly Committee was largely engineered by Bombay merchants. They found a ready and willing support from the Government of India, who now obeyed the behest of Bombay to the shame of Bengal.

In the opinion of Mr. J. L. Bannerjee (Congress), the proposed duty, far from helping the indigenous industry, would smother it. He refused to submit to this exorbitant extortion of the Government of India, which imposed this duty only for the benefit of a group of speculative merchants operating from Bombay. The question was whether Bombay should prosper at the cost of Bengal.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. Marr, Leader of the House, promised to telegraph the result of the debate to the Government of India.

**25th MARCH** :—By 54 votes to 26 votes the adjournment motion of Moulvi Jalaluddin Hashemy to discuss the "serious situation that has arisen in the city in regard to the Delhi Agreement by the execution of Bhagat Singh and other Lahore prisoners" was lost in the Council to-day. Most of the elected Hindu members were absent.

Prior to the opening of the debate, Mr. W. L. Travers, on behalf of the European group, made an emphatic protest against the discussion of the motion as it would accentuate the racial feeling and do great disservice to the country.

The trend of the speeches was that the bureaucracy had done it designedly to nullify the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement.

The Home Member, speaking on behalf of the Government, recognised that there was a very deep public feeling in various directions, but he sincerely hoped that reflection would bring about a wide realisation of the transcendent necessity of working out the Delhi Agreement and of bringing in a future which would be happier than the present.

**26th. MARCH** :—Without a cut the Council sanctioned to-day the total demand of the Home Member for Rs. 1,99,88,000 for police.

An attempt was made by Mr. N. K. Basu to censure the Government for "the misguided activities of the Jessore District Police" during June to October 1930, when a number of respectable people of Jessore were subjected to ill-treatment at the hands of the police, especially of the Superintendent of Police, who, Mr. Basu said, slapped the face of Mr. Amritlal Roy an old man, and ex-Professor of the Narail Victoria College.

Replying to the Home Member's question, Mr. Basu said one of the cases was brought to the notice of a superior officer, and another was published in the papers. Mr. Basu's motion was pressed to a division and was lost by 60 votes to 36, a majority of the Mahomedans joining the officials and the European group.

Mr. R. Maity, by a cut motion of Rs. 1,000, criticised "the excesses of the police in Midnapore in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement." The time-limit having been reached, there was no reply from the Home Member. The motion was lost and the original demand was then passed.

**27th. MARCH:—**The Council passed to-day the entire demand of the Education Minister for Rs. 1,15,43,000 for education.

Several Mahomedan members raised the question of Moslems in the Senate, Syndicate and other University bodies in this connection, and pointed out that there was not a single Mahomedan on the clerical staff of the University.

The member for the University welcomed more Moslems in the Senate but pointed out that during the last 25 years, the University had received benefactions to the extent of fifty lakhs from Hindus, while Moslem contribution during the period was only Rs. 10,000. He asked the Moslem community to create public opinion so that the more wealthy of its members might come forward with benefactions. So far as the Hindus were concerned they had no grudge and they felt that their interests were safe in the hands of the Education Minister and the Vice-Chancellor of the University both of whom were Mahomedans.

Moulvi Abdus Samad remarked that to impute selfishness and partiality to the Hindus was nothing short of a gross perversion of the truth. He had reasons to believe that Moslem communalists were playing the game of the bureaucracy, and helping it in the policy of divide and rule.

Mr. W. L. Travers, on behalf of the European group, appealed to both the communities to co-operate with the Education Minister.

A token motion by which discussion was raised was withdrawn.

**28th. MARCH:—**The Council passed to-day, without cut, the demand of Mr. Bijoy Prasad Sinha Roy, Minister, for Rs. 41,81,000 for public health. The Minister was of opinion that the health of Bengal was showing signs of improvement. He narrated the steps taken by the department concerned in this direction but regretted that, owing to financial stringency, several new schemes had to be postponed.

**30th. MARCH:—**Barring a rupee cut, the entire budget grants of the Government as presented were sanctioned to-day. In connection with a supplementary grant for the detention camps at Buxa and Hijli, non-official members by a cut urged upon the Government the necessity of releasing detenus in view of the fact that the cause of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement would therefore be furthered.

The Home Member assured the House that, conditions permitting, they would release detenus with pleasure, but from what had happened, he could not see that the Irwin-Gandhi settlement had any effect on terrorists. There was no indication whatever that people who were responsible for the revolutionary movement had decided to drop that policy and adopt one of non-violence.

The Home Member said that the number of persons so far dealt with under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act was 506. The Government had released one, who was found to be lunatic and sent him to the asylum. Two were convicted for specific offences, one was still absconding. In two cases, the Government cancelled the previous order. The Government also refused to pass orders in the case of 68 persons who were discharged. Of the remaining 431 detenus 12 were directed to notify their residences to the police, seven were interned in their homes and five in the villages. One was externed from Bengal. The Home Member added that the Government were considering the question of home domicile of 20 others. Of the remaining 386, 157 were detained at Buxa and 90 at Hijli. The Government however hoped to transfer all the prisoners in the near future to Hijli camp and to intern them there. He assured the House that none was interned unless the Home Member was personally satisfied that a *prima facie* case had been made out against him. The cut motion was lost, and the original demand carried. *The Council was then prorogued,*

# THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

President:—Hon. Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi

The Budget session of the Madras Legislative Council commenced at Madras on the 24th. FEBRUARY 1931. Presenting the Budget the Hon. Mr. H. C. Stokes, Finance Member, said that the current year would close with a deficit of 56.39 lakhs to be met from the balances.

Taking the receipt side for 1930-31 he said land revenue, excise and stamps showed a decrease of 16.39 and 16 lakhs respectively.

Turning to Budget estimates for 1931-32, the Finance Member said that the Government anticipated a fairly normal season and some increase in miscellaneous revenue. The heavy fall of 29.47 lakhs was anticipated under excise, stamps and registration. The Government had budgeted a slight increase hoping a slight recovery in trade conditions within the next 12 months.

Concluding the Finance Member said: "If I am asked to select a motto to be placed at the head of our Budget, it would be 'festina lente' which being freely interpreted means wait and see. Times call for caution and it is in this spirit that the budget has been prepared."

The Chief Minister, next presented the Select Committee's report on the *Motor Vehicles Taxation Bill* and moved its consideration.

Before this two petitions were presented to the House by two members on behalf of the Madras taxi owners' and bus owners' associations respectively urging postponement of consideration of the Bill. Further discussion on the bill was adjourned.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

The general discussion on the budget which commenced on the 27th. FEBRUARY concluded on the 3rd MARCH. The Home Member replied to the criticisms relating to police excesses and maintained that the police discharged their duties satisfactorily.

The Law Member referring to the classification of political prisoners did not hold the convicting magistrates responsible in determining the classification as they refused to give the required information.

Summing up the debate, the Finance Member referring to the reduction of official salaries recalled the speech of the Finance Member in the Assembly and said that the question would be considered at Simla at the conference between Finance Members of all the provinces probably shortly after the Budget session of the Assembly.

Sir Mahomed Usmau, Home Member, replying to the criticisms levelled against the Police department, said that two cases of the alleged beating of volunteers by policemen reported in the press were brought to the notice of the Police Commissioner who after enquiry stated that there was absolutely no truth in the said report. It was stated that if the police did not interfere when picketing took place there would not be any trouble. To test that an order was issued on Jan. 26 to withdraw the police and the result was that picketing attracted large crowds which dislocated the traffic and the Commissioner found that the experiment could not be continued as that might lead to a disturbance of the peace.

## THE GANDHI-IRWIN AGREEMENT

12th. MARCH:—The galleries were crowded when the Council reassembled to-day after a short recess in anticipation of an interesting discussion on the resolution, notice of which was given by the Kumararaja of Venkatagiri. After questions and some official business the Kumararaja moved his resolution: "This Council expresses its profound joy and gratitude at the successful termination of the conversations between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi and expresses its heartfelt appreciation of the inexhaustible patience, industry and courtesy of the Viceroy in bringing about that result. This Council hopes that the spirit of mutual trust which has prevailed so far will enable a dispassionate consideration of the future scheme of constitution and lead to a speedy and satisfactory settlement of the status of India as an equal partner of the British Commonwealth of Nations and promotion of

cordial relations between England and India. This Council requests that this message be communicated to the Viceroy,

Dr. Subbaroyan seconded the Kumar Raja of Venkatagiri's motion on the Irwin-Gandhi agreement.

Mr. A. Y. H. Campbell, Revenue Member, speaking on behalf of the Government, associated himself with the terms of the motion and said that the Government appreciated the part played by Mr. Gandhi in arriving at the settlement. As far as the Government were concerned they were going to carry out the terms willingly. He said that the settlement was the beginning of a new era and hoped that all parties and classes would combine together to determine the future of India.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

**13th. MARCH:**—Voting on budget demands commenced in the Council to-day. The Revenue Member's demand for Rs. 27,42,000 for land revenue administration was first considered.

The opposition benches availed of his opportunity to criticise the Government's assessment policy. Swami Venkatachalam Chetty said that Government cannot kill the goose that lays the golden eggs and demand assessment on a statutory basis. Mr. Chetty disapproved of the policy of the Government enhancing the assessment.

Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan moved a token cut to discuss the Government's land revenue policy and resettlement operations. Several members who tabled identical motions supported the mover.

The Revenue Member having replied, the motion was pressed to a division and carried by 38 against 30 votes.

**14th MARCH:**—The Council voted to-day the budget demand under excise in full. The cut motion for criticising Government's excise policy and urging the introduction of total prohibition was rejected by 43 against 17 votes.

After the Excise demand was voted the demand under the head 'Stamps, reserved,' was taken up.

Mr. Ramalingam Chettiyar's cut motion to urge the reduction of the stamp fee (judicial and non-judicial) and its restoration to the old rate was carried by 35 votes against 29.

#### LATHI CHARGE AT GUNTUR AND UDIPI

**15th MARCH:**—At question time in the Council to-day, replying to a short notice question regarding the lathi charge in Guntur on March 6 after the Gandhi-Irwin agreement and the arrest of Mr. Konda Venkatappayya, the Home Member said that lathis were used to disperse a contumacious mob and eleven of them and six or seven police constables received injuries which were reported by the district medical officer to be of a trivial nature. Mr. Venkatappayya who was arrested on March 6 was released on the 7th on receipt of the Governor-General's instructions to withdraw all orders under sec. 147 and also all pending prosecutions in cases not involving violence.

The Home Member added that they had asked the district authorities to endeavour to obviate clashes between the public and the police so far as was consistent with the prevention of disorder. Concluding, he said that nobody regretted more than the Government for what had happened.

**17th. MARCH:**—Sir Mahomed Usman, Home Member, replying to a supplementary question in the Council to-day regarding the alleged lathi charge at Udipi on January 26 said: "We may let bygones be bygones, especially now after the peace settlement between Government and the Congress." He added that it would be better if both Government and the opposition turned attention to constructive work with regard to the future constitution.

The demand under head the Executive Councils (reserved) over which the policy of extending the term of Executive Councillors was criticised yesterday through Sami Venkatachalam's cut motion was voted in its entirety to-day after another cut urging the necessity of re-distribution of the provinces on the linguistic basis, was lost by 36 votes against 50.

Mr. Abdul Hamed Khan raised discussion by a token cut to protest against Government's action in demanding security from "Dravidan", a Tamil daily, without giving any reason and without specifying the articles to which objection was taken and also in demanding security from "Swarajya"

The Home Member said that security from "Dravidan" was demanded only after warning the paper thrice against objectionable articles. Regarding "Swarajya" the

Home Member said that now that the Ordinance was repealed there was no need to consider the question. He added that what had happened in the past need not be raked up and what the Government wanted was a spirit of friendship. The cut was rejected, 21 voting for and 56 against.

**18th. MARCH:**—The Council passed a condolence resolution touching the death on March 13 of Mr. S. N. Doraraj, a nominated member.

The demand number thirteen for grant under jails amounting to Rs. 27,27,700 was voted in full when severe criticism was levelled against jail administration regarding the quality of diet supplied, form of punishment meted out for slight prison offences, release of Moplah prisoners etc. Non-Officials urged the necessity of the appointment of a Committee to enquire into prison administration.

The Law Member replying said that everything should be done regarding the points raised. Regarding the appointment of a committee of enquiry the Law Member assured that the Government would give serious consideration to the suggestion.

The house then discussed the demand for police grant amounting to Rs. 163,33,900. Non-Officials headed by Mr. Subbaroyan urged for an enquiry into the post-truce police excesses.

The Home Member wanted specific instances brought to him as he would order limited enquiry into the same.

The grant was voted in full.

**19th. MARCH:**—The police administration was severely criticised in the Council on a token cut in the police demand by Mr. Mahomed Schammad, who urged *inter alia* the disbandment of the Malabar special police, pointing out that it was unnecessary under the existing conditions in Malabar.

Dr. Subbaroyan, the Opposition leader, complained against the *lathi* charges in Guntur and Peddapuram after the Delhi agreement, and hoped that the Home Member would hold an impartial enquiry.

Sir Mahomed Usman, replying, said that the sub-inspector responsible for the *lathi* charge at Peddapuram had been placed under suspension pending further enquiry and that the action of the police officer at Guntur would be enquired into. Concluding, he said, that it was his duty to see law and order maintained and promote good feeling between the police and the public.

The mover withdrew the cut and the police demand was voted in full.

**23rd. MARCH:**—When the demand for the education grant came up before the Council to-day a strong plea for compulsory elementary education was made by Mr. Ramalingam Chettiar of Coimbatore who moved a token cut to discuss the educational policy of the Government supported by several other members of various parties. Strong objection was raised by Mr. Panairselvam to the system of mixed schools for both boys and girls.

**26th. MARCH:**—Government's industrial policy evoked much criticism in the Council to-day, when the demand for grant for industries was made.

Sir A. P. Patro complained that no attempt had been made to improve the industry in the province during the last three years. He strongly urged the ministry to encourage spinning and weaving so that it might supplement the income of the labourer. He also appealed the ministry to support the Swadeshi movement from the economic point of view.

Dr. Subbaroyan wanted khaddar to be encouraged as an economic problem and said that it deserved support as it helped the agriculturists.

The Minister, replying, promised to do all he could to encourage khaddar and Swadeshi.

**27th. MARCH:**—The Minister for Development introduced the *Madras Co-operative Societies Bill* in the Council to-day and a select committee consisting of 55 members was constituted to consider the Bill. One member suggested that all non-official members of the House should be members of the select committee. This motion when pressed was lost; the mover alone voting for it.

The remaining demands for grants was voted on the next day, the 28th March, when, after the guillotine was applied, the Council was prorogued,

# The U. P. Legislative Council

President:—Sir Lala Sitaram

The Budget Session of the U. P. Legislative Council opened at Lucknow on the 11th. February 1931. At the outset glowing tributes of respect and admiration were paid to Pandit Motilal Nehru and Moulana Mahomed Ali by numerous speakers. Rai Rajeswar Bali, ex-Minister and Deputy Leader of the Nationalist Party, set the ball rolling and other speakers included Mr. J. C. Smith, Finance Member, the Nawab of Chattari, the Home Member, and Nawab Yusuf, Minister.

Sir Lala Sitaram, President, in his concluding speech, feelingly referred to the dazzling self-sacrifice of Pandit Motilal Nehru, and adjourned the House till the next day as a mark of respect to the memory of the two illustrious sons of India.

12th. FEBRUARY:—At to-day's meeting of the Council, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was elected Deputy President by 53 votes, against 49 votes secured by the rival candidate Kunwar Surendrapratap Sahi.

The Council voted to-day supplementary grants aggregating to over seventeen lakhs for the current financial year without any discussion. The grants voted included an item of three lakhs for anti-locust operation, and another item of nearly three lakhs for additional expenditure by the Police Department. It was explained that abnormal conditions of the year were responsible for the increased expenditure both under the C. I. D. and the District police. Terrorist activities and the launching of the civil disobedience movement necessitated the entertainment of additional forces and the formation of special armed police reserves at seven different centres in the province. Large forces of police had to be moved constantly at short notice. The result had been an unavoidable increase under allowances and contingencies.

A similar explanation was added in connection with the additional provision of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lakh under General Administration.

The Council discussed to-day the settlement forecasts of several districts in the province. In the course of the debate Mr. J. C. Smith, Finance Member, gave out that there was going to be "a lamentable tale of provincial finances" when the budget would be presented on the 18th instant.

14th. FEBRUARY:—The Council carried unanimously to-day two resolutions urging the transfer to State control of the Bengal and North Western Railway and the Rohilkhand Kumaon Railway as well as the Bareilly-Lucknow Section now managed by the latter Railway, with effect from the end of 1932, when the existing contracts are due to expire.

17th. FEBRUARY:—The Council held a brief sitting to-day and discussed only one non-official resolution urging the appointment of a committee to examine the present agrarian situation and to recommend measures of relief for zamindars and tenants to remain in force so long as low prices prevailed. The mover and his supporters maintained that the cost of cultivation far exceeded the yield in price of produce, the loss per acre being roughly one hundred. The tenants had no money and could not pay rents. The present distress if unalleviated would be a source of great trouble and danger to the State.

Speaking on behalf of the Government, Mr. J. C. Smith, Finance Member and Mr. T. Sloan, Revenue Secretary, both assured the Council that the Government were fully alive of the position, and were doing their best to meet it but much depended on the result of rabi sowing. A Committee would serve no useful purpose. On the contrary, it would entail some expenditure. The resolution was carried.

## BENARES DISTURBANCES

Replying to a short notice question by Chowdhury Jaggannath Dom, Mr. J. C. Smith, Finance Member, gave details of the recent Benares disturbances. The position was better there since Sunday last. There were only two cases of assault

yesterday, and none till noon to-day. The total casualties since the outbreak were 17 killed and over 200 injured.

The Council then adjourned.

#### Budget for 1931-32

**18th. FEBRUARY**:—Mr. J. C. Smith, Finance Member, presented to-day the Budget for 1931-32. The Budget estimates are surprisingly sanguine and in framing them the following vital assumptions have been made: (1) the normal monsoon, (2) the hardening of the prices of agricultural produce together with the fall in prices of these commodities which the agriculturist generally purchases, (3) the willingness of the people to pay their dues as far as they are able, (4) the relaxation of the campaign of civil disobedience in the various phases.

The revenue for 1931-32, inclusive of recovery of 64 lakhs carried forward as special arrears from the current year, is put down at 13 crores and 26 lakhs, the expenditure charged to revenue at 12 crores and 56 lakhs, the capital receipts at 1 crore 88 lakhs and the debt head disbursements at 1 crore and 90½ lakhs. The current year is assumed to close with a net deficit of about one half lakhs, that is to say, the budget year will open with a minus balance of the same figure. But according to the Budget for 1931-32 it is a revenue surplus budget to the extent of roughly 70 lakhs. In the Budget for 1930-31, the estimated revenue was at 12 crores 84 lakhs. The corresponding revised figure is 12 crores and 29½ lakhs. The expenditure for 1930-31 inclusive of supplementary estimates voted from time to time was put down at 12 crores 79 lakhs. The revised estimate is 12 crores 79½ lakhs. The fall in price and the Civil Disobedience Movement were responsible for the decrease in revenue in 1930-31 to the extent of 95 lakhs. Of this amount, two items concerning land revenue and irrigation dues and totalling 64 lakhs are at present regarded as postponed payment and carried forward to the budget year.

#### COURT-FEES AMENDMENT BILL.

After the presentation of the Budget the Finance Member introduced the *Court-Fees Amendment Bill* and moved its reference to a select committee. The Bill aimed at the enhancement of provincial revenue by 15 lakhs.

The Finance Member explained that the Government intended to put the provincial finances on a sound basis before their approaching transfer to popular control. Except one nominated member, non-officials in a body opposed the motion, suggesting drastic retrenchment before further taxation. Several speakers urged reduction of salaries of public servants in view of the fall in prices. The motion for reference to a select committee was rejected by 60 votes to 25. The Council then adjourned till the 9th March.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

**9th. MARCH**:—The Council met to-day for the general discussion of the Budget. Eleven members spoke during the day including Mrs. J. P. Srivastava who, in the course of her speech, suggested that the Council should pay greater attention to the needs of women, particularly in regard to education, and maternity and child welfare. She mentioned that, for want of adequate medical attention, every other child born in Cawnpore died in infancy. Other speakers suggested the appointment of a retrenchment committee and the reduction of the salaries of highly paid Government servants and also of University Professors.

The majority of the members, speaking on the next day, the **10th. March**, advocated drastic retrenchment, including reduction of the salaries of Government servants, and pressed for the appointment of a retrenchment Committee.

Messrs. *Chintamani* and *Desanges* and the *Nawab of Chattari* and *Nawab Yusuf* all expressed their deep-felt satisfaction at the termination of the civil disobedience movement as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin settlement, and hoped that the participation of the dominant political party in India in the next Conference would result in an agreed constitution acceptable to all parties in the country.

**11th. MARCH**:—The Council dispersed to-day after a brief sitting during which a resolution regarding the loan programme for the budget year was considered. The building programme for the next year will be very much restricted, and confined only to completion of the works already under construction.



In the course of the debate, the *Finance Member* stated that the financial outlook was worse than what was anticipated in the budget. The recent untimely rains and hailstorms had seriously affected the prospects of *rabi* crops, and would add greatly to the difficulty of tenants in the payment of rents and revenue.

*Mr. Chintamani*, in his speech said that, according to the information available to the Indian members of the Round Table Conference, the whole of Sir Malcolm Hailey's great ability and influence had been exerted in England on behalf of the political progress of India and if the unwritten history of those weeks of December 1930 could be seen by any one, it would be realised to what extent the people of India were indebted to the advice that Sir Malcolm gave to His Majesty's Government.

#### VOTING ON BUDGET GRANTS

*12th. MARCH*:—Voting on Budget grants commenced on this day and the *Police Budget* was discussed at the outset.

The Nawab of Chattari, Home Member, moving the demand for one crore and 64 lakhs said, that as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, the Government would have to bear the cost of the additional punitive police in several districts. The Government accepted reductions under several items to the tune of Rs. 40,000.

The Council carried, by a large majority, a motion urging the abolition of the post of the personal assistant to the Inspector-General of Police, and another motion urging that an officer of the provincial service should be appointed to the post of second assistant.

A token cut of one rupee was also carried asking for the removal of the invidious distinctions between provincial service and Imperial Service Police Officers.

The Home Member said that these would not disappear unless the two services were combined and it was beyond the power of the Local Government to combine them. The debate on police demand was not finished when the Council adjourned.

*13th. MARCH*:—A lump reduction of Rs. 25,000 was accepted to-day as a probable saving on account of the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement by the Congress. The entire police demand, less Rs. 79,508 which was the aggregate of the reductions made by the Council was voted.

The *Forest Demand* of Rs. 38,64,859 was next considered. The Council reduced the demand by Rs. 35,000 under different sub-heads, and voted the balance. Demands under the heads 'stationery' and 'printing' loan and hydro-electric works not charged to revenue and irrigation and hydro-electric establishment charges were voted in full.

In the demand of Rs. 39,19,700 under the head "*irrigation works expenditure charged to revenue*," the Council made a lump reduction of Rs. 5,000 as a measure of economy.

#### MOTION FOR "CUT" IN C. I. D. DEMAND

At the end of to-day's sitting Sir Lala Sitaram, President, referred to the voting that took place yesterday on Mr. Chintamani's motion of lump reduction in the item concerning the C. I. D. by Rs. 10,000. The motion was declared lost by 46 votes to 44.

It had been brought to his notice to-day, the President said, that there was some discrepancy in the voting list. On a scrutiny, it was found that Mr. Jagbhan Singh had voted for the motion, but someone else had signed for him in the "Noes" list. The President believed that it was an unfortunate mistake due to an accident. Accidental or deliberate, the mistake was there, and it had altered the voting position. There was now a tie of the reduction motion and his casting vote was required. The police demand was already voted. There was thus no hurry about the matter, but as the incident had been brought to his notice before the time fixed for the application of the guillotine the affair should not be regarded as closed. He would have to give his casting vote, and he would do so to-morrow after due consideration.

Next day, the *14th. MARCH*, Sir Sitaram, President, said that he had examined the division list further and was inclined to think that the signature was not deliberately made. The mistake seemed to him purely accidental inasmuch as the member while putting his signature did so at the wrong place and when he discovered this, he attempted to score off his name but this was not effectively done and so the Council Officer could not check it. As regards the tie off-hand he would have been inclined to say what happened and

there was no further need for worry. The Council had rejected the reduction and passed the demand and the Chair might as well give its casting vote that way and be done with it but the Chair had to lay down certain principles and follow certain precedents. The principle laid down by successive speakers of the House of Commons was that the casting vote should not decide the point finally but be so given as to give opportunity to the House to give its decision later on the point at issue. In this particular case he believed it would be open to the Home Member to come forward later with a supplementary or reappropriation demand if he found the C. I. D. provision was inadequate. He therefore gave his vote in favour of the reduction and declared the motion carried. The result was that the police demand which was voted yesterday was automatically reduced by Rs. 10,000.

The Council then discussed the *Education Grant* which comprised Rs. 2,00,48,345 voted and Rs. 2,88,260 non-voted.

*Mr. J. P. Srivastava*, Minister, presenting the demand referred to the achievements of the department during the current year. The teaching in rural schools had been given a basis which would interest boys in country life and predispose them to agricultural pursuits. Progress had been made in compulsory education which was now in force in 36 municipalities and 379 areas of 25 districts. Six new Government Training Schools for vernacular teachers had been opened. Owing to financial difficulty, it was not found possible to have large provision for fresh expenditure. The budget provided just over one lakh for new items bringing total educational expenditure to 16 per cent of the entire provincial revenue.

Notice had been given of over 140 motions, mostly token motions, for the reduction of the education demand of which only about fifty were discussed to-day. There was an interesting discussion on the token motion regarding expenditure on universities. The mover and his supporters maintained that too much money was spent on university examination and suggested diversion of part of the university allotment to primary education. The motion was strongly opposed by several non-officials who held that the grants to the Universities were insufficient and deserved to be increased. They quoted figures to show how rapidly the demand for higher education was increasing. The motion was eventually withdrawn.

Discussion was continued on the 16th MARCH when there was a prolonged debate on a token motion urging that greater attention should be paid to the spread of education among the depressed classes. Depressed class members—two elected and one nominated—took part in the debate.

On behalf of the Government, *Mr. Mackenzie*, Director of Public Instruction, said that the Government's policy was that no student shall be debarred from admission to any school on account of his caste.

*Mr. V. N. Mehta*, Education Secretary, eulogised the work of unofficial bodies in the cause of education of the backward classes and stressed the necessity of encouraging their education in general schools and not in separate special schools.

Another token motion brought to the forefront the problem of girls' education. *Mr. Srivastav* regretted the absence of women on the local bodies and other institutions controlling girls' education and suggested the creation of special standing committees for that purpose. She pointed out that there were over three million girls of school-going age in the U. P. of whom scarcely 1-1.5 lakhs were attending schools.

*The Director of Public Instruction*, in the course of a sympathetic reply, agreed with *Mr. Srivastava* that the most effective way of combating illiteracy was through widespread education of women.

In connection with the debate on another token motion the Director of Public Instruction admitted that there was slackening in the expansion of primary education during the last two years because of lack of funds. The expansion of primary education he added was largely a question of funds.

*17th. MARCH* :—The demand for Rs. 92,64,000 under the head "*Land Revenue*" was discussed at to-day's meeting of the Council.

There was a prolonged discussion on a token motion urging the Government to make liberal revenue remissions to enable the Zemindars to forego portions of the rent to relieve the acute distress prevailing among the tenants as a result of the abnormal slump in prices.

The mover *Rai Rajeswar Bali*, ex-Minister, said that throughout the province,

tenants and Zemindars were at their wits' end as to find means to make two ends meet.

*Mr. T. Slogan*, Revenue Secretary, said that the Government had remitted kharif revenue to the extent of ten lakhs, canal dues to the extent of six lakhs and Takavi advances to the extent of four lakhs. This form of relief had been given in areas where there was distress due to causes other than low prices. The Government were watching anxiously how long the present slump was going to continue, but the Government were not going to be stampeded into giving away large sums of revenue until the prospects of the present *rabi* crop were definitely known. At present, there was no intention to grant any more remissions in respect of the last kharif dues, but the Zemindars were being given ample time to pay up. The civil disobedience movement having been called off the Government trusted that all political pressure to withhold payment of rents would disappear.

*Mr. Zahir Ahmed* referred to the resolutions recently passed by the United Provinces Congress Committee asking for remission of rent and revenue and said that in pursuance thereof, hundreds of meetings were being held in the Allahabad district by Congress leaders. There might not be any political propaganda, but there was the stern fact that the tenants had no money to pay rents. Zemindars and their employees, whenever they went to realise the rents, went at the risk of their lives.

*Mr. J. C. Smith*, Finance Member, said that the Government could not afford to lose a rupee of the land revenue to which they were entitled and could not consider the question of all round remissions. The Government had already asked for reports from the District Officers, and would carefully consider them. Immediate action meant indiscriminate action which would involve waste of revenue.

*Mr. C. Y. Chintamani*, supporting the motion, said that the position must be grave when on the morrow of the Delhi settlement, the Provincial Congress Committee, which was closely in touch with the villages, deemed it its duty to record the resolutions referred to by Mr. Zahir Ahmad. The token motion was adopted.

**18th. MARCH:**—A substantial cut of half a lakh was effected to-day in respect of the demand for the collection and administration of Land Revenue.

*Rai Rajeswar Bali* moving the cut urged the abolition of the post of Settlement Commissioner as being now superfluous.

The debate on the motion was prolonged, it being pointed out on behalf of the Government that the Settlement Commissioner performed highly important duties co-ordinating the work of Settlement Officers scattered throughout the province, and examining on an average 7,000 assessment reports every year. He was a link between the Government and the Settlement officers.

The reduction motion was pressed to a division, and carried by 41 votes against 37.

#### The Kalakankar Attachment

**20th. MARCH:**—A series of short-notice questions were put in the Council to-day by *Rai Rajeswar Bali* regarding the "coercive measure" adopted against the Raja of Kalakankar and the *Rai Sahib* of Bhadri for realization of land revenue arrears.

*Mr. J. S. Smith*, Finance Member, replying, said that questions were shown to him only the previous day, and as they related to matters as to which information had to be obtained from the district concerned, it was not possible for him to give detailed replies. The information at present available to the Government was confined to a Press telegram from Lucknow and certain figures given by the questioner himself. The Press message made no mention of the *Rai Sahib* of Bhadri.

As regards the Raja of Kalakankar, the figure given indicates that his kharif demand was just over Rs.90,000, of which up to the 10th March he had paid little over Rs. 50,000 but his payments fell below even half of his admitted rent collections. Under such circumstances, the Government could take no exception to the use of coercive measure.

*Mr. C. Y. Chintamani* enquired what efforts, if any, the Finance Member did make to get information on the matter from Partabgarh ever since it first came to his notice.

The Finance Member replied that he had so far omitted to send only queries to the District concerned.

*Mr. Chintamani* handed over a notice to the Chair signifying his intention to

move an adjournment by way of protest against the unsatisfactory nature of the replies to the questions regarding the attachment of the Raja of Kalakanker's property.

*Sir Lala Sitaram*, President, held the motion in order, adding that his difficulty in admitting it was that, at 4-30 p. m., under the orders of H. E. the Governor he had to put the budget demands under discussion to the vote, and under the standing orders a motion for adjournment must come up at 4 p. m. or earlier. If the discussion of the demands continued up to 4-30, the adjournment motion could not be discussed to-day, but in the event of the Council finishing the voting of the demands on the agenda by 4 o'clock, it would be taken up as soon as the discussion of the demands was over.

The Council however disposed of the demands at 3 p. m. and the adjournment motion was accordingly taken up at that hour.

*Mr. Chintamani*, moving the adjournment, said that Partabgarh was within easy reach of Lucknow and the Finance Member, if so inclined, could have obtained all the necessary information. Apart from being vague, the replies indicated that in the Government's opinion the District Officer of Partabgarh had done no wrong. *Mr. Chintamani* blamed the Government of lack of sympathy, vision and judgment. The landholders, as a class, had done more for the Government than any other body of men. The Raja of Kalakanker had paid a larger percentage of revenue than the rents realised. There were many more landlords in the United Provinces, who were worse offenders in this respect. No Government, with average understanding and sympathy, would have behaved in the manner the U. P. Government did with a man of the Raja of Kalakanker's position. The public mind was sure to be greatly agitated by such proceedings which would spoil the atmosphere of peace and goodwill which the noble Viceroy, with the assistance of the Mahatma, had been trying to produce in this country, in order that the relation between the British and Indians might once more be relations of cordiality and mutual trust and esteem. Actions such as the one under discussion were calculated to hamper that work very effectively.

*Mr. J. C. Smith*, Finance Member, replying said that several questions put to-day were such that replies to them could not be given unless sufficient information had been gathered. The Deputy Commissioner of Partabgarh was an Indian Officer of extremely kind and discreet disposition. It was very unlikely that he had treated the Raja of Kalakanker unnecessarily harshly. The Raja of Kalakanker himself had told the District Officer in February, that he had no great difficulty in realizing rents. The Finance Member was convinced that with a slight effort, the Raja who was very popular with the tenants, could have realized more rents than he actually did, and thus pay up the part of the revenue arrears and thus avoid all unpleasantness. The Finance Member emphasised that there was absolutely no political motive whatsoever in the action taken against the Raja of Kalakanker. Five other talukdars in Partabgarh had been treated in the same manner.

The adjournment motion was carried without a division.

**21st. MARCH** :—The Council discussed to-day the demand under the heads "Jails" and "Administration of Justice." Mainly on grounds of economy the Jails demand for Rs. 3,763,000 was reduced by Rs. 54,850 before being voted. Discussion of the demand for the "Administration of Justice" was not concluded when the Council adjourned for the day.

In connection with a token motion *Mr. Chintamani* suggested that the policy of appointing Superintendent of Central Jail invariably from the Indian Medical Services, needed to be changed. The I. M. S. regime of jails especially under the present Inspector-General, had not been conspicuous for success. The volume and intensity of dissatisfaction with the jail administration that existed in the province would show that whatever their technical qualifications, the I. M. S. Superintendents had signally failed to tow in public confidence.

*The Nawab of Chattari* replying said that five of the six posts of Superintendent of Central Jails were reserved by the Secretary of the State for I. M. S. officers.

Another token motion brought to the fore the treatment of prisoners, especially political prisoners. Allegations of merciless beating, inhuman treatment and deliberate starvation of prisoners were made by several members.

The Nawab of Chattari doubted if all the allegations were true. He admitted that there might be some instances where excesses were committed by jail officials,

but he hoped they were matters of the past, and it were best to let bygones be bygones.

The token motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Chintamani moved a reduction of the demand under "Administration of Justice" by Rs. 10,000 in respect of the item concerning temporary courts. He urged that every pie spent by the State in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy case, must be borne by the Government of India.

The Nawab of Chattari, Home Member, opposing said that the cost of the court had to be borne by the U. P. Government. The Government of India, like any other complainant, was entitled to justice free of cost. The reduction motion was carried by 29 votes against 26.

23rd. MARCH:—In connection with the discussion of the Budget demand to-day under the head "Administration of Justice", Mrs. J. P. Srivatsava regretted the total absence of women from the judiciary, and pleaded for the appointment of some women as honorary magistrates.

The Nawab of Chattari, Home Member, assured her that the Government would gladly make such appointments if suitable women were willing to offer their services to take up the work.

24th. MARCH:—Two token cuts moved by Rai Rajeshwar Bali under the *Medical Demand* were carried without division by the Council, protesting against the absolute monopoly enjoyed by the I. M. S. of the post of inspector-general of civil hospitals and the reservation of no less than 15 posts of civil surgeons at all the more important towns in the province to the members of that service. It was made clear in the course of the debate by Mr. Chintamani and others that the Council was only interested in the question of policy and had not the slightest objection to the appointment of the present Inspector-General, Lt.-Col. Nutt on personal grounds.

Maharajkumar Major Mahijit Singh said he had protested against the control exercised by the Government of India in regard to the choice of Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, but apparently no heed had been paid to his protest.

Another token cut moved by Mr. Chintamani was also carried without division, regarding the position and prospects of members of the State Medical Faculty in the province.

Rao Krishna Pal Singh complained that injured Congress volunteers had been refused treatment at the Agra hospital, but no reply was forthcoming from the Government benches.

25th. MARCH:—To-day being the last day for voting the demands, the guillotine was applied at 5 o'clock and all the undisposed demands were voted without discussion.

The Medical demand was discussed for almost the entire day and several token cuts were moved and withdrawn after discussion. The Public Health demand could only be discussed for five minutes.

"I am ashamed to confess that what I saw can only be described as a disgrace to the fair name of the province,"—said Maharaj-Kumar Major Mahijit Singh, Minister, in reference to several hospitals at district head-quarters he had visited, including the Colvin Hospital at Allahabad. The question of the improvement of these hospitals was raised by Mr. Chintamani by means of a token reduction of Rs. 10.

In the course of the discussion, serious difference of opinion arose between the Minister and his distinguished predecessor in office, Rai Rajeshwar Bali as to the best method of running such hospitals in an efficient manner. The former was for provincialising them, while the latter on the contrary thought that it was not a desirable step to take. The Maharaj-Kumar undertook to constitute a committee to go into this important question consisting of himself, the secretary to the Medical department and the inspector-general of civil hospitals and the motion was eventually withdrawn.

#### The Cawnpore Riots

26th. MARCH:—An adjournment motion moved by Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Husain to discuss the failure of the Government in restoring peace and order in Cawnpore, was talked out in the Council to-day and the mover rose too late to withdraw it as he did not want to embarrass the Government officials handling the situation.

Rather curious suggestions were made by Mr. St. George Jackson, representing the European community, and Mr. H. C. Desanges, nominated member for the Anglo-Indian community, regarding the best manner of restoring normal conditions. The former wanted the imposition of punitive police four times the number of the existing police force in Cawnpore city, while the latter in defending the Government asked the Council whether it would agree to the establishment of martial law which might probably quell the riot in twelve hours.

The most effective speech from the official side was made by Kunwar Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary, who with his characteristic fluency and force strongly deprecated the suggestion of martial law and pertinently asked how many members would support the Government if it took such a drastic step.

Mr. J. C. Smith and the Chief Secretary, in their speeches, said that the Government had acted with extreme promptitude and the local officers were leaving no stone unturned to restore harmony and goodwill between the warring communities. Troops and police force in sufficiently large numbers had been despatched from Lucknow and other districts to Cawnpore and the Government had every reason to believe that the situation had by this time been brought under control.

#### OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

The Council to-day rejected without division two resolutions moved by the Finance Member for the imposition of an annual registration fee of Rs. 25 on private motor cars and Rs. 10 on private motor cycles and, secondly, for the enhancement of registration fees by approximately 25 per cent.

Another resolution moved by the Finance Member seeking the sanction of the Council for the expenditure of Rs. 13,000 on the improvement of the acoustics of the Council chamber was amended by Mr. Chintamani and the Council adopted without division the amended resolution, referring the scheme for consideration and report to a committee consisting of Dr. S. Nehru, Dr. M. N. Saha, Dr. Wali Muhammad, Sir Bernard Darley and Michael Keane (chairman) with the secretary of the Legislative Council, Mr Surendranath Ghosh, as secretary to the committee.

The Finance Member opposed the amendment but dared not challenge a division.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

*30th. MARCH*:—The Government sustained heavy defeats in the Council, to-day, in respect of two non-official resolutions, one of which urged legislation making it obligatory on the Government to obtain the previous approval of the Council to a revision of the irrigation rates, while the other wanted an early amendment of the Land Revenue Act to reduce the pitch of assessment from 40 to 35 per cent. The first resolution was carried by 48 votes against 24 and the second by 40 votes against 21.

There was a prolonged and animated debate on the latter and strong exception was taken by more than one speaker to the Finance Member's remark that years ago the zemindars were no more than the Kadars.

An amendment to the above resolution was moved by Mr. Chintamani asking for the appointment of a committee to consider principles of exemption and gradation in land revenue assessment and to make recommendations to embody provisions in this behalf in the United Provinces Land Revenue Act. The amendment was not pressed and it was lost without division.

#### LATE MR. VIDYARTHI

Feeling tributes were next paid to the memory of Babu Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi (ex-M. L. C. for Cawnpore in the last Council) who lost his life while attempting to restore Hindu-Muslim unity in the Cawnpore Riots.

#### The Governor's Address

*31st. MARCH*:—Addressing the Council to-day His Excellency Sir George Lambert, Acting Governor, said that it was fortunate that he was meeting the members now, and not earlier. A month back the air was full of strife and the atmosphere was heavy with the dust of active conflict. Now, thanks to the sustained efforts of two very genuine lovers of human harmony, the country had a glimpse of what might be hoped when there was enduring peace. "Every one here represents some vital interest in the common weal. A great majority of you have been here to stand for and guard the interests of our teeming millions whose future happiness and well-

being will be made or marred by the discussions soon to be taken. It is incumbent upon every member to use the whole weight of his influence on behalf of the safe and ordered advance of the methods which can be defended by reason and to discourage by every means in his power any attempt to return to the activities which in fact lead to disruption and disorder, by whatever motives they may be inspired."

Proceeding, the Governor detailed how his Government had carried out the terms of the Delhi settlement, both in spirit and in letter, with the utmost practicable promptness. All the notifications under the Criminal Law Amendment Act were cancelled on the 6th March and by the 10th March orders were issued for the removal of the detachments of additional Police imposed in different areas. 4407 prisoners were released by the 15th March and since then 295 more prisoners had been released. There were now left only 165 convicted prisoners and 108 undertrials all of whom were convicted or arrested for the acts of violence or for clear incitement to violence. Of the 77 prisoners convicted under Section 124A only seven were still under detention.

After appealing to the members to sustain the spirit of trust and confidence, the Governor proceeded to discuss the agricultural situation in the United Provinces. He referred to the slump in prices and to the rent and revenue position. Up to the end of February the Government had collected only 208 lakhs out of a total kharif demand of 344 lakhs. The Government had not pressed the Zemindars unduly and the Zemindars in their turn had shown the same condition for the tenants. Now that it was clear that the prices would persist at or about their present level in the near future, the Government recognized that tenants must be granted some tangible relief. Steps had already been taken to obtain information on which to base the scheme of remissions. Any uniform system would be both wasteful and unsatisfactory. There were obvious objections to the grant of relief to landholders whose revenue represented a far smaller proportion of their asset than that to which the Government were legally entitled. The Government proposed to take the pitch of the rents as the criterion for the need of relief. Those tenants whose rents had been enhanced to keep pace with the rise of prices in recent years were most in need of relief. It was, therefore, necessary to enquire to what extent the rents had risen since 1916 in every "pergana." Where the increase had been less than 12½ per cent it was not considered necessary to make any reduction. Where it was over that figure the proposal was to reduce the rent to the 1916 level and to give a corresponding reduction in land revenue.

As regards the last "kharif" demand, if it was found that large amounts were in fact unrealizable; either immediately or ultimately, The Government would consider suspension or remission according to the needs of each district. The Government had not hesitated to stand by the agriculturist during the recent years of stress. They had spent altogether about a crore and a half during the last three years in revenue remissions, famine relief and locust operations. The country was passing through a period of stress which bore heavily both on the Government and the people. Each must bear its share of the unpleasant burden.

Concluding, the Governor deplored the recent communal outbreaks and appealed to the members to bring their influence to bear on the urgent task of restoring friendly relations between the communities.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

# THE PUNJAB LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

President:—Sir Shahabuddin

27 A chorus of condemnation was raised in the Punjab Legislative Council, which met at Lahore on the 16th. January 1931, against the dastardly attempt made on the life of the Governor when His Excellency attended the University Convocation on December 23, which was echoed by every section of the House. After the taking of oath the President, Sir Shahabuddin, on behalf of the House, most sincerely congratulated His Excellency the Governor on his providential escape and sympathised with His Excellency for his suffering, and condemned the outrage. He thanked God that such a popular Governor was spared to rule and guide the destinies of the province ever more.

Captain Sikander Hayat Khan, Revenue Member, Sir Jogendra Singh, Agriculture Minister, Sir Henry Craik, Finance Member, Pandit Nanakchand, Rai Bahadur Sewakram and about a dozen other representing all shades of opinion associated themselves with the sentiment expressed by the President.

## SUPPRESSION OF ANARCHICAL CRIMES

Mr. Ahmed Yarkhan Daulatana, formally moving a resolution recommending to the Government that adequate measures be adopted forthwith to cope with the anarchist crime said, one should have the courage to call a spade and condemn such crimes. If the cult of bomb and pistol was allowed to permeate the strata of social life the result would be that even when dominion status was conceded, the same sort of unfortunate incidents would continue to happen with the only difference that instead of the Governor, the leader of the House Captain Sikandar Hayat Khan and the Minister for Self-Government (Dr. Gokulchand Narang) be made the target of the revolutionaries. The Speaker asked the Government to find the source wherefrom the revolutionaries get the sinews of war making crimes impossible.

Mr. Din Mahommed supporting the resolution condemned the civil disobedience movement as having brought in its wake bombs and pistols. He said the misplaced public support and the zeal shown to lionise such criminals had helped the crime to spread.

Chowdhury Aladadkhan criticised the wording of the resolution and requested the Punjab Government to recommend to the India Government to adopt a policy of conciliation instead of repression which had been tried but found wanting. The Speaker opined that such crimes must be rooted out before any constitutional progress has been made.

Thakur Panoram Chand speaking next objected to the remark that the civil disobedience movement was responsible for such crime. Mahatmaji, he said, launched the movement after his historical letter to His Excellency the Viceroy whom he implored to agree to his terms. The movement was started with due caution and emphasis on non-violence. The Speaker regretted that the energy of the youth was being misdirected. The crime perpetrated on December 23rd was a blot which all the waters of the five rivers of the Punjab could not obliterate. The Speaker supported the resolution.

Sardar Mamrajsingh averred that the police were also responsible for their injudicious acts done to the immense harm of Government which had been bankrupt in statesmanship.

Doctor Mrs. Shave referring to the Cantonment Murder said that it was a shame on the house that such a crime as committed two days ago was possible. She appealed in the name of womanhood to realise the gravity of the situation.

Mr. Ranbir Singh traced the root cause of these crimes to economic troubles which he urged should be removed.

Sir Henry Craik said that within the last two and a half months 17 anarchical outrages had occurred in the Punjab and Delhi. The Government had a force of 400 persons at Lahore to nip in the bud anarchical crimes and a small force at Amritsar. These bodies had done useful work in capturing revolutionary literature, arresting persons and spotting large amounts of explosives. At the Delhi armoury of revolutionaries, there was sufficient material to make 6,000 dangerous bombs.



Incitement to revolutionary crimes, he pointed out, proceeding, came from three sources : Congress leaders, the press and demonstrations glorifying the perpetrators. The law at present was inadequate and if the incitement and crimes continued, the Government would have most reluctantly to introduce a law similar in the Bengal Regulation by which they would intern suspects in jail and restrict their sojourn to certain place and also introduce a drastic measure, like the Murderous Outrages Act, which was in force in the N. W. F. P. Conciliation was a moonshine and it would merely encourage crimes. The debate had not concluded when the Council adjourned.

Next day, the 17th. JANJARY, Pandit Nanak Chand, opening the debate, said that they would consider and most carefully investigate and discuss any measure that the Government might propose, but they could not give unconditional support to the Government and would not be a party to the roping in of innocent persons. He quoted instances of the great magnanimity shown by Sir Geoffrey De Montmorency, Lord Irwin and Lord Hardinge after the attempt made on their lives. He suggested that the Government should emulate their example and not resort to any hasty steps.

Mr. Owen Roberts asked the Government if action has been taken against those Congress leaders who to the knowledge of the Government had incited people to revolutionary crimes. If no action was taken the Government had obviously failed in its first duty to law abiding persons. Referring to the suggestion of conciliation, Mr. Roberts said that passive submission to law-breaking was neither conciliation nor government. He said that he was not asking for repressive measure. He had no desire to see the province police-ridden, but adequate police, adequate law and proper judgment were reasonable demands for the safety of persons and property in the province.

Sardar Habibullah said that the original idea of having a discussion on the subject was to give an opportunity to the various heads to discover the ways and means of stopping these crimes. (*A voice* : But the heads have nothing in them.) (Laughter.) He said that as long as public opinion against these crimes was not created no solution of the problem was possible. Something should be done to divert the press from their pro-revolutionist tendencies.

The closure was then applied and Mr. Ahmad Yar Khan Daulatana, replying to the debate, said that there should be no leniency in dealing with revolutionary crime. He suggested to the Government to discover the source wherefrom the revolutionaries were obtaining funds.

Sir Henry Craik assured Mr. Owen Roberts that action had been taken against those leaders who had delivered inflammatory speeches. There was not a single prominent leader of the civil disobedience movement in the Punjab who was not or had not been in jail for objectionable speeches. As regards the speeches delivered by all India leaders at the Lahore Congress, Sir Henry said that the decision to take action did not lie in the hands of the local Government. There were reasons for deferring action against what at that time seemed to be empty threats, but at the same time prompt action then might have checked or further worsened the position. Referring to the control of the press, Sir Henry said the Government had been handicapped by the inadequacy of the press law. The Government could no doubt prosecute persons for seditious articles, but in several cases, dummy editors, who really were *chhaprassees*, were working as editors. He was glad that under the Press Ordinance the Government had got some power to effectively control the press and hoped that the Assembly would pass the Press Bill.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

#### HIGH COURT JUDGES

The Council next adopted a resolution of Mr. Mohd. Eusooof demanding that at least half the Indian Judges of the High Court should be statutory Indians.

The Government, who remained neutral, pointed out that the appointment of Judges lay in the hands of His Majesty and the Government of India.

#### LOANS TO ZEMINDARS

Mr. Riasat Ali moved a resolution recommending the Government to advance taqavi loan to zemindars at nominal rates of interest to meet the extraordinary strain on their financial resource due to the economic slump.

Mr. Townsend said the resolution was not acceptable to the Government on account of financial stringency.

#### AN ADJOURNMENT MOTION

At this stage, when it was six o'clock, Chaudhuri Chhoturam moved an adjourn-

ment motion with a view to draw the attention of the Government to the unprecedented fall in the prices of agricultural produce and to suggest measures to ameliorate the lot of agriculturists. Chaudhuri Chhoturam suggested the local Government should recommend to the Government of India that firstly, either the import of wheat to India be stopped or a duty on imported wheat should be levied; secondly, the railway rates on wheat be reduced, and thirdly, the exchange ratio be fixed at 16d.

Mr. Owen Roberts suggested that instead of imposing an import duty, the import of wheat be controlled by giving licence to importers.

Capt. Sikandar Hayat Khan, Home Member, assured the House that the Government had been anxiously taking all possible measures to improve the position of agriculturists and others. He announced that in order to help the sugarcane producers in Rohtak district the Government had decided to give the producers relief to the extent of Rs. 1,53,000, which would mean a 37½ per cent relief in *abiana*. The suggestions of the mover of the adjournment motion were being considered by the Government. The Railway Board had been asked to reduce (the rate on ?) wheat from the Punjab to Calcutta. Perhaps it would be possible for the Government of India to impose a duty on the import of wheat if the wheat prices continued to remain at low level.

Before withdrawing the adjournment motion Chaudhuri Chhoturam emphasised the deplorable condition of agriculturists in the Punjab for the payment of revenue. He said that not only family jewellery had been mortgaged by numerous people, but bullocks were sold and there was a case in which even a daughter was sold.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

#### EXAMINATION OF PROVINCIAL REVENUE

25th. FEBRUARY:—The Council passed by 41 against 14 votes Mr. Ahmad Yarkhan's resolution recommending the Government to appoint a mixed committee of officials and non-officials with a majority of elected Zamindar (statutory agriculturists) members to discover, examine and report on the fresh sources of provincial revenue. Fourteen members including mostly Hindus opposed the motion on the ground that an enquiry at this time would serve no purpose when a fresh constitution was in the making and when they did not know which subjects would be provincial and which central. The Government and the Muslims voted for the motion.

#### SALARIES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

26th. FEBRUARY:—The Council passed to-day Khan Bahadur Malik Mohammad Amir Khan's resolution recommending to Government that all officials whose salaries could not be reduced by the local Government should be requested to make a voluntary surrender of a reasonable portion of their salaries for the period of depression.

The Government spokesmen, Sir Henry Craik, Finance Member, and Dr. Gokulchand Narang, Minister for Local Self-Government opposed the resolution as it would put into an awkward position those officials who could not afford a reduction in their salaries and always carried out the behest of the Government. Moreover the Government had no power to suggest reductions in the pay of those officials who were appointed by the Secretary of State.

Before the resolution was carried without a division, Sir Henry Craik told the House that if the resolution was put to vote the officials, following a parliamentary practice, would not vote, as it affected their personal selves.

#### PROPOSAL FOR RETRENCHMENT COMMITTEE

27th. FEBRUARY:—Sir Henry Craik, on behalf of the Punjab Government, accepted to-day Pir Akber Ali's resolution recommending to the Government to appoint a retrenchment committee, with a majority of elected members of the Council, for making immediate suggestions for curtailing provincial expenditure with a view to bringing to a level the present poor financial condition of the province. He admitted the necessity for such an enquiry, and hoped that the proposed committee would approach the subject in the right way.

#### REDUCTION OF MINISTERS' SALARIES

The Council next discussed at length Sardar Habibullah's resolution, fixing the Ministers' salary at Rs. 2,500 instead of 5,000 and also two amendments reducing it to Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 3,333. The amendment suggesting Rs. 4,000 as salary was defeated, 10 voting for and 56 against and other amendments and resolutions were

lost. The Ministers did not participate in the discussion, and the Government voted against the amendment.

#### Budget for 1931—32

*2nd. MARCH* :—Sir Henry Craik, Finance Member, introducing the budget in the Council to-day, said after deducting the opening balance of Rs. 13 lakhs the present year ended with a deficit of Rs. 47 lakhs. Owing to three successive disastrous years beginning with 1928-29, the Punjab's credit balance of Rs. 128 lakhs had turned into a deficit of Rs. 47 lakhs.

Turning to the forthcoming year, Sir Henry said he had managed to reduce the total expenditure charged to revenue for the next year down to Rs. 10,82 lakhs, a decrease of Rs. 39 lakhs on the revised estimates for the current year. This was possible owing to drastic reductions under all contingencies. The capital expenditure during next year was expected to amount to Rs. 215 lakhs, of which Rs. 154 lakhs was expenditure on the hydro-electric scheme.

Continuing, Sir Henry Craik said :—'When the budget for the current year was framed, we expected to incur a capital expenditure of Rs. 175 lakhs, of which Rs. 150 lakhs had to be taken by loan and the balance from the extraordinary receipts was estimated at Rs. 87 lakhs, that is to say, we would have devoted Rs. 23 lakhs out of our expected extraordinary receipts of Rs. 87 lakhs to capital expenditure, leaving a balance of Rs. 64 lakhs of extraordinary receipts to come to the rescue of the deficit revenue account. During the current year it was decided to ask for a loan of Rs. 30 lakhs, bringing the total capital borrowings for the year up to Rs. 180 lakhs as against Rs. 150 lakhs originally contemplated in the budget.'

He next showed that there was a saving of Rs. 28½ lakhs in expenditure: Education (8½), buildings, and roads (7½), Agriculture (4), Irrigation (3½), Police (2). But unfortunately, against this saving, there was excess expenditure in other departments, namely, Police (5 lakhs), Administration of Justice (3) and Pensions (4). Counting the excesses in other departments—the total excesses amounted to 13 to 14 lakhs, reducing the savings for the year to between Rs. 17 and 18 lakhs and giving a total expenditure charged to revenue for the year of Rs. 11,22 lakhs, or Rs. 18 lakhs below the figure of the modified grant. But for the retrenchment, the expenditure would have arisen to between Rs. 11,55 and 11,58 lakhs.

Turning to the forthcoming year 1931-32, Sir Henry said, we have managed to reduce the total expenditure charged to revenue for the next year down to Rs. 10,83 lakhs, a decrease of Rs. 39 lakhs on the revised estimate for the current year and a lower figure than that reached since 1927-28. This was possible owing to drastic reduction under all contingencies, provisions for travelling, etc. The capital expenditure during the next year is expected to amount Rs. 215 lakhs, of which Rs. 254 lakhs is expenditure on the hydro-electric scheme.'

'As regards our loan account the situation is as follows :—The province had a pre-reform irrigation debt of Rs. 23 crores. On this we have to pay interest but have not to make repayment of capital. Besides this there is the post-reform debt for productive capital expenditure of which 6¼ crores were borrowed from the Government of India, which is being discharged by annual payments on account of capital and interest, while 276 lakhs were raised by the Punjab bonds which are due for payment partly in 1933 and partly in 1937. All these debts have been incurred for productive profits. In addition there is the unpaid balance of revenue loan taken in 1922-23 amounting to about 60 lakhs which is being paid off in instalments spread over 20 years. This loan was necessitated by the adverse results of two extraordinarily bad years, 1921-22 and 1922-23.

'At the first sight, there may not seem to be much scope for optimism in the survey of our financial position which I have laid before the house. Unthinking optimism would indeed be criminal. A pessimist—and naturally enough there are plenty of them to be found in every section of society at the moment—might reinforce his gloomy philosophy by pointing to the fact that in the past decade really bad years have outnumbered the really good and there is at present little sign of recovery of prices. As regards the future political changes the pessimist may argue that experience has shown that more the democratic form of Government the greater its cost, as democracy can only be economical at the cost of popularity and that whatever constitutional changes are made the expensive luxury of agitation has become a habit. But there is another side to the picture. Our revenue though inelastic, does show over a period of years a steady tendency to rise and not fall. Price have before now sunk only to rise again and many shrewd judges hold that the worst phase of the

present depression has been passed. Further, it is reasonable to hope that any readjustment of the sources of income between the central and provincial Governments must be to the advantage of the provinces. At any rate we can derive satisfaction from the fact that the Punjab Government's finances have weathered much worse storms than the present. Though the first two years after the introduction of the reforms saw a credit balance of Rs. 6,61 lakhs it converted into a deficit balance of Rs. 277 lakhs. Nevertheless in spite of that handicap the decade now closing has been one of steady progress and material advance. Two great productive projects are approaching completion and there has been enormous expansion of the work of the nation-building departments. On such a survey we can, I claim, look back with pride on the progress of our province during the last ten years and look forward to the future, if not with careless confidence, at least with courage'.

#### ELECTION OF DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Sardar Boota Singh was then elected Deputy President defeating Mr. Din Muhammad by 40 to 37.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

3rd. *MARCH*:—Two important Bills were introduced in the Council by the Government to-day. The first, the *Punjab Alienation of Land (Amendment) Bill* forbids, in the execution of a decree of insolvency by order of a civil court, the temporary alienation of land by members of an agricultural tribe to persons not being members of the same tribe or a tribe in the same group by way of farm or unfructuary mortgage for more than twenty years. The Bill was circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon.

Dr. Gokulchand Narang, Minister for Local Self-Government, introduced the *Punjab Municipal Executive Officers' Bill* which would provide to begin with certain municipalities with whole time salaried executive officers with statutory powers to assess and collect taxation, enforce bye-laws and put into execution the policy approved by the committee which body will continue to have the power of taxation, making bye-laws and dictating policy in general. The Bill was referred to a select committee for reporting by March 15.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

The general discussion of the Budget was held on the 5th. and 6th. March. Members particularly criticised the Government's policy of increasing expenditure and reducing grants for beneficent departments.

Mr. Mukundlal Puri suggested that co-operative societies should be run on commercial lines, more money be spent on girls' education and Hindus be given proper representation on the district board.

Dr. Gokulchand Narang, Minister, Local Self-Government, admitted that Hindu representation on the district boards was really inadequate and promised to try that the minorities' representation in future was adequate.

Capt. Sikandar Hayat Khan, Revenue Member, said that the Government had been following a liberal policy of remissions to zaminders and would follow the same policy hereafter.

Sir Henry Craik said that additional police was employed to deal with terrorists. The expenditure on police had not been increased. The Government had only carried out the recommendations of the Lumsden Committee which suggested the grant of certain allowances to junior police officials. He concluded that the Government had done more to increase the prosperity of the province than any other body by opening roads, buildings, canals, etc.

9th. *MARCH*:—Out of 41 demands which were to be sanctioned during eight sittings, the Council passed 23 demands without any cut at to-day's sitting. The Council Secretariat received some motions for cuts but they were received too late. Therefore the members opposed the entire amounts in four demands.

Pandit Nanakchand opposed the demands for the Mandi Hydro Electric Scheme on the ground that it would prove profitless. Other members also voiced the same view.

Dr. Gokulchand Narang, Minister, said that the work of the project had so much advanced, that it was unwise to stop it. The demand was passed.

The demand for Education evoked considerable criticism of the present education policy of the Government. The members urged the Government to spend more money for primary and secondary education, and also girls' education.

## PUNJAB POLITICAL PRISONERS

**19th. MARCH:**—At question-time in the Council to-day, Sir Henry Craik, Finance Member, said that during the Civil Disobedience Movement 780 persons were convicted under sec. 108, Cr. P. C., 139 under sec. 124-A, I. P. C., and 687 under sec. 17 (1) and (2), Criminal Law Amendment Act throughout the Punjab. From the first category of prisoners 26 were placed in 'A' class, 50 in 'B' class; of the second category, 24 were placed in 'A' class and 35 in 'B' class; of the third category 7 were placed in 'A' class and 17 in 'B' class.

Replying to another question, Sir Henry Craik said that recently orders were circulated for taking off Gandhi caps from prisoners in jails. Gandhi caps were taken off from the heads of prisoners entitled to use their own clothes as this concession did not cover the wearing of political symbols which were strictly prohibited.

It was a fact that some of the prisoners went on hunger-strike and some put off all their clothes except *langotis* (short loin-clothes) in protest against the forcible removal of Gandhi caps.

Replying to the third question, the Finance Member said that there were now 18 prisoners in jail who were convicted in the conspiracy cases of 1914-15 and that all of them had served more than 14 years imprisonment.

## EXECUTION OF BHAGAT SINGH AND OTHERS

**25th. MARCH:**—In the Council to-day, replying to a short-notice question of Rai Bahadur Lala Mohanlal, Sir Henry Craik, Finance Member, stated that the stories current in Lahore since Tuesday that the bodies of Bhagat Singh and his two co-accused were mutilated and burnt without proper religious rituals, were absolutely incorrect. The Government, he said, were issuing a statement in reply to all allegations and he informed the members that the dead bodies of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were removed from the Lahore Central Jail at 8-30 p. m. the day they were executed. The bodies were taken in two lorries and three other lorries accompanied the former two lorries with fuel and other material necessary for the cremation. The bodies were cremated, continued the Finance Member, according to strict Hindu and Sikh religious rites and were completely burnt near about 5 in the morning when the ashes were thrown midstream in the Sutlej.

The Finance Member further stated that the statement issued by the Deputy Commissioner at 1 a. m. on Tuesday morning was issued according to the programme that was to be followed.

The Council next discussed the *Municipal Executive Officers' Bill* and postponed further discussion till the May session. The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

## May Session

The May Session of the Council commenced at Lahore on the 1st. May 1931, Sir Shahabuddin presiding. Attendance was fairly good.

Khan Bahadur Sikandar Hayat Khan moved that the *Punjab Alienation of Land Amendment Bill* be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Raja Narendranath, Mr. Sampuran Singh, Mr. Pir Akbar Ali, Rai Bahadur Chhoturam, Mr. Wazir Hussain, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Anderson, nominee of the President and the mover.

Rai Bahadur Mohanlal suggested that the names of non-agriculturists be included.

The mover agreed and the names of Kunwar Mamraj Singh and Labh Singh were added to the Select Committee after which the motion was carried.

## PUNJAB EXECUTIVE OFFICERS' BILL

The House then resumed consideration of the Punjab Executive Officers' Bill as reported by the Select Committee. Malik Mohomed Din moved an amendment: "on a requisition made by a majority of its members and it shall be so extended if the local Government after having instituted due inquiry are satisfied that the administration of a municipality was so unsatisfactory enough as to justify its extension." The amendment was supported by Mahomedans, Rai Bahadur Chhoturam, ex-Minister, being the only Hindu to lend his support to it.

Dr. Gokulchand Narang, Minister for Local Self-Government, opposing the amendment, said he could not accept the amendment as it would negative the effect of the entire Bill. The House, he added, had accepted the principle of the Bill. Therefore it could not be now said that there should be no such law. The

House by a majority had accepted the necessity and justification for such a measure. The amendment was negatived by 20 to 40.

The first two clauses of the Bill were then carried without opposition and discussion on minor amendments was not over when the House rose for the day.

*7th. MAY*.—The Council to-day passed the Bill authorising the appointment of executive officers in certain municipalities for relieving the secretary and chairman of the municipalities of certain duties.

Before the Bill was finally put to the vote, Chaudhri Chhotu Ram declared that his party, called the Unionist party, consisting of about 29 members, mostly Muslims, would not be a party to the Bill. They walked out.

Dr. Narang, Minister, replying to the debate regretted that the Opposition had taken a communal attitude on the Bill. The present measure was more liberal in spirit than that of Bombay or Madras. In those presidencies the appointments were made by the Government and not by the Corporations.

The Bill was passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

Earlier the President accepted an adjournment motion whose notice was given by Sardar Habibulla to discuss the leakage of University papers and resultant hardships to students.

*8th. MAY*.—There being no quorum to-day the Council did not discuss the adjournment motion regarding the leakage of University results and resultant hardships to students. Another adjournment motion for reduction of Abiana (water rates) by half, permission for which was granted in the morning, was also not discussed.

#### LEAKAGE OF UNIVERSITY PAPERS

*11th. MAY*.—The leakage of the Punjab University question papers and consequent hardships on the students by re-examination formed the subject of discussion in the Council to-day.

Sardar Habibulla, the author of the original adjournment motion, initiated the debate to-day and dwelt at length on the hardships of students owing to their re-examination.

Raja Narendranath opposed the re-introduction of the subject which had automatically dropped out owing to want of a quorum, but the President ruled the objection out of order.

Mr. Din Mahomed charged the University with not being able to maintain secrecy in printing and distribution of papers.

Malik Ferozekhan Noon, Minister for Education, recognised the hardships to students who had suffered owing to the mischief of some persons. He pointed out the difficulties of Government and said that leakage had occurred while papers were in transit in railway iron safes to one district from which they were distributed all round. Leakage had not occurred when papers were with the University or from the Press. The C. I. D. was investigating the leakage and soon a court case would emerge. He assured the House that the Government was trying its best to make leakage impossible hereafter.

The motion was carried, Government not opposing it as they welcomed the motion to ascertain the sense of the House.

#### THE LAND ALIENATION AMENDMENT BILL

The Council next passed the Land Alienation Amendment Bill which was introduced in the March session of the Council. None of the amendments tabled by the Hindu members were discussed.

The Council circulated for public opinion the *Public Services Commission Bill* and carried a motion recommending a reduction of 50 per cent. in *abiana* (canal water rates) and land revenue throughout the province in order to help the agriculturists. Sir Henry Craik and Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan sympathised with the agriculturists but pointed out that if the motion were accepted the Government would lose two crores of rupees which could not be replaced in any other way.

Government remained neutral and the motion was carried. The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

# The C. P. Legislative Council

President :—Sir Shankerrao M. Chitnavis

Addressing the adjourned session of the C. P. Legislative Council which met at Nagpur on the 12th. January 1931. His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler greeted the old and new Councillors and the President, stating that a Legislative Council of this Province without Sir Chitnavis in control, would hardly seem a Legislative Council at all.

His Excellency then referred to the agricultural condition in the northern districts of the Province. During the last three years in the Jubbulpore division and in the Narasinghpur district, nearly 52 lakhs of revenue has been suspended, of which over 23 had been remitted already. During the same period, the Government distributed nearly 73 lakhs in taccavi. Direct expenditure on relief operations during the three years had been about 38 lakhs, and none of this would come back. His Excellency continued : "Unfortunately conditions this year have not been normal. Not only has the world slump in the prices of agricultural produce been aggravated by local conditions, but a deliberate attack has been made on the Provincial revenues by those whose aim it is to overthrow the Government. The result is directly under excise and forest and indirectly under other heads. The Government will lose over 50 lakhs of income during the present financial year, whilst expenditure is likely to increase by over three lakhs for combating the Civil Disobedience Movement itself. In the coming year, it is clear the Government will lose at least 32 lakhs under the head 'Excise' whilst other heads suggest diminution of at least 19 lakhs making 51 lakhs in all. This province's total income is only about 5½ crores, and it would be seen that a financial crisis of the first magnitude is facing the Government." Regarding the present situation His Excellency said that the Government and people had now to face the stony path of retrenchment and contraction. He complemented all those who resorted to constitutional means, and kept cool amidst the prevailing excitement often under great difficulties.

As it was the way of the world, much prominence had been given to those who broke the law, but what struck him most had been the very limited field from which the leaders of the disobedience movement had been drawn, and the number and quality of those who had stood by the cause of ordered progress. He offered thanks for their support rather than impute blame to those who through differing motives, had taken to subversive practices. He thanked the large body of officials who had done their duties so well throughout the many weary months of exceptional stress. He paid compliments to the Police, particularly to Mr. Morony, for guiding the destinies of the Police force with the single-minded desire to make it the model of what a police should be.

Regarding the Civil Disobedience movement the Governor said he would not shirk his duty of putting down lawlessness whether directed against the public generally or against any section of the public, but he wished to see restoration to normal conditions all round as soon as possible. By releasing from jail a large number of persons who had realised the dangerous character of their actions and given assurance for the futures, his Government had shown abundantly that it was animated by no vindictive feeling."

His Excellency continuing said :—"At the moment the great hindrance to progress is the atmosphere of distrust and readiness to look for bad motives where none exist or where there is only honest difference of opinion often on a matter of degree. In such an atmosphere, to blame is easy, but nothing big has ever been created out of mere criticism. There has been no greater task in the world's long history, and certainly none more difficult than that which now faces the people of Great Britain and India." Success, he felt sure, would be achieved in proportion as each trusted the motives of the other, and was ready to pool what was good in each for the common benefit.

## BULDANA RIOTS.

*Mr. Y. M. Kale* then moved a motion for the adjournment of the House in connection with the agrarian riots in Buldana District. The mover alleged that the police and higher officials took no prompt action to arrest progress of the riots, and were deaf to several complaints.

*The Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendra Rao*, Home Member, opposing the motion protested against the unjustifiable remarks against the officers.

After two hours' discussion the motion was declared lost by 41 votes against 17. The House was then adjourned till the next day when after the transaction of formal official business was again adjourned till the 15th.

## PRISONERS IN C. P. JAILS

*15th. JANUARY*:—In the Council to-day *Mr. C. B. Parekh* moved a resolution urging the appointment of a committee to report whether prisoners were overworked and did not get adequate rest and recreation.

*The Hon. Mr. Raghavendra Rao* opposing the motion expressed the opinion that no useful purpose would be served by such a committee.

The resolution was declared carried by 42 against 24 votes.

*17th. JANUARY*:—During interpellations to-day, in reply to *Mr. C. B. Parekh*, who enquired whether in the jails in the Central Provinces and Berar, a male prisoner is required to grind 35 seers and a female prisoner 25 seers of grain, and what time is required ordinarily for a male or female prisoner to grind 35 seers and 25 seers of grain respectively and whether the object of giving grinding work is merely to give hard labour to prisoners or to obtain all the flour that is required for the prisoners in jail, *Mr. H. C. Gowan*, Chief Secretary, stated that a male prisoner sentenced to hard labour is required to grind 25 seers a day, and a female prisoner is given labour according to her strength and ability. A working day of seven hours is given for the required task. A strong prisoner can complete it in four hours or less. Grinding work is given as hard labour and also to obtain the flour required in jail.

Replying to *Mr. Kedar*, *Mr. Gowan* stated that the total number of persons convicted for substantive offences in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement in this province up to the 27th December last was 4853. Information as to the number of arrests was not available.

Replying to *Mr. Parekh*, *Mr. Gowan* stated that only ten Indian prisoners were put in "A" class.

Replying to *Mr. Kedar*, *Mr. Gowan* stated that only those "C" class political prisoners who were physically fit were put on oil pressing work and Government would not put a stop to this.

Replying to *Mr. B. G. Khaparde*, the *Hon. Mr. Raghavendra Rao* stated that certain persons who had committed offences punishable with whipping were whipped.

Interpellations over, *Mr. T. J. Kedar*, moved a resolution recommending the release of all political prisoners, who practised civil disobedience and were not guilty of acts of violence. The mover emphasised the necessity for releasing political prisoners and thus showing to other Provincial Governments the benevolent and generous heart of the Government. In the course of discussion on the resolution *Mr. Kanitkar* moved an amendment that the uncollected amount of fines should not be collected from Satyagrahis. The amendment was accepted by the mover and embodied in the main resolution.

*Mr. S. M. Rahman* supporting said that political prisoners were not felons and their co-operation was absolutely necessary to work the future constitution successfully.

*Mr. Dube* said that the Congress movement was the outcome of despair.

*Mr. Gowan*, Chief Secretary, characterised the demands as preposterous.

Replying to *Mr. Kedar*, *Mr. Gowan* stated that 4,853 satyagrahis in connection with civil disobedience were imprisoned for substantive offences in the Central Provinces and Berar till the 27th December last.

*The Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendra Rao* assured the House that Government would give careful and serious consideration if the prisoners gave an assurance that they would dissociate themselves from the movement after their release.

*Mr. Khaparde* expressed the opinion that the resolution if given effect to would do good to the people and Government.



*Mr. Kedar* characterised the Home Member's speech as most disappointing. The mover wanted the release of political prisoners to create a peaceful atmosphere. The resolution was declared carried without any division.

#### REMISSION OF LAND REVENUE

*Seth Sheolal's* resolution recommending land revenue and rent payable this year by Malguzars tenants and ryots be remitted to the extent of half and other half be suspended was declared carried by 37 against 19 votes. Out of 175 resolutions on the agenda only 16 were disposed of and the Council was then adjourned to the 25th February.

#### Budget for 1931-32.

*25th. FEBRUARY:—*The Council meeting to-day, Sir Arthur Nelson presented the Budget for 1931-32. In doing so, he said that the crop failure in the north of the Province for two successive years, led to grant of remission and suspension of land revenue on a large scale and to the postponement of recoveries of taccavi advances. Revenues from other principal sources were also seriously affected as a result of scarcity.

Revenue expected in the current year was 556.10 lakhs, but it was now estimated to be 499.73 lakhs. The fall of just over half a crore of revenue was attributed to the partial failure of crops in the north of the Province. Fall in prices, the civil disobedience movement, suspensions and remissions in land revenue accounted for a fall of 5½ lakhs. The fall in Excise revenue was 30 lakhs, stamps revenue, 12 lakhs, and Forest revenue 7½ lakhs.

To make up for this loss of revenue, expenditure had been cut down from 554.32 lakhs to 521.63 lakhs by drastic retrenchment. The "axe" was applied to contingent charges, travelling expenses and grants-in-aid to local and private bodies for educational, medical and other general purposes, by curtailing the activities of almost all the departments, but it fell heavily on approved new works and schemes of improvement provided in the Budget with the result that the nation-building departments which suffered most. Retrenchments of over a lakh had been made from the Land revenue department (2½ lakhs), Forest (about 4 lakhs), General Administration (2 lakhs), Education (4¼ lakhs), Medical (1½ lakhs), Agriculture, Veterinary and Co-operative departments (1¼ lakhs), Civil works, (12½ lakhs) and Miscellaneous (about 2 lakhs). Expenditure on the Jail and Police Departments increased by ½ and 1 lakhs respectively, owing to the Civil Disobedience Movement. By the adoption of measures of retrenchment, the revenue deficit had been reduced to 21.89 lakhs. Under Debt and Capital heads, the net surplus was now estimated at 21.89 lakhs against 9.91 lakhs anticipated in the last Budget.

The Budget for 1931-32, observed the Finance Member, provided for a revenue of 512.15 lakhs and expenditure chargeable to revenue of 488.09 lakhs or a surplus of 24.06 lakhs revenue. Estimates had been framed with caution. Under Land revenue only a portion of the arrears was down for collection and the present level of prices had been taken into consideration in estimating the receipts. Estimates under other heads followed the revised estimate of last year generally, except that receipts from motor vehicles fees had been raised by 5¼ lakhs to provide for increased receipts from the proposed enhancement of the registration fees for motor vehicles to meet the fall in revenue and at the same time to keep a small balance in reserve.

Expenditure had been kept to the minimum. It took account of the reduction in the rates of travelling allowance and grain compensation allowance. Only such new schemes and works as were of an unavoidable nature and in the nature of commitments or were revenue producing, had been budgeted for. Provision had been made for advancing taccavi on a liberal scale on account of the fall in prices of agricultural produce, and the Capital programme had been confined to continuance of works already started.

The estimated result of the years' working was a revenue surplus of 24.06 lakhs, ordinary closing balance of 18.10 lakhs and Famine Insurance fund balance of 72.78 lakhs.

The ordinary balance of 18.10 lakhs however was not a free balance as it included 6.0 lakhs on account of Depreciation funds and on account of the Sinking fund for loans.

## IRRIGATION BILL

After the presentation of the budget, the *Hon'ble Sir Arthur Nelson* introduced the *Central Provinces Irrigation Bill*. There was a suggestion that the Bill may be circulated to elicit public opinion before it was referred to a select committee, but the suggestion was thrown out and it was referred.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

There was a supplementary demand amounting to Rs. 3,93,000 under the head "loans and advances" to cultivators. The demand was voted without any opposition. The *Hon'ble Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao* moved for supplementary demands amounting to Rs. 77,530 under the head "Police Reserved" on account of temporary increase in the strength of police force in this Province, the purchase of three motor-lorries and additional special armed force at Raipur owing to the spread of the civil disobedience movement. The demand was voted.

The *Hon. Sir Arthur Nelson* next moved for a supplementary demand amounting to Rs. 66,000 under the head "famine relief fund" as advance to the Provincial Loan Account for loans to cultivators. This represented the amount withdrawn from the surplus balance in Famine Relief Fund to cover advance to the Provincial Loan Account to meet additional taccavi advance to cultivators during the current financial year. The whole of this advance with interest thereon will be repaid to the Fund in the ensuing year.

The *Hon. Mr. Raghavendra Rao* moved for a supplementary demand amounting to Rs. 65,558 under the head "Jails and Convict Settlements" to meet the increased expenditure due to the admission of a large number of civil disobedience prisoners and also conveyance charges for prisoners. The demand was voted without any opposition.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

**26th. FEBRUARY:**—The general discussion of the Budget was held to-day and over a dozen members participated and the non-official attack was mainly directed against the Government policy of effecting heavy retrenchment in the nation-building departments.

*Mr. Rajurkar* considered that the general budget discussion was an annual tamasha inasmuch as the Government did not respond to the popular demands and he showed from the figures that in balancing the deficit budget, the Government "Axe" fell heavily on education and other transferred departments while police expenditure increased.

*Mr. Parekh* protested against the Government policy, which made inroads on the legitimate incomes of local bodies.

*Rao Saheb Patil* congratulated His Excellency for curtailing the tour expenses and complained that the Government had made no attempt to reduce the salaries of the Civil Servicemen and expressed confidence that, had they approached the Secretary of State he would have favourably considered the suggestion.

*Mr. Mangalmurti* criticised the Government for causing most of the retrenchment in the nation-building departments.

*Seth Sheolal* suggested the abolition of the Criminal Intelligence Department while *Mr. Joshi* suggested the abolition of one of the posts of Additional Judicial Commissioner.

*Mr. Kale* explained that the Government was not giving effect to the wishes of the legislature in abolishing the posts of Divisional Commissioners and explained that *Berar* was being blackmailed.

*Mr. Karikar* wanted to apply the "Axe" more to the expenditure of the Reserved departments than to the expenditure of the nation-building departments.

The *Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendra Rao*, Home Member, replied to non-official criticisms about spending extra money over police. He justified the retention of the C. I. D. department and the present strength of additional judicial commissioners to meet the demand from the public.

The *Hon'ble Sir Arthur Nelson*, Finance Member, said that budget provisions on a more liberal scale could not have been made for the Transferred departments under the trying and most critical present political situation existing in this province and elsewhere. He made it clear that there was absolutely no justification for the adverse criticism that the reserved and transferred departments had received differential treatment.

## NON-OFFICIAL MOTIONS

**27th. FEBRUARY:**—In to-day's meeting of the Council the Government suffered many defeats. There was a motion protesting against unsympathetic Government policy towards agriculturists in not giving relief by way of remission and suspension of land revenue. The motion was carried by 31 votes against 17. Another motion was appealing to the Indian Civil Service and Provincial Service to volunteer themselves for a proportionate reduction of their pays. The motion was carried without a division.

**28th. FEBRUARY:**—At to-day's sitting of the Council, the demand under the head "Excise" was subjected to severe criticism.

*Mr. Gokulchand Singai* moved a token out of one rupee to protest against the Excise policy. He urged that in the districts of Narasingpur and Saugor, the policy of total prohibition should be introduced and those districts should be made dry.

*Seth Sheotal* supported the motion and criticised the Government's excise policy and advocated a decrease in the number of liquor shops in spite of the Government's apprehension of loss of revenue.

*Mr. S. M. Rahman* supported the motion and appealed to the Ministers to put forward a definite programme in the direction of introducing total prohibition.

*Mr. R. W. Fuley* (nominated member) asked the House to show some other form of revenue to replace Excise revenue. Unless they did it, it was useless to move motions which would mean playing to the gallery.

*Mr. C. B. Parekh* said that during the course of nine years, consumption of country liquor was yearly decreasing and such decrease was surely a sign towards total prohibition.

*The Hon'ble Mr. Jaiswal*, Excise Minister, replying to criticisms, said that the policy of the Government was laid down ten years ago, as the introduction of total prohibition. But it was the ultimate goal, and he was not in a position to bind down the Government to bring about immediate total prohibition.

*Mr. B. G. Khaparde* urged the Government to find out some means to inaugurate total prohibition and asked the Hon'ble Minister whether he grew wiser in his official capacity and wanted to go back upon his former speeches.

*Mr. Khaparde* enquired whether it would be advisable for him to continue in office, if he was unable to carry out his strong views about total prohibition.

*Mr. T. J. Kedar* supported the motion and urged upon the Minister to come forward with a scheme or plead inability to carry out his own views.

The speeches by Messrs. Khaparde and Kedar were often interrupted by treasury benches.

*The Hon'ble Mr. Jaiswal* replied that he held the opinion referred to about total prohibition in his personal capacity, but now he was acting on behalf of the Government.

The motion was put to a division and declared carried by 23 votes against 15. The House was then adjourned.

**2nd. MARCH:**—*Mr. U. S. Patil's* cut, amounting to Rs. 17,000 as a protest against the grant of rewards by the district authorities to officials, was carried by 34 votes against 20 in the Council to-day. Out of a total demand under excise amounting to Rs. 10,08,044 the House effected "cuts" amounting to Rs. 31,370.

*Rao Bahadur K. S. Naidu* proposed a cut amounting to Rs. 20,222 under the demand "Forests-Reserved", but later withdrew it.

*Mr. M. P. Kolhe* moved a token out of one rupee to protest against the delay in appointing and completing the work of the Forest Committee for looking into the grievances of the people. The mover said that if the Committee would have taken work before hand, Forest Satyagratha would not have taken a firm foot.

*Mr. De*, Commissioner, Berar division, stated that forest satyagratha was started on political grounds and not because the Forest Committee's work was delayed.

The motion was lost by an overwhelming majority, only 14 members voting in favour of it and 38 voting against.

In regard to yesterday's cut in the Excise grant, the Leader of the House having declared during the course of the debate that he would treat it as a censure motion if it was carried by an overwhelming majority, an interesting feature of the debate was that the "cut" was moved by a member of the Ministerialist Party.

## GRANT FOR GOVERNOR'S HOUSE-HOLD.

*Soth Thakurdas Gowardhandass* next proposed a cut amounting to Rs. 1,350 relating to the staff and household of His Excellency the Governor, particularly the dispensary establishment, but it was lost for want of support from non-official members.

*Mr. M. P. Kolhe* then moved a token cut of one rupee on the ground that more days for non-official work should be allotted, but it was subsequently withdrawn.

## EQUIPMENT OF COUNCIL LIBRARY.

*Mr. M. P. Kolhe* moved a token cut of one rupee on the ground that the Council library was not well equipped.

*Sir Arthur Nelson*, Leader of the House, assured the members that the question would be considered, and on this assurance the mover withdrew the motion.

**3rd. MARCH** :—The whole of the day the Council was engaged in considering "cut" motions under the head "*General Administration-Reserved*".

Non-official members moved cuts demanding redress of local grievances.

*Rao Sahib M. S. Patil* moved a token cut of one rupee as a protest against the non-redress of grievances regarding the application of Sim formula.

*Mr. I. J. Kedar* said that the Berar members should have no grievance over the application of the Sim formula, because Berar paid more revenue. And he appealed to the mover to withdraw the cut.

*Mr. V. M. Kale* from Berar said that each province should cut its coat according to the cloth it had. He urged that the revenue got from Berar should be spent exclusively for protecting the interests of the people of Berar. Berar should not be taxed to feed the Central Provinces. *Mr. Kale* sounded a note of warning, that the time would come when the Berar members would have to remain aloof from the Council.

The cut was pressed and declared lost by a show of hands. The Council was then adjourned to the 6th instant.

## RELEASE OF PRISONERS

**6th. MARCH** :—After question-time to-day the *Hon. Sir Arthur Nelson*, leader of the House, read the statement of the Irwin-Gandhi settlement. He expressed that all 'A' and 'B' class prisoners would be released very shortly and the release of 'C' class prisoners would be taken in hand.

The President and the whole House expressed the same sentiments and in view of the statement, the House was adjourned for one hour.

After one hour *Mr. D. Y. Rajurkar*, member of the Nationalist Party, moving a token cut amounting to Rs. 6,000, urged that the pay of the Government Advocate was more than sufficient.

The *Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendra Rao* said that for an expert advocate, the present pay was necessary and asked the mover to withdraw the cut. The mover pressed his "cut" and on a division, it was lost by an overwhelming majority. 36 members voted against the motion and only 18 for it.

*Mr. R. W. Fulay*, a nominated member representing Labour, moved a token cut of one rupee indicating the need of applying the Bar Council Act to C. P. and Berar and to know what steps were taken by the Government since last year. But the cut was not pressed.

*Mr. D. Y. Rajurkar's* token cut of one rupee to protest against the non-reduction in the scale of pay of District and Sub-Judges was declared carried by 39 votes against three.

## SELECTION OF HONORARY MAGISTRATES

*Mr. Gokulchand Singai* moved a token cut of Rs. 100 protesting against the Government's policy in not carrying out the resolution of the C. P. Legislative Council in the matter of selection of Honorary Magistrates.

The *Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendra Rao* emphasised that the criticism was unjustifiable and assured the mover of the cut and the House that the present selection was most satisfactory. Honorary Magistrates at present selected were doing excellent service.

*Mr. C. B. Parekh* moved a token "cut" of Rs. 100 protesting against the present method of recruiting of Judicial Commissioners from service ranks and not from the Bar.

*Mr. H. C. Gowan*, Chief Secretary, opposed the cut, which was declared carried by 39 votes against 17.

*Mr. Parekh* moved another cut of Rs. 100 suggesting that at least half the member of District Judges should be recruited directly from the Bar.

*Mr. Gowan*, Chief Secretary, opposed the cut. The cut was carried without any division. The House then adjourned.

**7th. MARCH** :—The demands under the head "jail and convicts settlement" (reserved) were subjected to a searching criticism to-day particularly to the treatment of political prisoners in jails. It was alleged that the food given to "C" class prisoners was worse in as much as that nobody would give it even to birds. Utensils provided for the prisoners were good for nothing.

Under the head "Police" (reserved) *Mr. C. B. Parekh* moved a token cut for the inadequate recruitment of Indians in superior services and particularly in appointments as Deputy-Inspector-General or Inspector-General of Police and it was carried by 40 votes against 17.

Under demand "Education" (transferred), *Mr. T. J. Kedar* moved a token cut protesting against the raising of fees in colleges and schools. *Mr. Jones*, Director of Public Instruction, opposing the cut pointed out by giving comparative table of standard of fees in other provinces and expressed that fees were raised on account of financial stringency prevailing at present and that education in this province was very cheap.

The *Hon. Mr. Deshmukh*, Minister for Education, followed the Director of Public Instruction and said that the income derived from such increased fees would be spent for education in rural areas.

It was urged by the non-official members that the Education Department alone should not be selected for financial stringency. The "cut" was pressed and carried without any division.

There were many token cuts, criticising motion against the Minister of Education, the educational policy but discussions were very dull. The Council was then adjourned.

#### C. P. MINISTERS' SALARIES

**9th. MARCH** :—To-day was the last day of the Budget session. The Ministers' salaries were reduced by Rs. 42,000. There was provision in the budget for Ministers' salaries for Rs. 96,000. This was reduced by 42,000 and they will now draw Rs. 2,250 instead of Rs. 4,000 per month.

The cut in the Ministers' salaries, which was moved by *Mr. Kolhe* was accepted by the Leader of the Democratic party from which the Ministers were drawn.

#### POWER OF PANCHAYAT COURTS

*Mr. M. P. Kolhe* moved a token cut urging that power to adjudicate cases involving sums upto Rs. 100 be given to village panchayats. The *hon. Mr. Jaiswal* opposed the motion on the ground that there were many difficulties in securing the proper persons to inspire the confidence of public. *Mr. Kolhe* replied that honorary magistrates appointed by the Government did not inspire confidence in the public, and no such argument should be advanced in this case alone. The motion was pressed and declared carried by 34 votes against 28.

#### VILLAGE UPLIFT

*Rao Sahab M. S. Patil* moved a token cut of one rupee, with a view to discussing the policy of the Ministers regarding the village panchayat movement, rural water supply, the indigenous system of medicine, and other measures of village uplift. The grievances for the mover of the cut were that the present Ministry did not take any steps in furtherance of the measure outlined, but threw obstacles in various directions. The present Ministry had a soft corner for urban areas, and therefore rural areas were neglected owing to their unsympathetic attitude.

*Mr. B. G. Khaparde*, leader of the Nationalist Party, reminded the House of the token cuts in respect of the policy of the Ministers carried in this session, and requested the Ministers and the Leader of the House to announce the policy of the Ministers to enable the House to vote their salaries.

*Rao Bahadur Naidu*, leader of the Democratic Party, said that at present the dyarchical form of Government was there and as such Ministers were necessary, and they would carry out the popular view as far as was practicable.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Nelson, Leader of the House, supported the policy of the present Ministry, and said they had no control over the situation created by the Civil Disobedience Movement, and consequently the Ministers were unable to secure more money for the transferred departments.

Mr. C. B. Parekh made a speech supporting the present Ministry.

Mr. Kanitkar, member of the Nationalist party, said that, after passing several token cuts to allow the present Ministers to remain in office was a bad precedent.

The Hon. Mr. Deshmukh, Minister, said that he had nothing to add to the speech of the leader of the Democratic Party from which the Ministers were drawn.

As a result of the discussion the cut was withdrawn.

#### MR. AWARI'S DETENTION.

Mr. C. B. Parekh proposed a token cut of one rupee as a protest against the detention of Mr. Awari in the mental hospital, but it was withdrawn. It will be remembered that Mr. Awari was convicted and sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment for sedition and he was undergoing the sentence in the Nagpur Central Jail, but was recently removed from the jail and put into the mental hospital. Mr. Awari was connected with the Arms Act Satyagraha launched in Nagpur some 3¼ years ago.

#### ABOLITION OF POST OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. M. Y. Shareef moved a cut of one rupee proposing the abolition of the post of Director of Public Health in pursuance of the recommendation of the Slocock Retrenchment Committee.

The mover pressed the motion which was carried by 32 votes against 20.

#### RAT DESTRUCTION SCHEME

Mr. R. A. Kanitkar moved a cut of Rs. 18,500 for the discontinuance of rat destruction schemes as they had had sufficient trial and seemed extravagant in a year of difficulty.

Mr. R. N. Bannerjee, Director of Industries, opposed the motion on the ground that rat destruction was quite necessary to prevent plague.

Mr. C. B. Parekh as the President of Nagpur Municipality, opposing the motion, said that on account of rat destruction, Nagpur, was free from plague for some years past. The motion was pressed and declared lost without any division. The remaining demands were put to vote by the chair without discussion and they were carried and the House adjourned *sine die*.

# THE B. & O. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

President :—Hon. Mr. Nirsunarain Singh

The newly elected Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council met at Patan on the 20th. January, 1931, Mr. M. G. Hallett, Chief Secretary, presiding. The Presidential election was held on the next day when Mr. Nirsunarain Singh was elected the President. He secured 51 votes against 41 by his rival Mr. Rajandhari Singh.

## The Governor's Address

22nd. JANUARY :—Addressing the Council to-day His Excellency Sir Hugh Stephenson, the Governor, congratulated the new President on his election and promised him all assistance and co-operation that was in his power to give. His Excellency next referred to the civil disobedience movement and the financial condition of the province which, according to him, were matters in which both the Council and the Executive Government were equally concerned and which were of paramount importance to the welfare of the province. His Excellency said that the movement was launched for the purpose of intimidating the Government, whether in India or in England, and intimidation, whether moral or physical, has been the most marked characteristic of all its manifestations. It had deliberately set out to destroy all restraint and all authority and had inevitably led to violence and increase of crime. He was not speaking of what was called political crime. It must be plain to all of them that what stood between a peaceful citizen and murder and loot was not the physical force of a comparatively small body of police, there being only one policeman to every six square miles in the province, but the authority that was behind the law and the respect that was inherent in the people's minds for that authority. If they impaired that authority, if they weakened that respect, they destroyed the only protection other than physical force, which an ordinary citizen has had.

His Excellency pointed out how dacoity and other forms of crime had increased due to the civil disobedience movement and how the general standard of public security was thus in great danger of deteriorating. It was, therefore, the duty of all of them to prevent this intimidation and uphold the authority of law and it was to this end and that with their assistance that their energies have been devoted during the past year. They have been criticised because of the methods they had adopted to attain this end.

There might be room, continued His Excellency, for differences of opinion as to the most suitable methods in dealing with the situation that had faced them. But there could be no question that those, who had deliberately set themselves to prevent the Government from functioning, had no right to dictate methods that they should adopt to deal with them. With the full sense of their responsibility the local Government and the Government of India had adopted those measures which seemed to them to be most effective in protecting the interest of the province. They had all followed with consuming interest the proceedings of the Round Table Conference and in months to come, with the full sense of their responsibility, they would have formed their own judgments on the questions that have been raised. But the issues of civil disobedience were entirely apart from these. No Government could exist side by side with chaos and unless they fulfilled their trust and maintained the authority of law and protected the individual form of intimidation no Government, whatever might be the form that might eventually emerge, would have any chance of success. Those, who were now behind the movement and were responsible for actions of those they had misled, had deliberately dissociated themselves from any consideration of the constitutional reforms and were pursuing the civil disobedience movement as a means of preventing the Government from functioning, whatever might be their personal views as to the stage that the constitutional changes, that were now on the anvil, should take. He confidently asked for their assistance in removing from the province what was obstacle to any form of Government and prayed that their united efforts might succeed in restoring Bihar and Orissa to sanity and orderliness that was essential to its prosperity.

As regards the financial outlook His Excellency said that the net result was that their closing ordinary balance this year, instead of 81 lakhs 52 thousand as was anticipated, would be 40 lakhs and 85 thousand. The position was undoubtedly serious—more so as they could see no improvement in the coming year.

*Rai Bahadur Lakshmidhar Mahati* was elected Deputy President of the Council to-day securing 57 votes against 33 obtained by his rival Khan Bahadur Saghirul Haq.

The supplementary demand of Rs. 1,64,242 put forward by the Government to meet the additional expenditure on account of the camp jail at Phulwari (Patna) provided some discussion.

*Mr. Sachchidananda Singh* moving a token cut in the demand complained that the jail building was badly constructed, it being a structure of corrugated iron sheets. Accommodation provided in it for political prisoners, he said, was highly unsatisfactory. Owing to the unsuitability of accommodation there was sickness among the prisoners and during the short period of the establishment of the camp jail nine political prisoners had died. He pleaded for better accommodation and accused the Government of having mis-spent the money.

*Mr. Godavaris Misra* and *Mr. Srinandan Prasad Narayan Singh Sharma* also complained against the administration of the camp jail.

The *Judicial Secretary* of the Government replying said that though the accommodation provided might not be as suitable as some of them expected, they had constructed the jail on the best site available in the province and it was equipped with electric lights, pipe water supply and a pucca built hospital. Considering the large number of prisoners lodged in the camp jail figures of sickness and deaths were not heavy. He was informed by the Jail Superintendent that *Mr. Rajendra Prasad*, Behar Congress leader, who visited the jail, seemed to have been favourably impressed with it.

The demands was ultimately passed by the Council which adjourned till Feb. 10.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

*10th. FEBRUARY* :—The Council discussed to-day the non-official resolutions. *Rai Bahadur Ramrananjaya Singh* moved a resolution for placing the Ayurvedic and Tibi Schools at Patna on a permanent footing.

The *Minister for Public Health* assured the Council that the Government had no intention of abolishing the institutions but placing it on a permanent basis would mean a large expense which the Government could not afford in the present financial situation.

The resolution was carried, the Government not challenging a division.

Two other resolutions for the reduction of canal rates levied on the Son and Motihari canals and the suspension of payment of half the land and revenue for the current calendar year owing to the general fall in the prices of food crops were rejected.

*11th. FEBRUARY* :—*Mr. Godavaris Misra* moved a resolution to-day on the subject of the classification of political prisoners. He criticised the existing classification arrangement and urged that the treatment should be according to the status of every person and in order that a particular kind of treatment be accorded the prisoner must be placed in the class in which the same treatment would be available. The present situation in which a large number of persons were being imprisoned called for a revision.

The *Raja of Kanika*, member in charge of Jails, opposing the resolution pointed out that the resolution if accepted would have the effect of giving special privileges to political prisoners irrespective of the nature of the offence. This had been repeatedly debated but had never been accepted in principle. It would have the incidental effect of necessitating revolutionary changes in the structure of jails with an enormously increased expenditure to finance which would be a serious difficulty.

The resolution was rejected without being pressed to a division.

Two other resolutions for raising the Intermediate College at Ranchi to a degree college and the recruitment of aborigines in a reasonable percentage in the Government departments were withdrawn after some discussion.

*12th. FEBRUARY* :—The Council discussed to-day non-official resolutions on the subject of imposition of octroy duty, introduction of free primary education, election of members on the Board of Industries and the advisory committees of the B. N. W. R. and E. I. R. and abolition of the post of school inspectors.



The resolutions were either rejected or withdrawn after discussion.

On being pressed on the matter of introduction of free primary education, the Minister for Education said that if the Council was prepared to agree he could bring forward a primary education Bill with a proposal of additional taxation for the purpose.

#### Budget for 1931-32

**13th. FEBRUARY:**—Presenting the Budget for 1931-32 in the Council to-day, the Hon'ble the Raja of Kanika, Finance Member, said that the civil disobedience movement, combined with the fall in prices, had involved a loss of half a crore of rupees to the province, which was admittedly the poorest in India. The loss of revenue was forty-two lakhs and the increase in expenditure 12 lakhs. They started the current year with a balance of one crore forty-nine lakhs and seventy thousand, of which forty-two lakhs and fifty-eight thousand was in the Famine Relief Fund. The revenue which they expected to receive in the current year was five crores and eighty-four and three quarter lakhs. Forty-two lakhs of that sum had now disappeared. The outstanding fact was that the excise revenue would be nearly forty-three lakhs less than they anticipated last February. Their expenditure charged to revenue for the current year was expected to amount to six crores and one and a half lakhs. But they now found it would be six crores and thirteen and a half lakhs, a total increase of twelve lakhs. The salient fact was that jails and convict settlements were going to cost them ten and a half lakhs more than they anticipated and the police one and a half lakhs more. They expected to reduce their balance by nineteen and a half lakhs. They now found that they would reduce it by fifty-nine and three quarter lakhs instead of the closing balance of one crore and twenty and a half lakhs they would have after taking a credit of improvement of nearly eight lakhs in the opening balance of just under ninety lakhs of which forty-six and a half lakhs would be in Famine Relief Fund, two and a half lakhs would represent subventions from the central road development account and forty-one lakhs their ordinary balance. Their revenue for the next year would amount to five crores and fifty-four and a half lakhs.

On the expenditure side they found that their ordinary obligatory expenditure charged to revenue would amount to five crores and seventy-four lakhs. That was to say there would be a deficit of about twenty lakhs in revenue position and including their capital heads their total receipts would be five crores and seventy-seven lakhs and their total expenditure six crores and a half lakh. That would have meant that their closing balance would come down to sixty-six and a half lakhs in subventions from the road development account and only 14 lakhs and thirty-three thousand in ordinary balances. Realising the seriousness of this position the Government decided that twenty lakhs would be appropriated from the Famine Relief Fund for expenditure on non-recurring items and retrenchments to the extent of eight and three quarter lakhs were effected in the first edition of expenditure. The total amount for new expenditure was just over six lakhs.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

General Discussion of the Budget was held in the Council from the 23rd. to 25th. FEBRUARY. A dozen of speakers stressed on the urgent need of retrenchment, particularly in imperial service charges. The principal speakers were *Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha* and *Mr. Dwarkanath*, who pleaded for a bold policy of retrenchment, as they thought it was the only remedy to save the province from financial chaos.

*Mr. Sinha* suggested that the Local Government should send a despatch to the Secretary of State through the Government of India, suggesting curtailment of imperial service charges, as without doing it administration in the province would be impossible.

Winding up the discussion the *Raja of Kanika*, Finance Member, said that their financial position was not so serious as of many of the other provinces. Their general view was that unless their estimates of revenue were seriously falsified they would be able to get through the next year without making any more drastic retrenchment. As far as they could see their obligatory expenditure in 1932-33 ought not to be much more than 8 or 9 lakhs in the excess of their revenue provided they exercised strict economy. As regards reduction in salaries he pointed out, firstly, that it was not yet certain that the reduction would be justified and, secondly, the matter could only adequately be tackled on an all India basis. The Council then adjourned till the 9th. March.

## IMPLEMENTING THE SETTLEMENT

9th. MARCH :—When the Council met to-day, Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha put a short-notice question to the Government asking what steps had been taken by them to implement the peace agreement.

Mr. Sachchidanand Sinha.—Will the Government be pleased to state what action they have taken in regard to the settlement between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi?

Mr. J. D. Sifton.—The Government have already withdrawn the notifications declaring various Congress bodies to be unlawful associations and have put matters in detail for the release of non-violent prisoners to be started as soon as civil disobedience is called off in Bihar and Orissa. But they have no information that the Provincial Congress Committee have yet taken any action to implement the orders issued by the Congress Working Committee. The prosecutions under the Ordinances have lapsed. All standing cases are being examined to see if they fall within the category of non-violence. The collection of costs of additional police has been suspended.

Mr. Sachchidanand Sinha then read the following letter issued by the Provincial Congress Committee for the information of the Government :—The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee has issued telegraphic instructions on the 6th instant to all subordinate committees to discontinue civil disobedience immediately in compliance with the direction of the Working Committee from Delhi.

The Hon. Mr. Sifton replied that he was glad that the Congress had taken action in the matter and the Government would not be slow to respond.

## VOTING ON BUDGET DEMANDS

The voting on the budget demands then commenced. Several cut motions regarding land revenue and excise demands were discussed.

The Council passed the whole land revenue demand.

10th. MARCH :—The Council passed to-day the *budget demands under excise, stamps, forests and registration*. The demand under *Irrigation* was being discussed, when the Council adjourned. There was some debate on a token cut in the registration demand, to call attention to the claims of the backward communities in the registration services. The Minister in-charge having stated that he was trying to encourage such appointments and was prepared to give due consideration to the demand the motion was withdrawn.

11th. MARCH :—Under a token cut moved by Mr. Srikrishna Prasad the Council discussed to-day at length the *Irrigation policy of Government*. Non-official members, including Rai Bahadur Dwarkanath, Khan Bahadur Saghirul Haq and Nawabzada Mehdi pressed on the attention of the Government to the several irrigation schemes for the benefit of agriculturists.

The Raja of Kanika, on behalf of the Government, explained that Government were fully aware of the possibility of benefitting the agriculturists by providing irrigation works. But they were also aware of the fact that irrigation works were expensive, and there was no justification for spending the general revenues on improving the agricultural estates, especially those permanently settled. He was trying to expedite the placing of a new Act before the Council regarding minor irrigation schemes. Until that Act was in operation the progress of minor irrigation scheme must necessarily be slow. The motion was ultimately rejected.

The Council then voted the whole demand under irrigation.

12th. MARCH :—The Council discussed to-day the *demand under general administration*.

A cut was proposed in the provision for the Governor's personal staff and household as a measure of economy. But after the Government reply that the expenditure was not excessive and His Excellency himself carefully scrutinized it, the motion was withdrawn.

The motion proposing total omission of the Ministers' salaries was not moved.

Under a token cut in the provision for the Ministers' salaries Mr. Srikrishna Prasad criticised the policy of the Minister for local Self-Government, in superseding the local bodies. Several non-official members joined issue with the mover and pleaded for a sympathetic attitude towards the local bodies and condemned the policy of supercession.

On behalf of the Government it was stated that supercession was applied as a

last resort when all other remedy was exhausted. The debate was being continued on the next day, the 13th. MARCH, when after a prolonged discussion the token cut was withdrawn.

The Minister defended his policy, stating that they could not shut their eyes to the worst things happening in municipalities. They were very reluctant to supersede and only as a last resort when matters were beyond remedy that they had superseded two local bodies. He contemplated a Bill whereby they could have only partial supersession and avoid general supersession.

The non-officials had their first victory when Mr. S. Sinha's token cut of Re. 1 in the provision for the Board of Revenue was carried by 38 votes against 32. Mr. Sinha urged the employment of Indians as managers of court of wards, especially the Bettiah court of wards.

Mr. Sinha also raised the question of abolition of the posts of commissioners under a token cut. The debate was not concluded when the Council adjourned.

**16th. MARCH :—**The Council voted to-day the budget demand in respect of the general administration and the administration of justice. Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha's token cut proposing the abolition of the posts of divisional commissioners was rejected.

The Government justified the retention of commissioners from the administrative point of view.

The demand under jails and convict settlements was under discussion when the Council adjourned.

**17th. MARCH :—**Replying to a short notice question put by Mr. Srikrishna Prasad in the Council to-day regarding the progress in the release of political prisoners, the Chief Secretary replied that approximately 2,000 prisoners had been already released and steps were being taken to release the remaining prisoners except those convicted of violence or incitement thereof.

Replying to a question regarding the reported dissolution of the legislatures and the holding of fresh elections, the Chief Secretary replied that the Government had no information if such step was contemplated.

The Council then voted the demand for the jail department.

Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha moved a token cut urging the need of laying down a definite policy with regard to the classification of political prisoners.

The Government replied that the present method of classification had worked satisfactorily. In view of the peace agreement the motion was withdrawn.

The police demand was under discussion when the Council adjourned.

**18th. MARCH :—**The Council voted to-day the police demand and the demands for scientific departments and education.

A retrenchment issue was raised in the police budget by Mr. Srikrishna Prasad. The Government replied that it was the price that they had to pay for security. There was no room for any reduction in police budget. The police were essential for the development and protection of the province from the disorder.

Under a token cut in the provision for grants to the Patna University in the Education budget, Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha raised a discussion regarding the policy involved in the appointment of the official Vice-Chancellor in succession to a non-official. He said that it was not a question of principle. According to the policy laid down and traditions set up, it was desirable to appoint a non-official public man as the Vice-Chancellor of the Patna University. There was a strong public feeling on the question of a departure from the policy.

The Minister for Education replied that no departure was involved in the appointment of Mr. Justice MacPherson as the Vice-Chancellor. The Government had not laid down a definite policy by which an official could not be appointed. They had only decided that the post be honorary.

Mr. Justice MacPherson has had considerable administrative experience and high educational attainments. He gave instances in which the High Court Judges were appointed Vice-Chancellor in other Universities too.

Mr. Bimala Charan, Mr. Khalilur Rahman and Mr. Bhagawati Saran opposed the motion. The discussion had not concluded when the Council adjourned.

#### CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT'S RULING

**19th. MARCH :—**Before the day's proceedings began in the Council the President referred to an incident which occurred outside the Council last evening.

He said that some members of the Council, including Mr. Athar Hussain, met him out in the verandah and talked to him about his ruling in not allowing more speeches in yesterday's debate and calling the mover to reply. He told them that having once called the mover to reply, it was his discretion whether he would permit any other member to speak or not.

Mr. Athar Hussain, thereupon, said : 'You have improperly used your discretion. He told the member that he should not use such an expression. On this the member said : "I will repeat it in the Council tomorrow." Then he told him that if the member did that he would take such action as he thought proper. He should like the member to withdraw that expression which was improper. But if he did not do so he did not propose to take any action in the matter because this was the first incident of its kind. He advised the members not to criticise his ruling either in the House or within its precincts and, on any infringement in future of this, he would take disciplinary action in exercise of the powers vested on him.

Mr. Athar Hussain withdrew the expression and said that he did not mean any insult and talked in a friendly way.

The incident thus ended amicably.

Mr. Sachchidanand Sinha's token cut in the *Education budget* was withdrawn on the Minister's assurance that when there was a vacancy in the future, the question of appointing a non-official public man as Vice-chancellor would receive their serious and sympathetic consideration.

The guillotine was applied and all the budget demands were passed.

**20th. MARCH** :—The Council voted to-day all the *supplementary demands* brought forward by the Government. The demand under the head of 'administration of justice' met with some opposition.

Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha criticised the action of the Government in launching prosecutions and cases which, he said, ought not to have been started and which involved unnecessary expense.

*The Bihar and Orissa Opium Smoking Amendment Bill*, a Government measure designed to register persons addicted to opium habit, was under discussion when the Council adjourned.

#### OPIMUM EATERS TO BE REGISTERED.

**21st. MARCH** :—The Council to-day passed the Bihar and Orissa Opium Smoking Amendment Bill, a Government measure, to register addicts and circulated for opinion *the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Amendment Bill*, another Government measure, designed to empower the Government to assist a municipality by taking over the duties of assessment collection and remission of taxes on their behalf without restoring to total supersession.

Mr. Sachchidanand Sinha said that he would defer a detailed criticism of the Bill till a later stage.

Rai Bahadur Dwarka Nath objected to additional powers being given to the Minister when the existing power of supersession had not been properly used. He thought that the Bill would introduce a defective and bad principle of dyarchy and a dual control in the municipal administration.

Messrs. Bhagawati Saran Singh, Srinandan Prashad, Narayan Singh Sharma and others supported the Bill.

The Council was then *prorogued*.

## THE ASSAM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Budget Session of the Assam Legislative Council opened at Shillong on the 9th. MARCH 1931. Before the introduction of the Budget the Council passed a resolution, all members rising, to record a feeling of profound grief at the death of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Pandit Motilal Nehru. The president undertook to convey the message to the bereaved families.

In presenting the budget in the Council the Finance Minister said :—

I have the honour to present to the House the Budget estimates for the financial year 1931-32, the most outstanding feature of which is the calamitous depletion of our balances to the insignificant figure of Trs. 1,50 for the opening, and Trs. 4,80 for the closing balance.

This year also, the preliminary budget was framed which was placed before the Finance Committee in January last and it anticipated a closing balance of Trs. 2,61 in the current and Trs. 9,83 in the next year after providing for ten new schemes in the various departments. Towards the end of January, however, the Forest Department after reviewing the actuals of 9 months, viz., up to end of December 1930, came to the conclusion that their revised estimate of income Trs. 29,77 for the current year was over-optimistic and that they could not expect to derive a income of more than Trs. 22,63 both in the current and in the next year, that is we were faced with a drop in forest revenue of over seven lakhs.

Sir, this revised estimate of the Forest Department, upset all our calculations and the Finance Department was compelled to ask all administrative departments to observe strict economy, while the Forest Department itself surrendered a sum of Trs. 2,77 by curtailing expenditure. Even then a heavy deficit budget appeared inevitable; but luckily about that time we get a credit of Trs. 1,17 from the United Provinces Government for Excise duty on country-made foreign liquor supplied from that province and consumed in Assam, a subvention of Trs. 17 from the Central Road Development Fund based on receipts from extra excise on petrol and lastly a welcome repayment in February of the loan of Trs. 75 given to the Shillong Municipality. I may say that this loan will be repeated for the Municipal Board of Shillong during the coming year, if it is necessary.

With these preliminary remarks, I now come to a consideration of the financial position, which, to say the least, is extremely unsatisfactory as revealed from the figures in the volume of detailed estimates. From what a position of security we have fallen to the depth of precariousness, can be very well gauged by a glance at the figures of the latest available actuals—in this case those for 1929-30—and our present budget estimates. The year 1929-30 began with an opening balance of Trs. 71,95 while we anticipate Trs. 1,50 only to represent our opening balance for 1931-32 a drop of 70 lakhs. Let it, however, be remembered that in this drop must be included the expenditure resulting from the serious floods in the Surma Valley in June 1929—some 35 lakhs, as you were told last year.

In order to balance our accounts, we have been compelled to observe very strict economy and, by the postponement of all possible new expenditure, we hope to effect a saving of Trs. 15.85. The extent and line of our endeavours to balance the budget has been set forth in the Budget Memorandum. Sir, you will find that we expected a revenue from all sources of Trs. 3,27,52; but in the light of the latest available actuals, we cannot put the same at a higher figure than Trs. 3,03,47,—a drop of nearly 24 lakhs; while the expenditure budget has been reduced to Trs. 3,17,95 from Trs. 3,33,80.

Turning to the budget for next year, hon'ble members, Sir, will find that we have closely followed the revised estimates of revenue in our anticipations for the next year; for, we believe, that the present trade depression will continue for sometime to come. We estimate our receipts from revenue heads at a little under 267 lakhs, an increase of 4½ lakhs over the revised. This increase is mainly due to an expectation that our income from land revenue will be better to this extent than the current year, due to ordinary expansion of settlement and introduction of new rates of revenue in parts of Nowgong and Darrang.

On the other hand, for expenditure on revenue account we propose a sum of Rs. 2,70,68 against Rs. 2,93,24 in the budget estimates of the current year. Our proposed expenditure is therefore 22½ lakhs less than was contemplated when the current year's budget was framed. Needless to say, therefore, new schemes almost disappear. We can only hope to provide for seven new schemes all the Transferred half of Government, barring one.

This unhappy exhibition of vanishing balances is grave and distinctly disconcerting. Assam, which is liable to the depredations of natural forces like floods and earthquakes almost annually, cannot continue with immunity to passively submit to the hopeless condition. I earnestly request all hon'ble members of the House and the general public, to give the Government their ungrudging co-operation in remedying the situation. The conditions of financial security cannot be met with a cash balance of less than 40 lakhs. As I mentioned, the floods of 1929 cost us 35 lakhs.

There are only two measures which can ameliorate this financial condition and they are increased income and decreased expenditure, or in other words, Taxation and Retrenchment. With a view to the former, Government propose to introduce—

(1) a Court Fees (Amendment) Bill, to bring its provision of land suits valuation on a par with those of Madras and Bihar and Orissa which, if passed by the Council, will double the court fees payable for such suits;

(2) Court Fees and Stamp (Amendment) Bills, to bring them to the same level as in Bengal, provided the non-official members so desire and carry the resolutions to that effect which have been tabled for discussion this session by various hon'ble members.

They are also considering the question of introducing, at a later session, a Local Rates Bill, which will increase the income of our local boards, thereby relieving the provincial revenues to some extent. Any other constructive measure or measures of increasing provincial revenues or of decreasing expenditure (though not, I hope, productive expenditure), from this House, will be welcomed and carefully considered by Government.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

*10th. MARCH*:—At to-day's sitting of the Council, *non-official resolutions* were discussed, all of which were either withdrawn or lost.

*Mr. Cooper*, a planting member, moved a resolution recommending an enhancement of court fees and stamps for the purpose of utilizing the annual receipts therefrom on water supply.

*The Hon. Sir Syed Saadulla*, on behalf of the Government, stated that while the Government were anxious to have the mandate of the Council, on the question at issue, Government members would not vote on it. The Opposition was based mainly on the ground that, in the present economic condition, it was not an opportune moment when people should be further taxed. The resolution was lost.

Another resolution which raised considerable debate met a similar fate. It was moved by *Khan Sahib Mashraf*, recommending that all appointments in the Executive, Police, Excise and Registration Departments in the Provincial and Subordinate Services should be filled by a competitive examination with communal reservations.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

*11th. MARCH*:—General discussion of the budget commenced to-day. The tenor of the speeches of the Indian members was retrenchment in expenditure and the appointment of a retrenchment Committee.

*Babu Sanatkumar Das*, speaking in Bengali, urged a reduction in the pay of Government servants to a quarter from the Governor downwards.

The two Muchi members spoke in Hindi, one on the economic condition and the other urging remission of forest rates.

*Mr. Whitherington*, a planting member, urged the continuance of E.B. Ry. Tangla-Rangapara extension through Darrang to North Lakhimpur. He pointed out the bad communications on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, making transport of goods extremely difficult, which, if improved, would increase the revenue of the Province, enabling it to open up land and tap huge forests. He deprecated the system of collection of revenues from tea gardens by "Mauzadars" and suggested direct realization thereof by Government saving the payment of commission to "Mauzadars".

Mr. Roffey detailed the existing crisis in the tea industry in India owing to the flooding of the world market with Java tea which, in the last twenty-five years, had increased six times over the present imports, those into India alone being valued at about thirty lakhs. He asked the local Government for help by requesting the Government of India immediately to approach the Secretary of State for support to the memorial which was being submitted by the Indian Tea Association, London, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking for the re-imposition of the duty of four pence per pound on all foreign tea imported into the United Kingdom, which duty was repealed by Mr. Churchill in April 1929.

The Finance Member, in reply, assured the House that the discussion of this subject would be brought to the notice of the Government of India with a request that, if they saw fit, a strong representation would be made to the Secretary of State for the protection of tea in India.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

**12th. MARCH:**—The Council to-day discussed non-official resolutions.

Mr. Robini Kumar Choudhury's adjournment motion to discuss the inconveniences caused by the carrying of mails to Upper Assam by a goods train from Pandu and the detention of Upper Assam passengers, travelling by the up and down mails, for a period of six hours at Pandu was disallowed by the President on the ground that it infringed the rule that only one matter could be discussed in the same motion and also that the Government had no authority over the postal or railway department.

The Government accepted and the Council passed the resolution of Mr. Pyari Mohan Dass recommending the formation of a committee to draw up a suitable bill either on the lines of the Goalpara Tenancy Act or the Bengal Tenancy Act to replace the existing tenancy law in Sylhet.

#### PREMIER'S STATEMENT WELCOMED.

**14th. MARCH:**—At to-day's sitting of the Council Mr. Mohendra Nath Gohain moved a resolution that the Assam Council welcomes the declaration of British policy regarding the constitutional developments in India, outlined in the Prime Minister's speech at the end of the Round Table Conference in London and records the opinion that the principles enunciated should afford a satisfactory basis for further discussion and eventually provide India with a constitution that will satisfy Indian aspiration acceptable to all sections of the community.

Mr. Munawarati moved a resolution further to record the appreciation of the steps taken by the Government of India and the Congress Working Committee to create a favourable atmosphere for making a proper constitution for India and the profound sense of gratefulness to Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi for the untiring zeal and energy and far-sighted statesmanship, displayed by them in bringing about the happier state of things. Members of all parties joined in the discussion in support of both these motions.

Mr. Roffey, Planting Member, supported the action of the European delegates to the Round Table Conference and stated that the planting group approved of the report regarding responsibility at the centre, subject to the safeguards mentioned therein. He pleaded for co-operation and goodwill of all parties to enable the report to be implemented.

The Hon'ble Sir Saadulla stated that Government members would not participate in the discussion of the aforesaid motions, but copies of the proceedings would be forwarded to the Government of India.

The resolutions were carried without a dissentient voice.

#### LEGISLATION FOR ADULTERATION

Another resolution for steps to be taken to introduce an early legislation to combat the sale of adulterated ghee, butter, mustard oil etc., was also carried. The house then rose for the day.

#### GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

**16th. MARCH:**—Addressing the Council to-day, His Excellency Sir Laurie Hammond suggested the appointment of a sub-Committee of the Finance Committee to examine the detailed budget and explore all means of economy as also any possible increase in provincial revenues. In course of his address His Excellency said:—May I first say a few words about the political situation? This, a month or so back, was distinctly gloomy and I was myself.

anxious as to what must be the ultimate outcome. At a period of considerable economic distress, owing to the sudden fall in prices of agricultural produce, there was in progress an agitation which must inevitably from purely economic causes and quite apart from any political sentiment, have eventually resulted in serious riots. There were indications that people, denied the right of access to the cheapest market, might wish to help themselves by looting. We all appreciate and applaud the settlement that has been arrived at and we trust that it may lead to a permanent and lasting betterment of political relations both in this province and throughout India. On the part of the Assam Government there has been and will be hesitation in carrying out with liberal and generous interpretation the orders of the Government of India. All the "political prisoners", so called, numbering 211, were released at once. In one pending case where it is alleged that a Kodali was used as a non-violent weapon the prosecution will continue.

I hope that in response to this action there will be a cessation of picketing and social boycott, and at this time when everyone is feeling the pinch of economic distress nothing will be done to prevent a man from trying to live as cheaply as possible, or to earn an honest livelihood in the way he deems most profitable.

Referring to the financial position which, he said, was a source of more acute anxiety to-day than the political, he criticised the suggestion for reduction of salaries and advised the members "not be scared or stampeded into false economy—still less into a repudiation of liabilities."

Turning to possible means of increasing revenue he drew attention to the question of Excise revenue which had decreased in ten years by nearly 17 lakhs despite an increase of 1.7 per cent in population.

Could they, he asked, with their finances in their present condition justify a sentimental objection which prevented the Assam Government from collecting the full revenue on all forms of intoxicating liquors in the province?

Continuing His Excellency said: "I am told that much of our opium revenue is now pocketed by dealers in contraband opium. There is good reason to believe the contention to be correct that we lose lakhs of rupees a year owing to smuggling and illicit distillation. It is in the present condition of Assam a most difficult problem.

As regards opium, I had hoped we should solve it by the introduction of opium in tablet form which we would sell and distribute through our own agency thus abolishing the 'mahaldar' and his malpractices. Unfortunately there has been delay in the matter of getting machinery to make tablets which all provinces will accept, but I hope the scheme will eventually be introduced."

Referring to revenues derived from Road Cess he said: "I compared just now our excise revenue which we obtained in the neighbouring provinces. I would ask to study also the road cess returns in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa as compared with the revenue derived from local rates in this Province in 1928-29 provincial revenues in Assam provided over 20 lakhs in grants to local bodies of which 7½ lakhs was for educational purposes, the balance of 13 lakhs being given in aid of other activities of the local boards. It is obvious that in the future the Assam Government will find it increasingly difficult to continue these grants and sooner or later they will be forced, so it seems to me, to pursue the course followed elsewhere."

The Governor then referred to the present precarious position of the tea industry. The Government of India in the past had received considerable revenues from this industry. Even recently the income tax returns were encouraging. He thought he voiced their feelings when he said that they would most gladly welcome any action by the Government of India whether by an increased tariff for tea in India, or by safeguarding in the United Kingdom which might save the situation.

#### VOTING ON BUDGET GRANTS

After the Governor's address discussion on the demands for grants commenced. The Council voted the entire demands under land revenue, stamps, forest, railways, navigation and superannuation allowances and pensions.

**17th. MARCH:**—At to-days sitting the Council passed the *Bijni Succession Bill* brought by the Government, declaring the main principles of the customary law of succession in Bijni Raj in Goalpara district by virtue whereof Mr. Jogendra Narayan Deb shall, during his life time, be the holder of the Raj and, after his death, Mr. Bhairabendra Narayan Deb will succeed him.



Mr. Munawwar Ali's motion for the circulation of the *Assam Court Fees Amendment Bill* concerning land suits valuation for eliciting public opinion was adopted.

Considerable debate ensued on the *Assam Land Revenue Re-assessment Bill 1930*, which was returned to the Council by the Governor for reconsideration, particularly of the assessment of land revenue at 12½ per cent instead of 10 per cent. The amendment was lost, 17 voting for and 23 against.

It may be remembered that in September last, the Council fixed ten per cent. as the maximum level of assessment in Land Revenue Reassessment Bill. The Governor sent the bill for reconsideration with a suggestion recommending 12½ per cent. In the debate held to-day Rai Bahadur Nilambar Dutta led the opposition to this proposal of the Governor.

Messrs. Rohini Kumar Choudhury, Sarbeswar Barua, Brindaban Chandra Goswami, Rev. Nicholls Roy and others strongly supported him. The planters group remained neutral. A strong appeal was made to the two Ministers by the Rai Bahadur not to oppose the popular cause. When division was called amongst elected members Rai Bahadur Rajani Kanta Choudhury from Barpeta and Dalim Chandra Bora from Tezpur voted with the Government, so did also the nominated members. The Governor's amendment was however lost by a majority of six votes.

**18th. MARCH:**—Discussion on demands for grants was resumed to-day in the Council. A full dress debate took place on the motion for the *reduction of Ministers' salaries* from Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 3,500.

The planting group, which considered Rs. 2,500 as sufficient, could not vote as their party was committed by their leader Mr. Roffey at last March session to retain the Ministers' salaries at Rs. 2,500 until the present constitution existed. The motion was pressed to a division and lost, 13 voting for and 26 against.

The Council then voted the entire demands under general administration, jails and convict settlements, famine relief and administration of justice, all the motions on reduction thereon being either withdrawn or lost.

**19th. MARCH:**—Almost the whole day was taken by the Council to-day on *demands for grants under Police and Assam Rifles*.

Censure motions were raised in the discussion generally on the efficiency of the police, especially the C. I. D.

Sir Saadulla assured the House that the Government was always anxious to correct the defects of the police and would be too glad to receive any report of misbehaviour on the part of the police officers.

In connection with the censure motion regarding the Assam Rifles Sardar Bahadur Jangbir Lama made an impressive speech in Hindi relating to its utility and minimum expenditure at which it was maintained.

The censure motions were, however, either withdrawn or lost and the entire police demands voted by the Council.

In connection with the demand for provincial advances and loans account, a censure motion was raised in the discussion on the inadequacy of the grant to meet the needs of distressed people by way of agricultural loans.

Sir Saadulla stated that the government was doing their best. The motion was lost by 1 vote. The Council then adjourned.

#### CONDITION OF RYOTS

**20th. MARCH:**—By the casting vote of the President the Council rejected to-day a resolution by Mr. Rohini Kumar Chowdhury for the constitution of a standing committee in each district to enquire into the conditions of the ryots and their ability to pay land revenue as well as to report what remission was necessary. It was proposed that the committee should consist of the deputy commissioner and several elected members of the Council and the chairman of the local board concerned.

**21st. MARCH:**—Discussion continued in the Council to-day on *demands for grants under Excise*. The censure motions raising discussion on the excise policy were either lost or withdrawn.

Censure motions under Printing raised a discussion on the inadequate sympathy for encouragement of local presses in the matter of printing Government forms. The motions were either lost or withdrawn.

Under miscellaneous Darbar charges, Mr. Munawarali moved a token out for the

immediate withdrawal of the Chin Hills Regulation No. 5 of 1896 from Shillong, under which the Dy. Commissioner might expel any non-native, whose presence he regarded to be injurious to peace and good administration.

Mr. Cosgrave, Chief Secretary, stated that Government recognised the change of conditions in Shillong Town and proposed the issue of a notification cancelling the said Regulation operating in Shillong. The censure motion was thereupon withdrawn.

*23rd. MARCH* :—For the first time, this session, Government sustained a defeat in the Council to-day when by a token cut under *Education demand* a discussion was raised about the inadequacy and irregularity of payments to the primary school teachers. The cut was carried, 27 voting for 12 against. Other token cuts raising discussion generally on the educational policy of Government were either withdrawn or lost.

*Mr. Witherington* discussed the question of narrow limits of career followed by Assam boys, namely, overfed medical, electrical and legal professions. He suggested that the Education Department should help the parents to decide what trade or profession their children should follow and to devise means of opening up new avenues for life's work and to adapt the curriculum so as to obviate the necessity of bringing in the Chinese, Punjabis etc. to do the work which the Assamese ought to do, and thus obviate the unemployment problem.

Mr. Witherington was generally supported by other members.

*The Hon'ble Mr. Hamid*, Minister, replying stated that Government would do their best for the technical education and observed that unemployment was a national question in which the public should co-operate with the Government.

The Council voted the Education, Medical and Public Health grants after which it adjourned.

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# The Burma Legislative Council

His Excellency Sir Charles Innes, the Governor opened the Budget Session of the Burma Legislative Council at Rangoon on the *12th. February 1931*. He referred in the course of his speech to the recent rebellion in the District, paid a tribute to Sir Joseph Maung Gyi's work as Acting Governor and hoped that they might say that the trouble was at an end.

Referring to the necessity of converting the recent Ordinance into ordinary law, His Excellency mentioned the existence in Burma of a small section of the Bengal Revolutionary party for years past, which had since increased in numbers and which was responsible for the attempt to wreck a train conveying several high Government officials and which set itself to the task of trying to corrupt the younger generations of Burma.

Sir Charles Innes added that they had every reason to congratulate themselves on the principle of separation being accepted by the Round Table Conference and the announcement of constitutional advance of Burma by Mr. Wedgwood Benn seemed to him entirely satisfactory.

## Budget for 1931-32

Mr. Thomas Couper, the new Finance Member, presented the first budget remarking that the current year had been one of disaster with provincial finances. A decrease of Rs. 70 lakhs in revenue under ten heads, including Land Revenue and Excise, was anticipated at the end of the current year of which the Land Revenue accounts decrease was Rs. 27½ lakhs and Excise Rs. 25 lakhs; but owing to the increase of Rs. 32½ lakhs under certain heads the fall in the net revenue in the current year was approximately Rs. 32½ lakhs, and almost exactly balanced by the nett decrease in expenditure.

The estimated receipts for the year 1931-32 showed an opening balance of Rs. 33 lakhs ordinary revenue, 1,026 lakhs with debt heads, and totalling Rs. 1,152 lakhs, while the anticipated ordinary expenditure was Rs. 963 lakhs, with other expenses totalling Rs. 1,143 lakhs, and leaving a closing balance of Rs. 9 lakhs.

The approximate losses in revenue for the year 1931-32 as compared with the previous year was estimated to aggregate Rs 67 lakhs including Rs. 13½ under the Land Revenue, Rs. 25½ under Excise, Rs. 11½ under Stamps and Rs. 16½ under Forests.

Referring to the financial position of the province, the Finance Member said that it was on the surface unsatisfactory, and in the present straightened circumstances, the immediate outlook was obscure. But fundamentally the position was sound, for if the revenue and expenditure met the anticipations, the province would owe only Rs. 354 lakhs or about one-third of the Provincial revenue on the 31st March 1932, entailing an annual repayment of roughly Rs. 28 lakhs in 20 years, if so desired.

The Council then adjourned the next day when there was a general discussion on the Budget to which only the Finance Member replied.

## DUTY ON CIGARETTES.

*14th. FEBRUARY:*—On the Council resuming its sittings to-day, the *Forest Minister* moved the Burma Cigarettes Duty Bill to impose a tax at the rate of Re 1 per pound on cigarettes manufactured in Burma, also on those imported here which are not taxed under the Tariff Act. Some members opposed it on the ground that it would kill the local industry, and effect inter-provincial legislation regarding imports.

The Forest Minister informed the House that a cigarette combine, in order to avoid the heavy duty, was now manufacturing cigarettes in India and importing them here. The proposed tax would yield nine lakhs. His motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee was pressed to a division.

## THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

The *Home Member* introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill to supplement the ordinary Criminal Law and moved for its consideration. He said the Bill was to replace the recent Burma Ordinance to deal with revolutionaries, and was intended to be used only against persons believed to be members of secret terrorist organisations. He referred to the death of Mr. Lowman and Lt.-Col. Simpson in Bengal and the Chittagong raid, and said that the members of the Bengal revolutionary party were coming to Burma and poisoning the minds of the people settled here and also of the Burmans. The Bill was necessary to check them and prevent their propaganda.

Several members opposed the Bill due to its wide scope and its giving more power to the police. The opposers of the Bill remarked that the recent rebellion had no connection with the Bengal revolutionaries and there was no justification for such a repressive measure.

The debate had not concluded when the Council adjourned.

## NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

*16th. FEBRUARY*:—The Council reassembled to-day to discuss non-official resolutions, to-day being the first non-official day after the resumption of the session.

After question time, the President made appreciative references to the long public service of the late Mr. James Emile Dubern, a member of the Burma Legislative Council representing the Trades' Association. The President expressed his intention to communicate to Mrs. Dubern a resolution of sympathy from the House. The members signified their assent by standing in silence.

## MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN ENGINEERING SCHOOL

On to-day's agenda being taken up the Government suffered their first defeat by one vote over a resolution recommending that a civil engineering school be opened immediately where the Burmese language should be the medium of instruction. Government members, opposing the resolution, pointed out the difficulties of teaching a scientific subject through Burmese language. They also pointed out the want of proper text books and suitable teachers and also the financial stringency at the present time.

## LAND REVENUE ASSESSMENT

The Council had not concluded discussion on Mr. Tharawaddy U. Pu's resolution recommending reduction in the rates of land revenue assessments in the districts when it adjourned.

*18th. FEBRUARY*:—Government suffered a heavy defeat to-day in the Council on *Tharawaddy U Pu's* resolution to reduce the land revenue assessment rates in all districts, on which the debate was resumed to-day. Non-official members of all parties supported the motion, pointing out the present unprecedented fall in the price of rice and the acute economic distress in the country.

The *Finance Member*, opposing the resolution, reminded the House of the recent Government announcement postponing the collection of land revenue by three weeks and explained the impracticability of the proposal. He also remarked that the reduction, if done, would entail the curtailment of the activities of the nation-building departments. The motion was pressed to division, and carried by a majority of 34 votes.

## CONTROL OF PADDY PRICE

The debate on a resolution by *Mr. U. Kun*, recommending to the Government to control the paddy market and fix paddy price at Rs. 180 per hundred baskets of 46 lbs each, was proceeding when the Council adjourned till the next day, the *19th. February*, when the resolution was carried by a majority of 20 votes, the Government again suffering a defeat.

## ENQUIRY INTO CAUSES OF RECENT RISING

*Mr. Tharawaddy U Pu* then moved a resolution recommending to the Government to appoint a committee, with a majority of non-official elected members, representing different parties of the House and presided over by a Judge of the

High Court, to enquire generally into the causes which led to such revolutionary movement and the alleged excesses in the action of those engaged to support them, to find out ways and means to prevent a recurrence of such unprecedented risings in Burma, to suggest remedies to the Government to restore peace and order in the country and to create a calm atmosphere in the country especially at this juncture when the people and Government were about to be actively engaged in consultation for the introduction of a certain kind of responsible Government in the country.

The debate was proceeding, when the Council adjourned

#### CAUSES OF RECENT RISING

**20th. FEBRUARY:**—Non-official business concluded in the Council to-day when the Government suffered two defeats.

The unfinished debate on Mr. Tharrawaddy U Pu's resolution was resumed.

The Chief Secretary, opposing the resolution, said that until judicial proceedings against those arrested were finished, no enquiry would be held as it would prejudice the case. He doubted whether such an enquiry would create a calm atmosphere and held that the demand for such an enquiry was now premature.

After discussion, the resolution was carried by 40 against 32 votes.

#### DEMAND FOR ABOLITION OF CAPITATION TAX

Another resolution recommending to the Government the abolition of the Capitation Tax in Lower Burma and the Thathameda Tax in Upper Burma was also carried, after some debate, by a majority of 20 votes.

The Council then adjourned till the next-day. A feature of the Council this year during the four days' non-official business was that the Council discussed only six resolutions out of the twenty which survived ballot, of which one was withdrawn after debate, while five were carried, the Government suffering a defeat in each case.

#### BURMA CIGARETTES DUTY BILL

**21st. FEBRUARY:**—The Council, after debating practically the whole day, passed the Burma Cigarettes Duty Bill as amended by the Select Committee which owing to representations substituted the contemplated tax of one rupee per pound to one rupee four annas per pound and rupees two and annas eight in other cases on all cigarettes manufactured in Burma and those imported into Burma but untaxed under the Traffic Act. Several members of the People's Party and Mr. Joakim, Burma Chamber representative and formerly nominated member, opposed the Bill on the ground that the duty was too high and would affect the local industry and also exportation of Burma tobacco, while members from other non-official blocks supported the Bill. The motions for the consideration of the Bill and its passage by the Forest Minister were both pressed to division and carried by a large majority.

The Council also passed several additional grants. The time being up further debate on the Criminal Law Bill was not resumed to-day and was postponed to 4th. March.

#### MINISTERS' SALARIES

**23rd. FEBRUARY:**—In the Council, to-day, Tharrawaddy U. Pu's motion for a token cut in the Ministers' salaries for discussing and condemning dyarchy was negatived. Although it was the last day for demands the President adjourned the Council for want of quorum on the third occasion and as a result the Ministers' demands were not passed.

#### CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL REJECTED

**4th. MARCH:**—When the Council re-assembled to-day there was a debate on the *Criminal Law Amendment Bill* which the Home Member introduced to convert the Burma Anti-terrorist Ordinance into ordinary law. After two and half hours' discussion, the Home Member's motion for consideration of the Bill was lost in a division, 30 voting for and 46 against.

Discussion of the Budget cuts in the Education and Minister's demands was also resumed, and the Council granted the entire demand without a cut after which the Council adjourned till the next-day.

The amended statement of objects and reasons for the Criminal Law Amendment Bill issued this morning referred to the existence of a revolutionary party instead of a section of the Bengal Revolutionary party. To this attention was drawn by Tharrawaddy U Pu during the discussion.

Opening the debate on the Criminal Law Bill *Colonel Welborne* (in charge of the C. I. D.) appealed to the House to support the Bill and save the country from being contaminated by revolutionary propaganda. He detailed the history and growth of the Bengal revolutionary party in Burma since 1922. He said the party first started collecting funds for the Bengal party, and later extended its activities and tried to get arms. The connection of the Bengal Party with Burma was definitely proved in the Dakshineswar case in 1926. Several revolutionary leaders visited Burma, made Insein their headquarters, started propaganda and in 1930 decided to commit outrages.

Mr. Welborne also stated that the Bengal Revolutionary Party indirectly encouraged the Tharrrawaddy rebellion by issuing seditious pamphlets. He remarked that violence was alien to Burmese character and emphasised the necessity for such a bill as it was impossible for the police to prevent such a propaganda under the ordinary law.

*Mr. M. I. Khan*, opposing, criticised the C. I. D. for not stopping such movements since 1922. He characterised the Bill as undignified and monstrous and said that the Bill would harass the public, as it was meant for every body generally.

*Mr. B. N. Das*, opposing, said that the Bill was ill-timed and ill-conceived. He submitted that the attempt to connect the so called Bengal Revolutionary with the unrest in Burma did not need intensive repudiation as on the face of it, it was absurd. He repudiated the arguments adduced by the Home Member in support of the Bill when he introduced it, and pointed out that the Government had failed to make out a case either for the Ordinance or for this Bill.

*Sir Oscar De Glanville*, supporting the motion, said that there was no ground for the allegation that the Bill would be used to harass the people as it contained safeguards. He said he listened to the opposition speeches with considerable surprise. The speaker believed that the Burma delegates at the Round Table Conference created a favourable impression in England, and believed that Burma would get a large measure of Responsible Government, but what that measure was depended especially on the people on the Opposition side. He asked the members to bear in mind that whatever happened in the Council was being carefully watched in England.

*U. Ba Pe*, Leader of the People's Party (main opposition party), opposing remarked that the Bill would increase hatred. He failed to understand why the Government did not nip the movement nine years ago. He said the causes of disaffection in Burma were economic, and no amount of repressive measure would prevent the people committing crimes so long as they were hungry. He opposed the Bill mainly on the ground that the Government were not trying to remove the root cause of hunger and starvation of the people, which would help recruitment of the Revolutionary party. "Lawless Law" he said, would rekindle the flames, and it was for the Government to find out ways and means to bring about economic prosperity. The present Bill tried to introduce a new precedent which was dangerous in the extreme, and therefore he opposed it.

*The Home Member* replying said that it was entirely wrong to say that the Government were indirectly attempting to get at political agitators as Tharrrawaddy rebels as such sections were not included in the schedule of the Bill. He repeated that the Bill was aimed against terrorists whatever his nationality, and said that it was entirely wrong to say that the Bill would give the Government power to harass the people.

The motion was pressed to a division and lost, a few members of the Independent Party, supporting the Government.

**5th. MARCH** :—The Council to-day adopted a non-official motion urging a separate Round Table Conference in London to formulate a constitution and grant responsible Government to Burma.

The Government remained neutral, while the Home Rule Party dissented.

The President informed the House that the Governor had sent a message for a reconsideration of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill but the House did not grant leave to the Home Member to introduce the Bill. The Government was defeated by a majority of 11 votes. The Council was then *prorogued*.

# THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

President :—Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi.

The Budget session of the Bombay Legislative Council opened at Bombay on the 18th February 1931 under the presidency Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi. In presenting the Budget estimates for the year 1931-32, the Hon'ble Mr. G. B. Pradhan, the Finance Member said :—

'A review of the figures of the current year and the ensuing year is a tale of woe. We have to face it and try to find out ways and means. The remedy of the evil far lies in our power'.

Mr. Pradhan observed that the revised estimate of 1930-31 disclosed that the anticipated surplus of one lakh had been converted into a deficit of 119 lakhs of which the fall in excise revenue alone accounted for Rs. 76 lakhs and forest dues for Rs. 19 lakhs was partly due to vigorous picketing and the campaign for non-payment of taxes. This deficit, continued the Finance Member, had been met partly from the previous year's balance and partly through retrenchment in travelling and other allowances of officials as well as the abolition of the Development department and the posts of water diviner and superintending engineer, Minor Irrigation works. The advisability of other measures of economy like the retrenchment of the salaries of the ministerial services, and the salaries of the existing officials, said Mr. Pradhan, were under consideration while steps were already taken to revise the scale of pay as regards new entrants.

Turning to the budget estimates for 1931-32, he announced that the anticipated deficit of 65 lakhs, (the estimated revenue 15,14 lakhs, expenditure debitible to revenue being 15,89 lakhs) which, he stated, might have to be met mostly by borrowing. A portion of this deficit, about eight lakhs, it is expected, would be realized through the renewal of the Court Fees and Stamps Act and the extension of the Transfer of Properties Act to Poona, Ahmedabad and Karachi. The figure of debt stands at 67,25 lakhs approximately.

## CONDOLENCE

Glowing tributes were then paid to the late Pandit Motilal Nehru and Maulana Mahomed Ali in the Council when it adopted unanimously a condolence resolution expressing sorrow at the death of Pandit Motilal and Maulana Mahomed Ali.

Speaking on behalf of the Government Sir Earnest Hotsen, leader of the House remarked that all India regretted the death of the two great patriots who laid down their lives while serving their country each in his own manner which he considered best. Both of them, Sir Earnest added, had the power of inspiring not only the respect and esteem but also the affection even of their political opponent.

The resolution was further supported among others by Maulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed, Minister for Education, and Sir Reginald Spence.

## GREETINGS TO LORD WILLINGTON.

The Council also unanimously adopted another resolution moved by Rai Bahadur S. K. Bole offering warm greetings to Lord Willington upon his appointment as the next Viceroy of India.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

23rd. FEBRUARY :—The Council reassembled to-day for the general discussion on the budget proposals.

Before the debate commenced, the Council proceeded to elect a Vice-President.

Of the two candidates, who offered themselves for election, Mr. N. F. Navle (non-Brahmin), was declared elected by a narrow majority of 44 votes, against 43 votes secured by Rao Bahadur R. R. Kale.

Mr. Mahomed Balooch (Karachi) initiated the debate on the budget. He severely criticised the Government's financial policy and complained of the step-motherly treatment meted out to Karachi in particular. He opposed the proposal to renew the Court Fees and Stamp Acts as a means to meet the budget deficit and urged retrenchment in the administrative expenditure as a remedial measure.

Several other speakers followed in the same strain and warned the Government that the proposed renewal of Court Fees and Stamp Acts would hit the agricultural classes severely, when they were already undergoing great hardships.

Next day, the 24th. FEBRUARY, Mr. G. Wiles, Financial Secretary, made a vigorous defence of the Government's financial policy which, he declared, ran on sound financial lines. He referred to the previous speakers who had remarked that this was the seventh of the series of deficit budgets, and only proved that Government was "riding for a fall." He differed from this view and explained that there was no procedure whereby it is possible to spend the previous year's savings which, in the case of Bombay was considerable, being the accumulations during the War years, except by creating a deficit in the year in which they spent the savings. This it was which explained the deficits from the first year of the Reforms. He added that there was therefore no voice inherent in presenting a technical deficit budget in certain years. This accounted for the deliberate deficit budgets in 1921-22 and 1926-27. In the other years, the deficits were due to the abolition of the Development Department and the decision to meet the interest for development loans from the accumulated balances. This transfer of interest payment to the revenues, he maintained, was a perfectly legitimate and sound transaction, which placed the finances of the presidency on a firm footing.

Mr. J. B. Abercrombie (Bombay Chamber of Commerce) criticised the Government's "pernicious principle" of borrowing to balance the budget unless the Finance Member satisfied the House that adequate retrenchment all-round had been carried out.

Mr. J. B. Petit (Mill-owners' Association), declared that he was opposed to any fresh taxation and suggested that non-official members should get together to consider schemes of retrenchment which could conveniently be carried out.

Rao Bahadur L. V. Parulekar strongly criticised the conduct of the Police during the recent months and said that they, far from being guardians of law and order, had been the cause of annoyance and trouble to peace-loving people on several occasions.

Next day, the 25th. FEBRUARY the Finance Member, replying to the debate, pointed out that real retrenchment in the administrative expenditure, as far as it could be carried out without detriment to the services, had been effected since 1927-28. Hitherto nearly half a crore retrenchment had been made. He also quoted facts and figures to show that the debt position, as revealed in the Blue Book, would be considerably less if valuable properties like the Sukkur Barrage lands and those belonging to the Development Department were sold. These, he added, remained unsold for the time being, as the market was unfavourable for the sale to be expected. He emphasised that the Sukkur works were carried out on the most careful estimates, which were revised from time to time and even at the present moment, it was proposed to examine the estimates in the light of the present position of the works. A White Paper would be issued for the information of the house.

While the Finance Member admitted that the financial position was anxious there was, he said, no warrant for the members accusing it of riding for a fall.

Earlier, Mr. Hudson, Revenue Member, addressing the House alluded to the fall in prices of commodities and promised certain concessions to be granted to agriculturists in this connection. He stated that modifications of the land revenue assessment which were demanded by the House caused the Government anxiety and were being carefully examined. He pointed out however that it had to be remembered that remission of only two annas in the rupee would involve an addition of 60 lakhs to



the existing deficit. The Government however, he continued, had decided as a special concession that none should be expected to pay more than one year's revenue. The Government were also making it as easy as possible for agriculturists to pay by postponing instalments wherever such a step was thought desirable. This was the length to which the Government could fairly go.

Referring to Sind, the Revenue Member said collection of the first kharif instalment had been postponed for one month, while a further announcement would be made after careful consideration. He added that he was afraid the extravagant claims made before him during his tour in Sind could not be satisfied, but he assured the House that the Government sympathised with the people of Sind in their misfortunes.

Sir *Earnest Hotson*, Home Member, replying to the criticism against the Government of Bombay moving to Mahabaleswar during the summer months, announced that the present cost of Rs. 67,000, which was mainly in connection with the Government House expenses, were being reduced by two-thirds. The future cost would only be in round figures of Rs. 25,000 a year.

Referring to the threat held out to force the Government to make larger cuts in expenditure by refusing to pass Taxation Bills, Mr. Hotson warned the House that the proposal was very dangerous as the Government would, in its turn, be forced to make large cuts in the nation-building departments as happened in 1922.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

*26th. FEBRUARY:—Sir Frederick Skeyes'* Governor of Bombay, addressed the Council this afternoon. In the course of his speech, His Excellency reviewed the political, economic, agricultural and educational problems of the presidency at length. His Excellency commenced his speech by offering a warm welcome to new members and referred to the special circumstances under which they were elected and congratulated them on coming forward despite the boycott and opposition and standing as champions of constitutional methods of co-operation and negotiation against those of intimidation adopted by their opponents. His Excellency added that the results of the Round Table Conference had justified and vindicated the stand which they took.

His Excellency next referred to the unsatisfactory financial condition of the presidency and added that in view of this it was necessary to have additional taxation. The satisfactory financial condition, His Excellency held, was not peculiar to India alone but common to practically every country in the world. But the severity of the disaster in this country was enhanced by the civil disobedience movement. His Excellency further said the Congress had ignored the elementary maxim that business and politics should be kept separate and they had used all their power and influence to cause interference with trade which had made the depression even more acute in India than in other countries. Farther, they had made a deliberate attack upon the revenues of the Government with a view to paralyse the administration, in which they had achieved a sufficient measure of success to add materially to the Government's financial embarrassments. Finally, their deliberate interference with the maintenance of law and order had caused additional expenditure which had completely swallowed up the accumulations of past years.

Referring to the prospects of next year, His Excellency said 1931 would be a year of great difficulty both commercially and financially. But he saw signs of better trade conditions. But if the Congress still persisted in their methods of interference with trade, the chances of recovery during the coming year were small.

His Excellency next referred to various things done by the Government and the Government was trying to introduce retrenchment in all departments. Referring to the extra jail and police arrangements, His Excellency said two temporary jails had been opened to accommodate the large number of prisoners and 2,400 extra police had been employed for dealing with civil disobedience. They in common with all ranks of the permanent department, said His Excellency, had been daily and hourly subjected to a severe

trial of endurance in the struggle with law breakers which had caused bitterness. His Excellency testified to his grateful appreciation of their wonderful discipline, courage and restraint which could not fail to win the admiration of all thoughtful and fair-minded persons.

Concluding, His Excellency referred to the Delhi conversations and said that no useful purpose would be served and indeed harm might result were he at this stage to say anything about the progress of the conversations. In view of the immense difficulties of the Indian problem, His Excellency appealed solemnly to work for an honourable settlement of the political struggle which greatly impeded and retarded the country's progress in every direction.

Continuing, he said peace was the great need of India at the present moment both to enable her to get out of the financial quagmire into which the country had been plunged and to ensure that the best advantage was taken of the splendid opportunity for political progress created by the success of the Round Table Conference. The result of that conference as summarised in the Premier's speech and amplified in the subsequent debate in Parliament, was surely sufficient guarantee of the good faith of the British Government. That had been reinforced in India by the immediate release of members of the Working Committee to allow them an opportunity of studying the new situation created by the result of the Round Table Conference. Consistently with the discharge of its responsibility, the Government could go no further and His Excellency asked all the members to use their influence with the Congress to induce them to be reasonable on their side.

The present, His Excellency continued, was indeed a golden opportunity which if not seized might pass for ever. If peace was not secured at present, His Excellency said signs were not wanting to show that a communal strife might develop which might put back the clock of India's progress. His Excellency, therefore, appealed whole-heartedly to work for peace which would mean a glorious achievement of contributing to the advancement of the country, the solution of its problems and the attainment of its political ideals.

#### THE COURT FEES AMEND. BILL

*27th. FEBRUARY:*—In the Council, to-day, the Government sustained a defeat on its taxation proposals. By a majority of 60 to 31, the Council rejected the first reading of the Bill further to amend the Court Fees Act which was sought to be renewed.

#### THE STAMP ACT AMEND. BILL

The Finance Member then introduced a Bill to further amend the Stamp Act in its application to Bombay. The proposal evoked strong opposition from the non-official benches.

Rao Bahadur Dr. Patil moved an amendment that the life of the Bill should be restricted to two years.

The Government accepted the amendment which however was carried to a division and thrown out.

Eventually, consideration of the Bill was postponed till after the disposal of the demands.

#### BOMBAY CHILDREN'S ACT AMEND. BILL

The House however unanimously passed the first reading of the Bill to further amend the Bombay Children's Act of 1924.

## SUPPRESSION OF SURAT MUNICIPALITY

On the 2nd. MARCH:—Mr. Chitale (Ahmednagar district) moved antadjournment of the business of the Council for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public interest, namely, the supersession of the Surat Municipality.

Sir Earnest Hotson, Home Member, objected to the motion which, however, was supported by 46 members and the motion was allowed.

When the motion came for consideration after tea interval, several members spoke on the motion whereon the Minister for Local Self-Government undertook to examine the matter further and reduce the period of suspension to a minimum if the law permitted him to do so.

Mr. Chitale withdrew the motion on these considerations.

## CUT IN LAND REVENUE DEMAND

On the 3rd. MARCH:—The Government sustained their second defeat of the session when the House by 41 votes against 40 votes adopted the motion of Mr. V. N. Jog (Dharwar) for a cut of five lakhs under the head Land Revenue.

Sir Earnest Hotson, leader of the House, drew the attention of the President that he had seen two members being taken forcibly into the Opposition lobby and made to vote against a Bill. Such incidents, he declared, entirely vitiated the voting.

The members concerned, questioned by the President, replied that they had voted of their own free accord.

The President, however, cautioned the members against canvassing votes on the floor of the House.

## FELICITATIONS ON GANDHI-IRWIN AGREEMENT

6th. MARCH:—Feelings of unalloyed rejoicings at the successful conclusion of the Irwin-Gandhi parleys were voiced from all sections of the House this afternoon, when it adopted unanimously a resolution moved by *Rao Bahadur R. R. Kale* welcoming the Premier's declaration on Jan. 19 and expressing 'extreme gratification at the satisfactory termination of the peace negotiations between Lord Irwin and Gandhiji and respectfully offered them their grateful felicitations. The Council further placed on record its high appreciation of the services rendered and the strenuous and patriotic efforts of Sir T. B. Saprú, Mr. Sastri and Mr. Jayakar in bringing about the happy result.

His Excellency was present in the Governors' gallery.

Speaking on the resolution members representing various sections of the House said that they were singularly glad because the great task that was begun at the Round Table Conference had taken its logical development in co-operation with the Congress consequent upon the proper appreciation of the implications of the Premier's declaration. They declared that the Round Table Conference sounded the death-knell of the Birkenhead tone which was now replaced by the spirit of understanding.

Of the spirit of sincerity of the British Government *Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto* said he had no doubt whatever and maintained that the Premier's speech read with the speeches of the Opposition delegations at the final plenary sessions definitely committed Parliament to a favourable attitude towards India. If this had not been so, if Gandhiji had not seen therein the substance of independence he wanted he would have been the last person to give in.

Other members while speaking in the same felicitous strain remarked that now that peace was concluded it was up to the Congress to apply itself to the solution of problems like Hindu-Muslim unity and minorities. They urged that due consideration should be given to their rights in any settlement effected.

*Sir Ernest Hotson*, Home Member, associating himself and the Government with the resolution paid a tribute to Lord Irwin. He deprecated any attempt at criticism of any party at this stage and said at a time like the present they had to forgive and forget unkindness. In the struggle just over everyone should join in admiring the patriotism and the self-sacrifice of those who suffered for the cause they believed to be right. At the same time all would join in expressing thanks to the Government servants who had done their best in the discharge of their duties. One very great thing remained to be done, namely, the satisfactory solution of questions like federation and minorities.

The resolution was carried with acclamation and the house then adjourned.

# **Congress & Conferences**

**JANUARY TO JUNE 1931**

# THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

ALLAHABAD—21st. JANUARY 1931,

*Resolutions passed by the Working Committee which met at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad at 4 p. m. on the 21st. January 1931 :—*

### DEATH OF MAULANA MOHAMED ALI

"The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress places on record its deep sense of the loss sustained by the country by the death of Maulana Mohamed Ali, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress whose great courage, lofty patriotism, spirit of self-sacrifice and dynamic personality had been of great value to the Congress and the Nation."

"Resolved further that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Begum Mohamed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali."

### STATUS OF ANGLO-INDIANS.

"Read the memorandum of Mr. Kenneth E. Wallace addressed to Pandit Motilal Nehru asking for certain assurances regarding the position of the Anglo-Indian community in free India. Resolved that Mr. Kenneth E. Wallace be informed that the Congress has always stood for religious and cultural liberty, equality of opportunity in the matter of education and public employment and freedom to pursue any trade or calling for all children of the motherland irrespective of whatever creed or community to which they may belong, and assures the Anglo-Indian community that a national government will guarantee these rights."

"As regards the assistance of the State being given to particular communities to raise funds by taxing themselves for educational or other purposes intended for their own benefit, this committee is of opinion that this may certainly be done provided that the purpose is not inconsistent with national policy."

### THE PREMIER'S DECLARATION

"After the committee had adopted the resolution on the situation created by the Premier's declaration a cablegram was received by Pandit Motilal Nehru from Messrs Shastri, Jayakar and Sapru which ran as follows :—

"Starting tomorrow meanwhile earnestly beg you postpone decision till we meet."

"The Working Committee considered the cablegram and sent the following reply :—

"Your cable received after Working Committee unanimously adopted resolution on situation. In deference your wishes will not release for publication till we meet. Meanwhile Congress programme will continue to be followed."

ALLAHABAD—31st. JAN. & 1st. FEB. 1931.

*Resolutions passed by the Wg. C. which was held at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad on the 31st. January and 1st. Feb. 1931 :—*

### NO SUSPENSION OF MOVEMENT

"The Working Committee having, out of regard for the wishes of Syta. Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar, suspended publication of its resolution passed on 21-1-31, an impression has got abroad that the movement of civil disobedience has been suspended. It is therefore necessary to reiterate the decision of the Committee that the movement is to continue unabated until explicit instructions are issued to the contrary. This meeting reminds the public that picketing of foreign cloth and

drink and drug shops in itself is no part of the civil disobedience campaign, but that it is the exercise of the ordinary right of a citizen so long as it remains strictly peaceful and causes no obstruction to the public."

"This meeting further reminds the sellers of foreign cloth including foreign yarn, and Congress workers that the boycott of foreign cloth being a vital necessity in the interest of the masses, is a permanent feature of national activity and will remain so till the nation has acquired the power to exclude foreign cloth and foreign yarn from India, whether by total prohibition or prohibitive tariff."

"Whilst appreciating the response made by dealers in foreign cloth and foreign yarn to the appeal of the Congress to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth, this meeting reminds them that it is not open to any Congress organisation to hold out hopes of their being able to dispose of their existing stock in India."

"Owing to the abnormal conditions existing in the country the Working Committee, in the exercise of its extraordinary powers, hereby appoints Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the President of the ensuing session of the Congress to be held at Karachi."

"Resolved: that the present A. I. C. C. do continue to function till such time as suitable arrangements can be made to hold the elections."

"Resolved that the next meeting of the Working Committee be held on the 13th February 1931 at such place as may be fixed by the President."

#### ALLAHABAD—13th. FEBRUARY 1931.

*Resolutions passed by the Wg. C. held at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad at 9 a. m. on February 19, 1931:—*

#### DEATH OF PT. MOTILAL NEHRU

"This meeting of the Working Committee places on record its deep sorrow over the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru whose counsel was a source of strength to all Congress workers, whose noble sacrifice was an inspiration to the ease-loving and whose courage was a solvent for the weakness of the weak."

"This meeting conveys its respectful condolences to Srimati Swarup Rani and the members of the family."

#### ELECTION OF DELEGATES

"Resolved that owing to the abnormal conditions existing in the country, the Working Committee in the exercise of its extraordinary powers authorises the President to issue instructions regarding the election of delegates to the Karachi Congress as far as possible before the end of this month."

"A Sub-Committee consisting of President Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shri B. Rajagopalachar and Shri Jammalal Bajaj was appointed to make recommendations regarding the Swaraj Bhawan."

"At Gandhiji's request the Working Committee postpones its final decision in regard to the present situation and adjourns its proceedings to an early date to be fixed by the President. Meanwhile the movement shall continue unabated in terms of the resolution arrived at on the 1st February 1931."

"The Committee also considered the report of Swaraj Bhawan Sub-Committee and approved of it. It was decided that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should execute a deed of trust appointing trustees in whom the property would vest."

#### DELHI—21st. FEB. TO 6th. MARCH 1931.

*Resolutions passed by the Wg. C. at Delhi from February 21st. 1931 to March 6th. 1931:—*

#### RULES FOR BOYCOTT

The Working Committee notes with satisfaction the great results so far attained in the matter of the boycott of foreign cloth and drinks and drugs. It lays down the following rules and instructions for the guidance of workers and organisations:—

The Working Committee warns all workers and organisations that the introduction of any element of physical compulsion will undo the great results so far

achieved and expose the Congress to the charge of a denial in practice of its own professions.

"The Working Committee trusts that all Congress and allied organisations and workers will strictly conform to the following rules :—

(1) The conduct of picketers shall be uniformly courteous towards dealers and buyers. There shall be no rudeness or bad language or rough behaviour.

(2) There should be no burning of effigies of recalcitrant dealers or *hai has's* or other unseemly cries or exhibitions.

(3) There should be no cordon, amounting to physical prohibition of movement of those who may handle prohibited articles.

(4) There should be no boycott of dealers or buyers amounting to deprivation of the necessaries of life.

(5) Greater effort should be made to enlist the services of women in the boycott campaign and as far as possible volunteers shall be drawn from the neighbourhood.

(6) The campaign shall be carried on by :

(a) picketing singly as in batches near the shop or in the neighbourhood and warning customers against buying foreign cloth or drinks or drugs.

(b) waiting as often as necessary on the shop-keepers in deputation and putting the national case before them.

(c) distribution of leaflets showing the advantages of the boycotts to the individual as well as to the nation and giving a resume from time to time of the progress of boycott.

(d) processions and singing parties taken through localities from which the buying public for the particular areas are drawn.

(e) lectures, discourses, lantern exhibitions and the like.

(f) boycott committees meeting and trying to understand and remove wherever possible the difficulties of dealers.

(g) inducing millowners to apply their resources to induce foreign cloth dealers to come to reasonable terms.

The Working Committee is of opinion that complete boycott is possible only by sustained work in the villages through khadi and therefore exhorts all Congressmen and the supporters of the Congress not to relax their efforts in respect of khaddar and to concentrate on the introduction of hand spinning and carding wherever they have not found a footing and the production and distribution of khaddar.

The Wg.C. warns buyers against spurious khaddar whether manufactured in foreign or indigenous mills or woven on hand looms from mill yarn.

#### ELECTION OF DELEGATES FOR KARACHI CONGRESS

In view of the abnormal conditions that have hitherto prevailed in the country and the difficulties that may arise in the conduct of the election of delegates for the next Congress in the usual manner and also with a view to give every facility to the large numbers of men and women who have suffered imprisonment in the national campaign to exercise their franchise and to get elected as delegates for the Congress, the Working Committee resolves the following directions be followed in regard to these elections.

The quota of delegates allotted to each district shall be divided into two halves, one half being elected by those who have suffered imprisonment in the civil disobedience campaign and the other half in the normal manner or where this is not possible in the manner hereinafter prescribed. In case the number allotted to the district is an odd number, the extra delegate will be allotted to the former group, that is to say those who have suffered imprisonment.

*Election of delegates by those who have suffered imprisonment*—The executive of the district shall arrange for one or more meetings to be held consisting of those who have suffered imprisonment in the civil disobedience campaign for the purpose of electing the number of delegates allotted to them. It will be open to all such persons attending this meeting who otherwise comply with the qualifications for the franchise to sign the Congress pledge and pay their subscription at any time before or including the time of meeting. Every such meeting shall elect its own chairman who shall act as the returning officer.

*Normal election*—The second half of the quota of delegates for the district shall be elected in the normal manner, but in case this is not practicable the executive of the district Congress organisation shall itself be authorised to elect these delegates.

If either half of the quota for the district is, for any reason, not filled up in this



manner, the provincial executive shall elect the remaining number provided that the deficiency in respect of the first half shall be made good by electing the remaining number from the released prisoners.

The quota of delegates elected directly by the provincial Congress committees may be elected by the executive of such committees.

*Bengal*—In view of the fact that certain difficulties have arisen in the course of previous elections in the province of Bengal and in order to avoid such difficulties and to provide for a speedy and final decision of all points and disputes, Mr. M. S. Aney is appointed the referee for all elections of delegates for the Congress from Bengal. Mr. Aney shall have power to supplement and amend the directions given above and to decide every dispute that may be referred to him relating to the election of delegates.

The President is authorised to issue further directions in all cases and, if necessary, to amend or alter these regulations in order to give full effect to the spirit and intention thereof.

All lists of duly elected delegates shall be prepared in triplicate, and sent to the Chairman, Congress Reception Committee, Karachi, the General Secretary, All India Congress Committee, Allahabad and the Provincial Committees. A complete list of all such delegates should reach Allahabad on or before the 22nd March, 1931. The supplemental or other lists will be valid if received at the A. I. C. C. office in Karachi three days before the holding of the Congress.

#### PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT

The Working Committee having considered the terms of the provisional settlement arrived at between the Government of India and Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the Congress, endorses them and directs the Congress Committees to take immediate action in accordance with them. The Committee hopes that the country will carry out the terms agreed to in so far as they relate to the various Congress activities and is of opinion that on a strict fulfilment of the obligations undertaken on behalf of the Congress will depend the advance of India towards Purna Swaraj.

#### KARACHI—25th.: TO 31st. MARCH 1931.

*The Working Committee which met at Karachi from 25th. to 31st. of March passed the following resolutions:*

"The General Secretaries presented their report which was passed with amendments. In view of the fact that the General Secretaries' report was necessarily incomplete the Committee resolved that a full report for the year 1930 be prepared soon after the sessions of the Congress and that the report do contain facts and figures relating to the civil disobedience movement. Further that the provincial committees be directed to send their provincial reports at an early date."

"The Committee recommended resolutions 1 to 17 of the Subjects Committee and which were subsequently passed by the Indian National Congress as also the following resolution which was adopted by the Subjects Committee:—

"All resolutions received from Provincial Congress Committees or individual members not covered by the resolutions already passed by the Subjects Committee are hereby referred to the Working Committee of the Congress for disposal."

#### The All-India Congress Committee

*The All-India Congress Committee met in the Subjects Committee tent at Harchandrai Nagar, Karachi, at 2 p. m. on March 27 and 28, 1931, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presiding on the first day and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the second day.*

1. The minutes of the last meeting held at Sabarmati on March 21, 1930 were confirmed.

2. The proceedings of the Working Committee were placed before the house.

3. The General Secretaries' report as amended by the Working Committee was presented to the Committee. Objections were raised by various members to various parts of the report and it was resolved that the report be withdrawn. The Committee endorsed the following resolution of the Working Committee:

"In view of the fact that the General Secretaries' report was necessarily incomplete the Committee resolved that a full report for the year 1930 be prepared soon after the sessions of the Congress and that the report do contain facts and figures relating to the civil disobedience movement. Further that the provincial committees be directed to send their provincial reports at an early date."

The Committee then resolved itself into the Subjects Committee of the Congress.

*The A. I. C. C. met again at 10 a.m. on April 1, 1931 in the Subjects Committee tent, Harchandrai Nagar, Karachi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel presiding.*

1. Resolved that all resolutions referred by the Subjects Committee to the A. I. C. C. be referred to the Working Committee.

2. The following ten members were elected to the Working Committee: Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Srimati Sarojini Naidu, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Shri Rajendra Prasad, Shri J. M. Sen-Gupta, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Shri M. S. Aney, Shri K. F. Nariman and Dr. Mohammad Alam.

NOTE.—Besides these the following are ex-officio members:

*President:* Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel; *Treasurer:* Seth Jammalal Bajaj; *General Secretaries:* Dr. Syed Mahmud, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.

3. Resolved that the new elections to the All-India Congress Committee should be completed by June 15, 1931.

4. The following election disputes Panel was elected. Shri S. Satyamurti, Shri T. Viswanatham, Swami Govindanand, Shri Kaleswara Rao, Shri R. K. Sidhwa, Lala Dunichand, Dr. B. C. Roy, Shri K. Bhashyam, Shri Rajkrishna Bose and Shri T. A. K. Sherwani.

### The New Working Committee

The new Working Committee met at Mahatma Gandhi's tent, Harchandrai Nagar, Karachi, on April 1 and 2, 1931. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel presiding. The following members were present at one or both the meetings:—

Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Srimati Sarojini Naidu, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Seth Jammalal Bajaj, Shri Rajendra Prasad, Shri J. M. Sen-Gupta, Sardar Sardul Sing Caveeshar, Shri M. S. Aney, Shri K. F. Nariman, Dr. Mohammad Alam, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.

The following resolutions were passed:—

#### I—NATIONAL FLAG COMMITTEE

##### *Resolved*

Whereas the National Flag now in vogue has gained popularity by usage and convention and whereas objection has been taken to the three colours in the flag on the ground that they are conceived on a communal basis, the Working Committee hereby appoints the following as a Committee for the purpose of examining the objections and recommending a flag for the acceptance of the Congress. The Committee shall have the authority to take such evidence as it may consider necessary and to send its report and recommendations to the Working Committee on or before July 31, 1931.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr. N. S. Hardikar, Syt. D. B. Kalikar, Master Tara Singh and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya will be the convener and three members will form a quorum.

#### II—BHAGAT SINGH CREMATION ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

Whereas allegations have been made in the press to the effect that the remains of the late Sardar Bhagat Singh and Syts. Rajguru and Sukh Deb were mutilated and were not properly cremated and were otherwise dealt with in an insulting manner and great public indignation has been expressed by reason of those allegations, the Working Committee appoints the following as a committee to examine those allegations forthwith and to take such evidence as may be necessary and to report to the Working Committee on or before the 30th inst.

Pandit K. Santanam, Maulana Abdul Qadir Kasuri, Dr. Satyapal, Malik Barkat Ali, Mr. Jiwani Lal Kapoor, Lala Raizada Hansraj. Dr. Satyapal will act as convener.

## III—FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

In view of the proviso to the Congress resolution No. 15 the Working Committee hereby appoints the following as a committee to invite opinion and suggestions from Provincial Congress Committees and other bodies and persons and to report and recommend to the Working Committee, on or before May 31 next, such revision, amendment or addition as in its opinion may be necessary to make the resolution fuller and more exhaustive:

Syt. C. Rajagopalachariar, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Syt. S. Satyamurti, Dr. Pramathanath Banerji, Syt. Sri Prakasa, Shri Ramdayalu Sinha, Prof. Brij Narain. Syt. Sri Prakasa will act as convener and three members will form a quorum.

## IV—PUBLIC DEBT ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

The Working Committee appoints a Committee consisting of Mr. D. N. Babadurji, Prof. K. T. Shah, Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai and Mr. J. C. Kumarappa (convener) to carry out a scrutiny into the financial transactions of the East India Company and the British Government in India and the so-called Public Debt of India and to report on the obligations which should in future be borne by India or England. The Committee be requested to present its report by the end of May.

## V—CONGRESS DELEGATE TO ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

With reference to the Congress resolution No. 5 appointing the delegation to the Round Table Conference, the Working Committee is of opinion that Mahatma Gandhi should be the sole delegate on behalf of the Congress.

## VI—DEPUTATION ON COMMUNAL QUESTION

The Working Committee decided to send a deputation consisting of the following persons to Delhi to meet the Muslim Leaders to settle the communal question: Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and Seth Jammalal Bajaj.

## VII—POLITICAL PRISONERS

With reference to resolution No. 3 of the Congress Mr. Nariman is hereby appointed to collect from all the provinces the names, addresses, occupations, sentences and the nature of offences of the prisoners and others covered by the resolution.

## VIII—VACANCIES IN COMMITTEES

If any of the members of the several sub-committees refuses to act as member, then the president will fill up the vacancy.

## IX—A RESOLUTION POSTPONED

With reference to Hindu-Muslim Unity resolution sent in by Messrs. Sunderlal, Manzar Ali Sokhta and Abdur Rahim, in view of the Congress resolution further proceeding is postponed.

## BOMBAY—9th. to 11th. JUNE 1931

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Manibhuvan, Bombay, on June 9, 10 and 11, 1931.

The following members were present:—

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, (*Chairman*), Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Shri. J. M. Sen-Gupta, Seth Jammalal Bajaj, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Shri M. S. Aney, Shri K. F. Nariman, Dr. Mohammad Alam, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram and Dr. Syed Mahmud.

Shri Rajendra Prasad was also present part of the time but had to withdraw on account of illness.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Working Committee were confirmed.

The following resolutions were passed:

## I—BENGAL ELECTION DISPUTES

In view of the local situation that has arisen in Bengal in connection with the Provincial Congress Committee elections, and in view of charges being made generally in connection with the affairs of the B. P. C. C. and in view of counter charges, the Working Committee, after having heard Syts. J. M. Sen-Gupta and Subhas Chandra Bose and with their consent, appoints Syt. Madhavrao S. Aney to be the sole arbitrator to entertain all the matters that might be referred to him by the respective parties and to give his final decisions thereon; provided that the appointment of the arbitrator shall not be deemed to cause the suspension of the elections now going on except that it shall be open to the arbitrator, on sufficient cause being shown, to suspend the elections.

## II—CONGRESS PARTICIPATION IN THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The Working Committee hopes that the efforts that are now being made to secure an honourable and satisfactory settlement of the communal problem will meet with success, but the Committee is of opinion that, even should these efforts unfortunately fail, in order to avoid any possibility of the Congress attitude being misunderstood in any shape or form, other conditions being favourable, Mahatma Gandhi should represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference, if thereto required, for the presentation of the Congress position.

## III—EXTENSION OF TIME TO COMMITTEES

At the request of the Committees concerned, the following extensions of time were granted for presentation of their reports :

- (a) The Fundamental Rights Committee : up to end of June.
- (b) The Public Debts Committee : up to June 21.

It was further decided that the usual travelling expenses be paid to the members of the Committee on demand.

## IV—CERTIFICATION OF SHOPS

The Committee does not approve of the policy of Congress organisations issuing certificates to shops dealing in cloth, except those dealing exclusively in khaddar, and the Committee advises those organisations which have already issued such certificates to withdraw them.

The Committee also does not approve of the policy of issuing certificates by the Congress to weaving handlooms, except those using handspun yarn, and such certificates as have been issued should be withdrawn.

## V—BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH

This Committee has noted with regret that some Congress organisations have infringed the directions issued by it in regard to the programme of boycott of foreign cloth by permitting the sale of the existing stock of foreign cloth for certain periods. The Committee calls upon these organisations immediately to cancel all such arrangements as they are against the declared policy of the Congress, namely, the complete prohibition of both the sale in India of the existing stocks and of the importation of any further foreign cloth. In the event of any infringement of the directions of the Committee in regard to the programme of the Foreign Cloth Boycott, the President of the Congress is authorised to take disciplinary action against the Committee or the individual concerned as the case may be.

## VI—PRISONERS NOT COVERED BY THE TRUCE

As required by the resolution No. 3 of the last meeting of the Working Committee, Mr. K. F. Nariman submitted the list of prisoners not covered by the Truce.

It was decided that the list be forwarded to Mahatma Gandhi for necessary action.

## VII—N. W. F. P. C. C. AND OFFICIAL COMMITTEES

With reference to the inquiry of the Frontier P. C. C., it was resolved that the evidence may be led before the Official Frontier Rules and Regulations Committee and the Frontier Revision Enquiry Committee, if there is still time and opportunity available for the satisfactory presentation of the popular case.

## VIII—FINANCIAL AID TO THE FRONTIER P. C. C.

With reference to an application from the Frontier P. C. C. asking for financial aid, the Committee authorised the President to deal with the matter finally.

## IX—SWADESHI BOARD

The Committee *resolved* that a Swadeshi Board be formed to help the Swadeshi Movement in every way possible, by means of preparation of a Directory of Swadeshi goods, by propaganda and otherwise. This Board will deal with Swadeshi articles other than cloth. The Committee authorised the President, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to recommend the names of members of this Board and frame the definition of "Swadeshi," for submission to the Working Committee at its next meeting.

The Working Committee is of opinion that Congress Committees as such should not make themselves responsible for issuing certificates to manufacturers or dealers in Swadeshi goods.

## X—SYT. N. S. RAGHAVACHARI

The Committee considered Syt. N. S. Raghavachari's application and *resolved* that he should be granted an increment of Rs. 10 per mensem. While on deputation with Mahatma Gandhi he should further get an allowance of Rs. 15 per mensem.

## XI—DELHI ELECTION DISPUTES.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed the sole arbitrator to dispose finally the election disputes in Delhi Province.

## XII—EXTENSION OF TIME FOR ELECTION.

The Committee authorised the President, wherever he may consider necessary, to extend the time for the elections of the A. I. C. C.

## XIII—PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In anticipation of the confirmation by the A. I. C. C. the Working Committee fixed the same amounts as Provincial Contributions to the A. I. C. C. as were fixed for the last year. The Committee *resolved* that these Provincial Contributions should be paid by the Provincial Congress Committees before August 15, 1931.

## XIV—HINDI TRANSLATION OF CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

It was *resolved* that in case Syt. Kanhayalal publishes the Hindi translation of all the Congress resolutions since 1886, a sum of Rs. 250 be paid to him as a grant towards the cost of publication and that one hundred copies of the publication be purchased from him for the use of the Congress.

## XV—CONGRESS LIBRARY

It was *resolved* that the Library of the A. I. C. C. should be removed from the Congress House, Bombay to the Allahabad office of the A. I. C. C.

## XVI—ACCOUNTS

The monthly accounts from January to April, 1931 were submitted and passed. It was *resolved* that the Ahmedabad office accounts should be submitted to the next meeting and that thereafter the same should be amalgamated with the Allahabad Office accounts.

## XVII—AUDITORS

Messrs. Dalal and Shah were re-appointed as auditors in anticipation of confirmation by the A. I. C. C.

## XVIII—ARTIFICIAL SILK

It was *resolved* that the questions regarding Artificial Silk raised by the Swadeshi Sabha, Ahmedabad should be referred to the President and Seth Jamnala Bajaj for disposal.

## XIX—WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

It was decided that the next meeting of the Working Committee should be held in Surat on July 1.

FORTYFIFTH SESSION OF  
**THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

*KARACHI—29th. MARCH 1931*

The 45th. Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Karachi in an open air stadium, named Motilal Pandal, which was packed to overflowing with delegates numbering over 3,200 from the different provinces and several thousands of visitors. Shortly after 6 in the evening, the President-elect Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, came to the pandal in a procession headed by volunteers, carrying two National Flags, immediately followed by the Frontier Red Shirts playing band. In the procession were also Mahatma Gandhi and other members of the Working Committee, Mr. Subash Bose and Abdul Gaffar Khan. Mr. Patel and Mahatma Gandhi received a grand ovation as they took their seats in an elegant *shamiana* facing north. The very large number of ladies in multi-coloured saris, sitting on the dais and occupying a huge segment of the circular stadium added splashes of colour to the sea of white caps and shirts. The proceedings began with the singing of Tagore's *Janagana mana*.

Scenes of great enthusiasm were witnessed and numerous messages of good-will and support from those not attending the session were noted. Though the open session was expected to be exciting, particularly over the resolution of the endorsement of the Gandhi-Irwin pact, there was a confident hope that Mahatma Gandhi would command an overwhelming majority and that he would have no difficulty in securing a vote of confidence for the Working Committee.

**Chairman's Speech**

*Dr. Choithram Gidwani*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his speech said :—

It is the proudest privilege of my life to welcome you to-day on this momentous occasion in the history of our national struggle for freedom. On behalf of the Reception Committee and the people of Sind, who have eagerly sought this opportunity ever since the Nagpur session of 1920, I extend to you a most hearty welcome. Eighteen years have passed since Sind was privileged to hold a session of the Congress and in that interval we have lost two of our foremost public men, Seth Harchandrai and Mr. Bhurgri, who were among the pioneers who built the Congress tradition in this province. Seth Harchandrai who organised the last Karachi Congress, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, we proudly recollect as the first martyr in the present campaign that started with the national boycott of the Simon Commission against which he was going to register his vote inspite of the protest of his medical advisers, when he met his death. As a humble tribute to his memory we have named our hastily improvised camp, Harchandrai Nagar. Mr. Ghulam Mahomed Bhurgri had been our foremost Muslim Congressman who always regarded himself an Indian first and a Muslim afterwards. No one in our province, Hindu or Muslim, had won the confidence of both communities to the extent to which Mr. Bhurgri did. The souls of Mr. Bhurgri and Harchandrai are with us in our welcome of you in our midst.

We are fully conscious of the defects and shortcomings in the arrangements that we have been able to make for your bare necessities. We seek your indulgence in view of the extraordinary circumstances in which this session is being held. A little more than a fortnight ago most of my comrades and co-workers who have shouldered the heavy task of this organization were prisoners of war, and the few who happened to be free could not tell even in the beginning of this month if the Congress session would be held at all. And almost on the eve of the Congress session came the tragic news of the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades which has plunged the whole country in sorrow and indignation and which has led us to abandon even the public entry and procession of the President-elect whom Karachi in other circumstances would have loved to give the gayest of welcomes. We have sought

rigidly to exclude all gaiety from our decorations in keeping with the seriousness and solemnity of the occasion. We take comfort in the knowledge that we are welcoming comrades in arms, nearly all of whom have laid all thought of comfort aside, and who come to us fresh from the rigorous discipline of prison life added during the last twelve months to their previous records of service and sacrifice and who know full well that they may be only having a brief respite that this truce affords.

#### IMMORTALS OF INDIAN HISTORY

Proud as we are to be your host on this historic occasion, great is our sorrow that fate has deprived us of the inspiring presence in our midst of that prince among patriots, the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, whose magnificent sacrifices in the cause of our freedom form one of the most glorious chapters in the history of that struggle which he conducted with consummate ability and brilliance. His death was hastened by the privations and sufferings of jail life which he cheerfully embraced at his advanced age, in spite of the precarious condition of his health. Pandit Motilal takes his place among the immortals of Indian history, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Chittaranjan Das and Lajpat Rai, whose names will for ever remain a priceless treasure for lovers of liberty. It is with a heavy heart that Sind offers a special welcome on this occasion to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who unfurled the Flag of Independence at Lahore on the midnight of 31st December 1929 and who has held it aloft ever since, with single-minded devotion and reckless courage. Death has deprived us also of another great leader, Moulana Mohamed Ali who also died serving the nation with fearless independence in far off London, martyr to his sense of duty. Karachi witnessed the famous trial in 1921 of which Maulana Mohamed Ali was the central figure and Karachi prison never held a more distinguished or a more determined foe of foreign domination.

#### TEN MONTHS OF PROBATION

Friends, we are meeting at a critical juncture in our history. For twelve months from the march to Dandi to the Delhi truce we have really lived. In 1920-21 we reached a wonderful height of emotional exaltation and ten years later in 1930-31 that emotion has been translated by the nation into heroic action. During those ten years of probation there has been a steady absorption of the teachings of our great-souled leader Mahatma Gandhi to whom the world pays homage to-day for having successfully evolved a matchless weapon that provides for righteous warfare, a righteous method. It is nothing short of a new dispensation in which brute force will no longer be the final arbiter in human affairs and might will not be acceptable as indisputable evidence of right. Mahatma's message is not for India alone. The evolution of that technique of Satyagraha in the course of this struggle is leading the world to claim the message as its own and from far off lands are heard echoes of great message. What sounded like only a creed ten years ago at Nagpur has been proved to be a potent practical weapon that claims superiority over steel and demands for its effectiveness, its exclusive use relegating old-world steel to rust. Undreamt of powers of endurance and resistance have been brought out by the exercise of this new instrument that brings a new hope to those that suffer from oppression and iniquity anywhere. Indian women, whom the world had been taught to believe, were only domestic chattel or harem toys, have established records of heroism for which history will find it difficult to find a parallel and even children have found a scope in the movement that has acted as a corrective to a century of dehumanizing education. Peasants and farmers have felt the glow of freedom and made sacrifices before which the better advertised woes of liquor dealers and foreign cloth merchants pale into insignificance. The nation has successfully stood brutal lathi charges. I have no doubt that, in spite of any misgivings and distrust that the more impatient among us may feel, the country will continue to follow with an ever increasing steadfastness and courage the path of non-violence chalked out by our illustrious leader. I even venture to hope that those fearless patriots who have counted their lives as naught in the pursuit of a different path, many of whom are unfortunately still in prison cells, will, at no distant date, be our comrades in arms, enforcing the will of a united nation wielding this invincible weapon that will win freedom in India and peace for the world.

#### A TRUCE AND NOT PEACE

It will be a fruitless task to discuss in detail the terms of the truce that has enabled us to hold this session of the Congress, not that there is any need of spo-

logising for them. The critics seem to forget that they are terms for a truce and not for a peace. What has been agreed to is a suspension of hostilities and not a termination thereof. The Working Committee was entirely justified in calling truce when they were satisfied that our opponents were in a frame of mind for peaceful negotiation on honourable terms. There is no other way of termination of the struggle at any time except by a successful negotiation. The history of previous efforts of Lord Reading and Lord Irwin to enter into such negotiations with Mahatma Gandhi should amply illustrate the determination of our illustrious leader not to let the Congress be drawn into a trap. He declined compromise in 1921 when valued co-workers put him down as an unpractical blunder. He declined compromise on the eve of the Lahore Congress when equally valued colleagues regretted his action. The Yeravada pourparlers are another instance in point. At Delhi, at last, after prolonged conversations he was convinced and he convinced the Working Committee that a change of heart was visible. He has surrendered nothing. The national resolve stands unaltered. We have met here to re-affirm it. While, however, I view with no misgivings Mahatmaji's decision and the decision of the Working Committee to agree to a truce, I cannot help thinking that the Lahore executions represent a grave error of judgment on the part of Government. Mahatmaji agreed to forego the inquiry into police excesses in order that atmosphere may not be vitiated for a peace effort by mutual recrimination. We had a right to expect that spirit of comradeship to be reciprocated. But now Government have made it difficult for us to believe in their desire to part with power. The continued detention of the detenus who have certainly not been convicted of any crimes of violence is also a source of greater discontent than ever. I am willing to place implicit faith in Mahatmaji's leadership but I must say that signs do not appear to be propitious for the conclusion of an honourable peace that would leave us masters in our own home. Britain must acknowledge our inherent right to be masters in our own home. She must abandon the insolent theory of trusteeship, agreeing to no longer lecture to minor wards but to talk on equal terms to people who are her equals in stature and who claim their rightful equality in status. All reservations and safeguards must be ruled out if they violate fundamental basis of any honourable negotiation. No curtailment of our inherent and inalienable right to manage our own affairs can be accepted merely to suit Tory prejudices or vested interests of England. Every safeguard must be in India's interests. The army of occupation as such must go and our financial administration must be as unfettered as that of Britain. England's management of Indian finances has not been so honourable that she can claim to retain control over them even in part, in *India's* interests.

#### FUNDAMENTALS OF THE DEMANDS

It will be your duty, friends, to discuss these terms for peace and issue your instrument of instructions to your plenipotentiaries during this session. The fundamentals of your demand have to be stated in explicit terms. We have to define the basis of the Federation. We can never be content with the dangerous doctrine evolved in London that Federation with the Ruling Princes, rather than the States, practically on their own terms, based on no guiding principle, will be the condition of central responsibility. Central responsibility is not a mere detail of the Indian constitution, the inclusion of which can be treated as hypothetical and conditional. It is the essence of our demand. In comparison, federation itself is a mere detail, being only the form while responsibility is the substance of self-government. Federate with the States by all means but there must be real recognition of common ideals and not merely geographical necessity for federation. The Princes in their own interests will do well to take this opportunity of coming into line with modern ideals. There are among them rulers who have shown enough intelligent anticipation to give grounds of hope that they will see that their best interests lie in their immediate conversion into constitutional potentates deriving their authority from the will of the people. It is only with such States that an India entering into a new era of freedom can federate to any advantage.

#### A UNITED FRONT

I will not encroach on your time any further. I have only to add that all our dreams of immediate freedom will be idle fancies if we do not present a united front in the ensuing negotiations. Our domestic issues must be finally disposed of to



prevent a repetition of the sorry spectacle of the first Round Table Conference in London.

Communal adjustment will admit of no further delay and we must not go to Chequers or Whitehall for the solution. The case for all parties has been stated ably, unequivocally and authoritatively by properly accredited representatives. Repeated restatement and revision of demands will not take us any nearer the goal. We will only be going round and round the whole problem without ever finding a solution. Satisfaction with *status quo* is ruled out by every community that claims to be patriotic. How then shall we proceed? Arbitration may ultimately prove to be the best way. Can we not find one man or more men, good and true, in whom Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, Parsis and Jews and all other sections of the people who claim this country for their motherland, can place implicit trust for maturity of judgment and impartial outlook, state our different cases before them and agree to abide by their award?

Friends, I would once again request you to overlook the numerous deficiencies in the arrangements we have been able to make for your brief stay. We have had to run a race against time and complete in one month a task never before performed and our modest success is due in no small measure to the co-operation of the Karachi municipality under its patriotic president Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my heartfelt gratitude. The merchants of Karachi have also laid us under a debt of gratitude by their whole-hearted co-operation. Volunteers, many of them fresh from prisons, have spent sleepless nights working under tremendous pressure and they will do their best to make your brief stay comfortable. I hope that some of you will find it possible to stay with us after the session is over to see something of our province while you are here. Karachi has no ancient associations but as a modern city administered on progressive lines and a geographical position that entitles it to be the gateway of India by sea and air, it is amongst the most important cities in the country and the first city of the future. Its harbour and its Clifton sands stretching over miles and its hot water springs at Magar Pir will provide enjoyable outings. Thatta in the district is one of India's most ancient towns that witnessed Alexander's invasion and there are ruins of more ancient towns that will appeal to the antiquarian. The Mohan-jodare which takes us many a century beyond what used to be known as the dawn of Indian history is only a night's journey from here. The picturesque town of Sukkur with the beautiful island temple of Sadhi Bela lies the same way. A visit to the place is called for also by the Sukkur Barrage, round which centre the problems of modern Sind. Four hours from here stands Hyderabad, the old capital of the Mirs of Sind, and the modern centre of Sindhi culture. I extend to you a cordial invitation to stay with us and see more of the life of this province where twelve centuries of contact have created adjustments and understanding between Hindus and Moslems that amount almost to a new culture, which I feel confident will endure and grow, inspite of the ugly reactions of recent times.

### Presidential Address

The following is the full text of the presidential address of *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* :—

Let me commence my brief address with respectful condolence to Srimati Sarup-rani Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal and other members of the family on the loss they have sustained in Pandit Motilalji's death. I know their sorrow has been greatly relieved by the knowledge that it is shared by the whole nation. Motilalji's help at this juncture was a necessity which we all, and above all Gandhiji, felt whilst the delicate negotiations in Delhi were going on. This loss came upon the nation when its tears had hardly dried over the death of Maulana Mahomed Ali. Though unfortunately the late Maulana had differences with us, his services to the country as a great patriot and a brave man who never concealed what he believed could never be forgotten. I tender my respectful condolences to the Begum Sahiba, Maulana Shaikat Ali and the whole family. And in this connection I would couple those nameless heroes who, unknown to fame and never caring for it, laid down their lives in the non-violent struggle during the past twelve months. May their souls rest in peace and may their lives chasten us and spur us to greater sacrifice and greater effort for the cause for which they died!

## LAHORE EXECUTION

The execution of young Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru has filled the country with deep resentment. I cannot identify myself with their methods. I have no doubt that political murder is no less reprehensible than any other, but the patriotism, daring and sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and his comrades command my admiration. The heartless and foreign nature of the government was never more strikingly demonstrated than in their carrying out the executions in the teeth of the all but universal demand for the commutation of the death sentence. Let us not, however, be deterred from our purpose in a fit of resentment. This insolent exhibition of their armed power but adds to the heavy indictment against the soulless system and increases our capacity for vindicating our position if we would refuse to be deflected from the straight and narrow path we have chosen. May the souls of the brave patriots rest in peace and may their families find comfort in the fact that the nation is a sharer in their mourning.

You have called a simple farmer to the highest office to which any one can aspire. I am conscious that your choice of me as first servant is not so much for what little I might have done, but it is a recognition of the amazing sacrifice made by Gujarat. Out of your generosity you have singled out Gujarat for the honour, but in truth every province did its utmost during the year of the greatest national awakening that we have known in modern times, and thanks be to God that the awakening was a call to self-purification.

## THE NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE

Though there have been aspirations, it is a fact beyond challenge that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer an idle dream of a visionary or a mere human longing. It is a solid fact capable of infinite possibilities for a humanity which is groaning for want of faith beneath the weight of violence of which it has almost made a fetish. The greatest proof that our movement was non-violent lies in the fact that the peasants falsified the fears of our worst sceptics. They were described as very difficult to organise for non-violent action and it is they who stood the test with a bravery and an endurance that was beyond all expectation. Women and children, too, contributed their great share in the fight. They responded to the call by instinct and played a part which we are too near the event adequately to measure. And I think it would not be at all wrong to give them the bulk of the credit for the preservation of non-violence. Our struggle is a world struggle and it is a matter of great satisfaction that the nations of the earth, especially the United States of America, have heartened us by their sympathy.

## HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT

The recent settlement, however, renders it unnecessary to dwell at greater length upon this heroic period in the national life. Your Working Committee has entered into a settlement in anticipation of your approval. You are now invited formally to endorse it. The committee having accepted it as your accredited representatives, it is not, I take it, open to you to repudiate it. But it is open to you to pass a vote of no confidence in the present executive and appoint better agents. But whilst it is but meet that I should draw your attention to the constitutional position, I have no doubt whatsoever that you will endorse the settlement which I hold to be perfectly honourable for both parties. Had we not accepted the settlement, the effect of the sufferings of the past year (?) Indeed, we have always claimed, as Satyagrahis must claim, to be ready and eager for peace. When, therefore, the way seemed to be open for peace, we took it. In view of the clear demand on the part of the British Indian delegation at the Round Table Conference for full responsibility and in view of the British parties having accepted the position and in view of the appeal made to the Congress by the Premier, the Viceroy and many of our distinguished countrymen, the Working Committee thought that, if an honourable truce could be arranged and if it was open to the Congress to press without any reservation for what it considered to be best for the country, the Congress should, if invited, take part in the conference and attempt to reach an agreed solution of the constitutional issue. If we failed in the attempt and there was no way open but that of suffering, then it was a privilege of which no power on earth could deprive us. Under the constitution clause of the settlement, it is open to us to press for Purna Swaraj, to ask for complete control over our defence forces, foreign affairs, finance, fiscal policy and the like.

## SAFEGUARDS OR RESERVATIONS

There would be safeguards or reservations or, as the late Pandit Motilalji called them, adjustments conceived in your own interest. When power passes from one to another by agreement, there are always safeguards in the interest of the party in need of reparation or help. The continued exploitation of India for close on two centuries renders it necessary for us to seek assistance in several respects from external sources. This we would gladly take from Britain if she is willing to give. Thus we would need military skill and there is no reason why we may not receive English assistance in this direction. I have taken only one telling illustration out of others that may be suggested. The defence safeguard may, therefore, be the retention of British officers or as some would say even privates. But we could never let our defence be controlled by the British. We must have full power to make mistakes. We may gratefully receive British advice, never dictation. The fact is that the British army in India is an army of occupation. Defence is a misnomer. Frankly, the army is for defending British interests and British men and women against any internal uprising. I cannot recall a single instance in which the Indian army was required for the protection of India to fight a foreign power. True there have been expeditions on the frontier and wars with Afghanistan. British historians have taught us that they were wars more of aggression rather than of defence. We must not, therefore, be frightened by the bogey of foreign designs upon India. In my opinion, if we need an army, we certainly do not need the octopus we are daily bleeding to support. If the Congress has its way, the army will suffer immediate reduction to its desirable proportions.

Nor can we divide financial control with the British Government. The nation can not grow to its full height if it has not exclusive control over its finance.

## REDUCTION OF CIVIL EXPENDITURE

Again, we have been taught to think that our civil administration will be inefficient and corrupt if we give up the able assistance of highly paid British civilians. The administrative powers that the Congress has exhibited during the recent years and the fact of its having on an ever-increasing scale drawn to its assistance some of the best young men and women, either without pay or on a mere pittance, should sufficiently dispose of the fear of corruption or inefficiency. It would be too great a strain upon our poor purse to have to pay by way of insurance against corruption a premium out of all proportion to the highest possible estimate of corruption that may ever take place. It will, therefore, be necessary if India is to come into her own, to demand a heavy reduction in the civil service expenditure and thus a consequent reduction in the emoluments of the civil service.

## NO REPUDIATION

We have claimed that many of the charges laid upon India are wholly unjust. We have never suggested the repudiation of a single obligation but we have asked and must continue to ask for an impartial investigation into the debts against us wherever we cannot agree.

## COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

There is no receding from the Lahore resolution of complete independence. This independence does not mean—was not intended to mean—a churlish refusal to associate with Britain or any other power. Independence, therefore, does not exclude the possibility of equal partnership for mutual benefit and dissolvable at the will of either party. If India is to reach her independence through consultation and agreement, it is reasonable to suppose that there will be British association. I am aware that there is a strong body of opinion in the country to the effect that before a partnership could possibly be conceived, there must be a period of complete dissociation. I do not belong to that school. It is, as I think, a sign of weakness and of disbelief in human nature.

## FEDERATION AND PRINCES

Federation is a fascinating idea, but it introduces new embarrassments. The Princes will not listen to severance, but if they will come in the true spirit, it will be a great gain. Their association must not be to impede the progress of democracy. I hope, therefore, that they will not take up an uncompromising attitude that may be wholly inconsistent with the spirit of freedom. I wish they would without

any pressure give us an earnest of their desire to march abreast of the time spirit. Surely, the fundamental rights of their subjects should be guaranteed, as of the rest of the inhabitants of India. All the inhabitants of federated India should enjoy some common elementary rights and, if there are rights, there must be a common court to give relief from any encroachment upon them. Nor can it be too much to expect that the subjects of the States should be to an extent directly represented on the Federal Legislature.

#### BURMA

As regards Burma, the press censorship has rendered it impossible for us to know the true situation there. Whether Burma should be separate from India or should be part of a free India, is for the Burmese alone to decide. But it is our concern—indeed it is the world's concern—to see that all sides are heard. It is well known that there is a unionist party in Burma. It is as much entitled to freedom of opinion as the separatists. If, therefore, the information given to the Congress that the unionist opinion is strangled be true, the injustice must be resisted. The proposition that there should be a referendum of Burmese opinion, seems to me to be eminently reasonable.

#### HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

But before all else comes the question of Hindu-Muslim or rather communal unity. The position of the Congress was defined at Lahore. Let me recite the resolution here: "In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report, it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular and the Muslims and other minorities in general had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of the communal question proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution can be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned."

Therefore, the Congress can be no party to any constitution which does not contain a solution of the communal question that is designed to satisfy the respective parties. As a Hindu, I would adopt my predecessor's formula and present the minorities with a Swadeshi fountain pen and paper and let them write out their demands and I should endorse them. I know that is the quickest method, but it requires courage on the part of the Hindus. What we want is a heart unity, not a patched up paper unity that will break under the slightest strain. That unity can only come when the majority takes courage in both hands and is prepared to change place with the majority. This would be the highest wisdom. Whether unity is reached that way or any other, it is becoming plainer day after day that it is useless to attend any conference unless that unity is achieved. A conference can give us an agreement between the British and us. It can perhaps help us to come nearer to the princes. But it can never enable us to achieve unity that must be hammered into shape by ourselves. The Congress must leave no stone unturned to realise this much desired end.

It must be clear to all of us that the Congress can be useful for attaining Purna Swaraj only to the extent that it has gained power. The past twelve months have undoubtedly given it a power that he who runs may see. But it is not enough and can be easily frittered away by hasty action or by pride. He is a spend-thrift who lives on his capital. We must, therefore, add to our power. One way to do so is on our part to fulfil to the letter the conditions of the settlement. The other is to consolidate our gains. I, therefore, propose to devote a few lines to this part of our activity.

#### BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH.

We have made much headway in the matter of boycott of foreign cloth. It is a right as well as a duty. Without it the impoverished millions of India must continue to starve, for if cheap foreign cloth continues to be dumped down in the villages of India, the *charka* cannot flourish. Foreign cloth must, therefore, be banished from the land—it is clear—even it could be obtained free. Millions who starve do so not because there is not enough food in the land, but because they have no work during the off session. It is, therefore, want of easy employment in

their own villages that leads to starvation. Incessant propaganda is necessary to rid the country of the chronic unemployment which has become a second nature with our peasantry. The best propaganda is to do sacrificial spinning ourselves and wear *khadi*. The All-India Spinners' Association has done much valuable work, but it is for the Congress to create a spinning and *khaddar* atmosphere. This, to my mind, is the best and most effective propaganda of boycott. It has been suggested that the argument against foreign cloth applies to the indigenous mill cloth also. This is true to an extent, but our mills do not produce all the cloths we need. For years to come they may continue to supply the balance that may be required over and above hand-spun cloth. But even our mills may prove a hindrance if they compete with *khaddar* or resort to questionable devices to push their wares. Fortunately many mills are patriotically working in co-operation with the Congress and are beginning to appreciate the virtue of *khaddar* in the interest of the toiling millions. But I can certainly say that if our mills unpatriotically hurt *khaddar* instead of complementing it, they must face an opposition somewhat similar to that against foreign cloth.

Foreign cloth merchants will do well to bear the Congress attitude in mind in this regard. Foreign cloth boycott is a permanent thing, not conceived as a political weapon but as an economic and social measure of permanent value for the welfare of the masses. These merchants, therefore, if they will look into the future and think of their country, will do well to give up their foreign cloth trade. Everything possible is being done to help them, but some very big sacrifice on their part is essential.

The English, Japanese and other foreign merchants, will, I hope, not misunderstand the Congress attitude. If they will help India, they will deny themselves Indian trade in foreign cloth. They have other markets and other enterprises.

#### PICKETING

This brings me to picketing. This has not been and cannot be given up. I give below the relevant clause of the settlement: 'Picketing shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public or any offence under the ordinary law, and if and when any of these methods is employed in any place the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.' Picketing is a common law right, but you will observe that within the limits prescribed it is not only inoffensive, but highly educative. Its function is gentle persuasion, never coercion or liberty. I use the adjective 'violent' advisedly. The restraining force of public opinion there always will be; it is healthy, elevating and conducive to the growth of liberty as distinguished from licence. Non-violent picketing is designed to create public opinion—an atmosphere which should become irresistible. This can best be carried on by women. I hope, therefore, that they will continue the marvellous work begun by them and earn the eternal gratitude of the nation and what is more, the blessings of starving millions.

#### BOYCOTT AND SWADESHI

In this connection, let me say a few words regarding the boycott of British goods. This idea is almost as old as the Congress. We know that after the advent of Gandhiji on the political platform, the boycott of British goods was replaced by that of foreign, not only British, cloth. He interpreted it in terms of economic and social uplift, whereas the boycott of British goods as such is a political and punitive measure. This was effectively employed during the recent hurricane campaign. Now that there is at least temporary peace and we seek to reach our goal through consultation and conference, we must withdraw the political weapon. We cannot be sitting at a friendly conference table and outside making designs to hurt British interests. Whilst, therefore, we must for the time being withdraw the British goods boycott, we must intensify Swadeshi which is the birthright of every nation. Whatever we produce in our country, we must encourage to the exclusion of foreign, whether British or other. This is a condition of national growth. Thus we must encourage and carry on intensive propaganda on behalf of indigenous insurance companies, banking, shipping, and the like. We may not belittle or neglect them on the ground of their inferiority or dearth. Only by wide use and helpful criticism may we make them cheaper and better.

#### EQUALITY OF TREATMENT.

There is much loose talk about equality of treatment. What is equality of treatment between a giant and a dwarf, between an elephant and an ant? Is Lord

Inchcape with his fabulous wealth and resources claimed equal rights with Seth Narotam Morarjee of lamented memory, it would be a travesty of equality. It would be time enough to talk of equality of treatment after Seth Narotamdas' successors have made some little approach to Lord Inchcape's resources. Equality of treatment in the case of hopeless unequals ought to mean raising the less favoured up to the level of the most favoured. Thus equality of treatment for the suppressed classes on the part of the so-called superior classes means raising the former to the latter's level, the latter sacrificing their substance and stooping to conquer. In relation to the British, we have hereto occupied a position in some respects lower even than the suppressed classes. The protection of Indian industries and enterprise to the exclusion of British or Foreign is a condition of our national existence even under a state of partnership. Protection within even the British Commonwealth is no new-fangled notion. It is in vogue in the dominions to the extent necessary for their growth.

#### DRINK AND DRUGS

Just as the boycott of foreign cloth is an economic necessity for the sake of the starving millions, the boycott of intoxicating drinks and drugs is a necessity for the moral welfare of the nation. The idea of total prohibition was born before its political effect was thought of. The Congress conceived it as a measure of self-purification. Even if the Government earmarked the revenue from this traffic for purely prohibition purposes, our picketing of these shops would continue; no doubt, subject to the same severe restrictions as in the case of foreign cloth. I invite the Government during the transition stage to anticipate the verdicts of the national legislature and not merely tolerate the picketing of two things—foreign cloth and drink and drugs—but make, if they will, common cause with the nation. But whether they will or not, we cannot rest still so long as there is a yard of foreign cloth entering the country or a single liquor shop corrupting our misguided countrymen.

#### SALT.

One word regarding salt. The salt raids must stop. The defiance of salt laws for the sake of civil disobedience must stop. But the poor living in the neighbourhood of salt areas are free to make and sell salt within the neighbourhood. The salt tax is not gone, it is true. In view of the likelihood of the Congress participating in the conference, we may not press for the immediate repeal of the tax which is bound to come very soon. But the poorest on whose behalf the campaign was undertaken are now virtually free from the tax. I hope that no traders will seek to take undue advantage of the relaxation.

#### THE ELEVEN POINTS

The foregoing perhaps shows you how uninteresting I am in many things that interest the intelligentsia. I am not interested in loaves and fishes or legislative honours. The peasantry do not understand them. They are little affected by them. I believe that Gandhiji's 11 points mean the substance of Swaraj. That which does not satisfy them is no Swaraj. Whilst I would respect the rights of landlords, Rajas, Maharajas and others to the extent that they do not hurt the sweating millions, my interest lies in helping the down-trodden to rise from their state and be on a level with the tallest in the land. Thank God, the gospel of truth and non-violence has given these an inkling of their dignity and the power they possess. Much still remains to be done, but let us make up our minds that we exist for them, not they for us. Let us shed our petty rivalries and jealousies and religious feuds and let everyone realise that the Congress represents and exists for the toiling millions and it will become an irresistible power working not for greed or power, but for the sake of common humanity.

There is one part of the constructive programme which I have not dealt with already. That is the all-important work of removing untouchability. It is no use tinkering with the problem. The recent heroic struggle on the part of the nation would have been more glorious if the Hindus had purged Hinduism of this evil. But heroism or glory apart, no Swaraj would be worth having without this supreme act of self-purification and, even if Swaraj is won whilst this stain continues to blacken Hinduism, it would be as insecure as a Swaraj without a complete boycott of foreign cloth.

#### INDIANS OVERSEAS.

In conclusion, I may not forget our brethren overseas. Their lot in South Africa, in East Africa and in other parts of the world is still hanging in the balance. Deena-

bandhu Andrews is happily in South Africa, helping our countrymen. Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru has specialised in the Indian question in East Africa. The only consolation the Congress can give is to assure them of its sympathy. They know that their lot must automatically improve to the extent that we approach our goal. In your name, I would appeal to the Governments concerned to treat with consideration members of a nation which is bound at a very early date to enter upon her heritage and which means ill to no nation on the earth. We ask them to extend to our nationals the same treatment they would have us, when we are free, extend to theirs. This is surely not asking too much.

I invite you to conduct your proceedings over which you have asked me to preside in a manner befitting the occasion at which we have met. Differences of opinion are bound to exist, but I trust that every one here will co-operate to make our deliberations dignified and conducive to the attainment of our goal.

### Proceedings and Resolutions

After the addresses were delivered, three resolutions were moved from the chair and passed.

The first was one of condolence on the death of Pandit Motilal, and Maulana Mahomed Ali and the other "heroes and heroines". The second was the resolution on Cawnpore riots. The third was one urging the release of political prisoners. The following are the texts:—

#### I—Condolence

"This Congress places on record its deep sorrow on the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Mahomed Ali, Moulavi Mazarul Haq, Syts. Revashankar J. Jhaveri, Shah Mahomed Jubair and V. C. Gurunatha Mudaliar, and the unknown heroes and heroines who died during the recent struggle, and tenders respectful condolence to the families of the deceased and assures them that the whole nation shares their grief."

#### II—Communal Strife in Cawnpore

"This Congress deploras the communal strife that is going on in Cawnpore and that has resulted in a large number of deaths and even a large number of injured. The Congress tenders its respectful sympathy to the families of the deceased and the injured. The Congress notes with deep grief the news of the death during the strife of Syts. Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi, President U. P. C. C. who was one of the most selfless among national workers and who by his freedom from communal bias had endeared himself to all parties and communities. While tendering condolence to the family of the deceased the Congress notes with pride that a prominent worker of the first rank was found sacrificing his precious life in the attempt to rescue those in danger and restore peace and sanity in the midst of strife and insanity. The Congress asks all concerned to utilise this noble sacrifice for promoting peace and never for vengeance and, to that end, appoints a committee to discover the cause of the tension and to take such measures as may be necessary to heal the breach and to prevent the poison from spreading to the adjoining areas and districts.

COMMITTEE:—Syt. Purshottamdas Tandon, Khwaja Abdul Majid, Syt. T. A. K. Sherwani, Syt. Zafurul Mulk and Pandit Sundarlal with Dr. Bhagavan Das as Chairman."

#### III—Political Prisoners

"This Congress is emphatically of opinion that if the object of the settlement between the Government and the Congress is the promotion of goodwill between Great Britain and India and if the settlement is an earnest of Great Britain's determination to part with power, the Government should release all political prisoners, detenues and undertrials not covered by the settlement, and remove all political disabilities imposed by the Government on Indians, whether in India or abroad, on account of their political opinions or acts."

#### IV—Sardar Bhagat Singh and His Comrades

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru then moved the resolution relating to Bhagat Singh and his comrades. The following is the text:—

"This Congress, while dissociating itself from and disapproving of political

violence in any shape or form. places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of the late Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades Syts. Sukhdev and Rajguru and mourns with the bereaved families the loss of these lives. This Congress is of opinion that Government have lost the golden opportunity of promoting goodwill between the two nations, admittedly held to be essential at this juncture, and of winning over to the method of peace the party which, being driven to despair, resorts to political violence."

*Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru*, moving the resolution, felt that it would have been more appropriate if the resolution was moved by Gandhiji who had drafted it or by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel who was at the helm of the Congress affairs to-day. He, however, asked the audience why was it that a mere chit of a boy had suddenly leapt to fame, and had become the light and guide to others. Why was the apostle of non-violence anxious to-day to pay the highest tribute to Bhagat Singh, although hundreds lost their lives in Peshawar, Sholapur, Bombay and elsewhere? The reason, *Pt. Jawaharlal* said, was that in Bhagat Singh self-sacrifice and bravery had passed the upper limits. But in honouring him, the audience in the heat of the moment must not forget the path of non-violence they had chalked out for themselves. He frankly told the audience that he was not ashamed of the cult of violence, but he felt that that cult for the present could not be practised in the best interests of the country and there was the fear of indulging in communal strife when once the sword was unsheathed. It was therefore a sign of weakness to have mental reservations. If they were to make mistakes, it should be on the side of right, and that was why the resolution dissociated the Congress from violence.

*Pandit Jawaharlal* said the country for the present was under conditions of truce, and they did not know if there would be real peace in the country. They must have to take up the struggle once again for which purpose they must always be ready. They did not know how many Bhagat Singhs they might have yet to sacrifice before India was free. The lesson which they should take from Bhagat Singh was to die in a manly and bold manner so that the country may live. (cheers.)

*Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya* supporting the resolution said the fact that young men took to violence showed that all was not well in the country and something had made them desperate. *Pandit Malaviya* claimed that the Government had a large share in making the young men revolutionaries. "But if, in spite of that, we advise young men to desist from violence, it is because we love you young men, and know too well the dangers of that cult and we do not wish to sacrifice any more Bhagat Singhs," he declared. "Bravery and courage were required in non-violence and my advice to the youth of India is to have the bravery of Bhagat Singh and use it in Gandhiji's struggle of non-violence," he continued.

The Lahore executions, said *Pandit Malaviya*, brought out one fact prominently, that India could never have self-respect under alien rule; for it was only possible in India that a request for commutation of sentences by Gandhiji of international fame, was turned down by the Viceroy. *Pandit Malaviya* therefore exhorted the audience to take a vow, and have no rest till freedom was won for India. That alone would be a living monument to Bhagat Singh. *Pandit Malaviya* also paid a glowing tribute to Kishen Singh, father of Bhagat Singh who along with the mother of Rajguru, were present in the pandal. At the general request of the audience, both of them came up to the rostrum, where Kishen Singh spoke giving incidents of his own life, as well as those of Bhagat Singh.

*Sardar Kishen Singh*, father of Bhagat Singh, spoke for over half an hour and produced a great impression on the audience. He related episodes from Bhagat Singh's life. Thunderous cheering broke out as he narrated how Bhagat Singh gave up his studies and resolved to devote his life in the service of the country, refusing to be married. When the speaker said he was not allowed to have the final interview with his son, angry cries of "Shame, shame," rose from the audience. *Sardar Kishen Singh* appealed to the youth to keep cool-headed and patient, and to be guided by wisdom and by enthusiasm, and to control their anger and act like true soldiers. Then victory would be theirs. Cries of "Bhagat Singh Zindabad" greeted the conclusion of the speech.

*Mr. V. L. Sastri* moved an amendment for the deletion of the words of disapproval of political violence. He deprecated the "half-hearted, stinting grudging compliments" to the great men who had been executed. Having lived a life of non-violence for a whole year against all forms of violence that the Government was capable of, it was



derogatory to the sense of dignity of the House to reiterate that it stood against violence.

At this stage "loud speakers" failed, and Mr. Sastri protested that they had been put out of order, and pleaded that differential treatment should not be meted out to him.

The President ruled that the speaker's time was up, and he should finish his speech.

Mr. Sastri protested he had not had his say, and again complained that "loud speakers" had been put out of order. He stated that Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who was to have seconded him, had been persuaded not to do so.

The President, however, ruled that his time was up.

Dr. Tarachand Lalwani seconded the amendment. He declared that the whole world knew that the creed of the Congress was non-violence. Why then repeat it over and over again, year after year?

Closure was moved, and the President put it to the vote and declared it carried.

Mr. Sastri demanded a poll which the President refused to grant. Mr. Sastri again protested that the sense of the House was not in favour of closure.

The President, however, put the motion for closure to vote again and declared it carried, Mr. Sastri persisting in his protests.

The amendment was then put to vote, and declared lost. The original resolution was put and carried. The Congress then adjourned.

#### SECOND DAY—30th. MARCH 1931

A considerably thinner crowd, but as eager and as expectant as ever, filled the great open air auditorium this evening for the second day of the Congress. On a beautifully decorated seat sat Mahatma Gandhi.

Pandit Jawaharlal ascended the rostrum and addressed the gathering as follows in moving the resolution ratifying the Gandhi-Irwin Truce:—

#### V—The Provisional Settlement

"This Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear, that the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) remains intact. In the event of the way being otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any Conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this object and, in particular, so as to give the nation control over the defence forces, external affairs, finance and fiscal and economic policy and to have a scrutiny, by an impartial tribunal, of the financial transactions of the British Government in India and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England, and the right to either party to end the partnership at will provided however that the Congress Delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India.

"The Congress appoints and authorises Mahatma Gandhi to represent it at the Conference with the addition of such other delegates as the Working Committee may appoint to act under his leadership."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in moving the resolution, said:—

"Three years have passed away since we passed the famous resolution at Lahore. In another year you and I may forget the great battle. You and I thought that freedom was nearer each day. You and I have seen many things. And still I am prepared to do things at your bidding. So, this evening, as I stand before you with this resolution, I will beg of you to listen to me with patience, and if you will care, to go along with me. I will place before you certain things."

"Among other things we have to remember the question of debts. You must remember we have been burdened with a debt which is not of our own making. Even the last conference itself, with its enormous money spent over it, was burden enough. We have, besides that, to consider many more points. I feel that some of these questions have, got to be placed before an impartial tribunal. You have all read Indian history, and you know too how money has flown into foreign lands from India, for the Army in Burma and China. We will recognise only such monies as have been spent on India's account. The last thing we will have to see about is

the question of the connection with the Empire, whether we will be in a position to sever our connection when we are in a position to do so. Our ideas of independence vary. Your idea of it may not be mine own. We have got to understand what we mean by it. Once we get real power in our own hands, all things will follow. We can change everything. One thing is certain that we cannot afford to be here or there and do two things at the same time. For this alone, I implore you to decide once for all. So far, we have decided to abide by Gandhiji, and let us do so until we see the way is blocked for any further progress."

*Dr. M.A. Ansari*, who spoke after Pandit Jawaharlal, said that he had been asked to second the resolution. He felt that there was no need to tell much about it, but he would obey the President. "This resolution", continued Dr. Ansari, "supports the provisional settlement of Lord Irwin and Gandhiji. Your business and my business would be to see now that the mandates that you and I give to the Congress delegation are carried out in full. In so doing, let me assure you that we are not going one whit beyond the resolution of Purna Swaraj that we passed at Lahore. Secondly, you will perceive that Purna Swaraj has been practically defined to in this resolution. Such things as Defence, the question of tariffs, economic and fiscal control, all this will and must be ours. You will also see for yourself that Mahatma Gandhi has been given plenipotentiary powers in the resolution. Therefore, it does not appear to me that we have gone back upon Lahore. If you will think for a moment and realise the tremendous strength which the country has acquired in this great struggle, then you will know there can be no more talk of going back. Let us not, my friends, suffer from the inferiority complex. If to-day, it is possible to make the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and the powers-that-be to come to terms with us here in India, it is possible to do many things. And, above all, I need hardly tell you, that if we will return home without even one demand being satisfied, we will not compromise and even if failure be ours, we will return to where we began and begin our struggle anew. I request you, therefore, to support this resolution."

*Mr. Jamnadas Mehta* then ascended the rostrum, and started the opposition to the resolution. He had given notice of an amendment: "This Congress repudiates the personal settlement arrived at between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin as inconsistent with the resolution on Independence passed at Lahore and directs the Working Committee to desist from any further negotiations on this behalf". This the President had ruled it out of order on the ground that it was no amendment at all. Mr. Jamnadas said: "Two years ago, curiously enough, it was my privilege to move an amendment to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution on Independence. To-day, it is my privilege to oppose the resolution he has moved, which is not at all in my opinion anything approaching adherence to Independence. It is really watering down what the Congress has done at Lahore. There can be no question, whatever, that whatever may be the brave words employed in the resolution, its real effect has been to water down the resolution on Independence passed at Lahore. You cannot eat your cake and keep it too. You cannot go to the Round Table Conference hedged in with conditions and make the world believe that you are still sticking to Independence. If anybody carefully perused the terms of what was first called Truce, and is now more properly called a Provisional Settlement, you will find that, under the agreement to go to the Round Table Conference the resolution on Independence passed at Lahore collapsed automatically (cries of "Hear hear") because of the limitation placed on those who go to the Round Table Conference.

"In the settlement which was published under the signature of Mr. Emerson, Home Secretary to the Government of India, it is clearly laid down that so far as the question of constitutional reform is concerned, there will be a further discussion of what happened at the Round Table Conference in January last. Of these discussions Federation is to be an essential part. There are to be safeguards and reservations about finance, military and external affairs. It is commonsense that if there is any safeguard attached to independence, that safeguard cannot be in favour of independence. It can only militate against complete independence. You cannot have sixteen annas with a safeguard, which will retain the sixteen annas intact. It means an anna taken away here and anna taken away there. And what remains may be a small truncated form of responsible Government. Therefore, let there be no mistake as to what this House is called upon to do, in passing this resolution."

"The resolution goes on to say", Mr. Jamnadas proceeded, "that the Indian delegation will accept only such adjustments as are demonstrably necessary in the interests of India. I have already told you there can be no safeguards which could be in the interests of India, and safeguards there can be only in the interests of England and the interests of those other than India. The Viceroy's Chelmsford Club speech, delivered only three days ago, ought to leave no room for doubt in the minds of the Working Committee as to what is meant by so-called safeguards. Let there be no mistake as to what the Viceroy's words are. They mean that the only right of the delegation in this matter would be to suggest some alternative which would be called essential for safeguarding British interests. Therefore the resolution which limits the Congress delegation to those safeguards only, which are demonstrably in the interests of India, is mere moonshine, and is an eye-wash. Therefore, let the House realise that this illusory instruction to the delegation will not work.

"There is no ghost of a chance of the proposals as embodied in the proposed resolution being accepted at the Round Table Conference."

Mr. Jamnadas proceeded: "So much is said about the enquiry into the public debt for India. It is said that we will repudiate it in the interest of India. I warn this House very respectfully that all debt that has been really incurred against the interests of India, has been paid out already, and very little remains of that debt. If you are under the impression that any debt which was incurred against the interests of India still remains to be paid, you are greatly mistaken. The debt which is now outstanding is mostly what is called productive debt. Out of nearly 1,200 crores, about eight have been invested in railways, irrigation canals, and public works, and with the provincial governments, municipalities, port trusts, etc. all of which are productive obligations.

"What therefore remains is hardly 180 crores, half of which is held by the people of this country. So far as the war debt is concerned, unless I am seriously mistaken, only 20 crores remain to be paid. So, if there is any chance of our recovering even all these debts which were wrongly incurred, it would be only if the Parliament agrees to float a British loan for the purpose of refunding to the people of India what they wrongly had taken from India. The Britisher, if he sticks to one thing more than another, it is his cash. He is not the man to finance loans to repay what was wrongly taken by him. Do not be misled by high sounding and bombastic words. Nothing is going to come out of it. People who make this provisional settlement will not have the courage to demand the payment back. You may pass the resolution if you like. It has no meaning. It is not worth the paper on which it is written. Not one rupee will be refunded. So far as the Indian portion of the debt is concerned, it is held by charitable institutions. If ever you make up your mind to repudiate it there would be a monetary crisis in this country, the like of which you have never seen. Therefore do not be led by a heroic gesture of this kind.

"Lastly I request you to refuse to pass this resolution, because it cannot be carried out in practice, because it is against the Lahore resolution, and because the Working Committee seems to be in a pathetic detachment about the reality of British imperialism. It seems to think that we have only to make a united demand, and the British Parliament will concede it. Those who have read Egypt's history cannot help feeling that if this is the independence which India is going to get, it will be a most hypocritical and illusory thing. It is your duty not to allow the Congress to go on and fall into a pit." (Applause).

*Swami Govindanand* next followed. He said: "I am voicing the feelings of the forward party in the Congress and the large mass of Indian people when I say that the Gandhi-Irwin pact has set back the clock of Indian progress towards Independence. The Truce, to us, is both disappointing and unacceptable. We, the left wing of the Congress, at first thought of opposing it, but in the interest of our country we have refrained from doing so in order not to weaken the hands of Mahatmaji in any way. He is anxious to be given an opportunity to go to the Round Table Conference in order to bring about Purna Swaraj or what he is pleased to call the substance of Independence acceptable to the people of India and we have correctly come to the conclusion, that we should not oppose him in any way. We wish to give him his full chance to extract water out of the stone of the Round Table Conference. We do not obstruct him for the simple reason that before long, we should know how far the Round Table discussion would bring Swaraj.

"We have no doubt, in our minds, that we cannot win freedom from the Round Table Conference. This is the first time in the long life of Mahatmaji when he thinks there is a probability of his getting Purna Swaraj by means of negotiations with British representatives. Let him, by all means, succeed with his practised diplomacy, persuasive logic and sweet reasonableness. We would give him full and free scope for it to proceed to England as an Ambassador of the whole nation of India. We felt that the time had not yet come to call off the civil disobedience movement, because the Government are not yet chastened in their mood. But a victorious army though we were, we surrendered practically unconditionally. We assure the Working Committee that, without lowering the flag of complete independence we shall allow them full latitude to pursue their plan of obtaining independence, through negotiations. If they bring independence from London, we shall examine its contents, and if we are satisfied that it contains the substance of real independence, we shall raise our hats and offer our salutations to them for getting us independence so cheap. But, if they return empty handed, we request them to be equally generous to us by affording us an opportunity to bring India's freedom by handing over to us the control of the Congress organisation.

Swami Govindanand proceeded : "The ratification of the truce term by the Congress has caused consternation and deep resentment among the youth of India. We are trying to control them and exercising all our influence that they should remain silent during the period of truce. But if and when the Round Table fails, we expect Mahatmaji to give us the option of carrying on the struggle, and God willing, to success. Under the circumstances we have resolved to abstain from taking part in the debate or in voting on the resolution."

Mr. Meher Ali, Mr. Sheik, Dr. Alam, Mr. Desai and Dr. Kitchlew next spoke.

*Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta* next addressed the gathering in support of the resolution. He said : "It has been said by Mr. Jarnadas Mehta that the resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to-night and brought forward in the Subjects Committee by Mahatmaji goes against the letter and spirit of the independence resolution adopted at Lahore. Mr. Mehta suffers, along with many of our countrymen, from the malady of inferiority complex. Mr. Mehta thinks, according to the teaching of the British, that the Indian nation can never shake off British domination in India. Mr. Mehta has not yet realised that the great movement which was led by Mahatmaji and the Indian National Congress during the last two months had demonstrated to the whole world that the Congress has got such power behind it, that it has got the whole Indian masses behind it and that to-day it could well upset the British Government in this country in no time whatever. (applause). When Mr. Mehta talked about the logic of buying independence, he said something which was not true. Gandhiji did not propose to achieve independence through logic or sweet reasonableness. He proposes—and he has demonstrated that to the rest of the world—to wrest independence for India by the strength of the masses in the struggle of civil disobedience which would immediately follow on the refusal of the British Government to part with power. Sweet reasonableness and logic we do not count on this occasion. We count on the power of the Indian National Congress and the Indian nation itself. My friend may talk about the British connection. In these efforts for independence, the old British connection of master and slave, of Imperial and Imperious Britain and Dependent India must end.

Mr. Sen Gupta continued : "Those who are opposed to this resolution say : 'Let us first cut off the British connection and for a period let there be no connection equal or otherwise with Britain and if necessary after a year or two or five years, if we think in the interests of India any alliance is necessary with any power on earth, Britain or others, we might then do it. These people do not realise the gigantic power which the Indian nation has got behind the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It is that which will give us Swaraj, which at one stroke will give up the British connection of master and slave, of exploiter and exploited that exists to-day. When that connection ends, and when there is going to be equal partnership, it would be equal partnership which could be ended at will by either India or Britain. Don't think Mahatmaji means by this resolution that the Congress is bound to go to the Round Table. Nothing of the kind.

"You know there may be not one, but several causes arising between now and the time of joining this conference which might stop the Congress from joining the Round Table at all. We Congressmen are bound by the terms of the truce. And if we find that a single prisoner is not released within a reasonable time it will be

a breach of peace by the British Government in India. In the event of the other terms of truce being broken such as, for instance, in respect of manufacture of salt and boycott of foreign cloth, the way is clear for us to refuse to go to the Round Table. It is our bounden duty to tell the British Government and the world that there has been a clear breach of the truce on the part of the British Government and we cannot go to the Conference.

"Can you imagine that the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji will go to the Round Table without first settling the Hindu-Muslim controversies amongst ourselves? It is impossible to imagine that any self-respecting delegation or leader like Mahatmaji is going to the Round Table without solving this dispute. Without it they are not going to proceed there, and humiliate a whole nation and consent to be patted by the Prime Minister of England on the back and be told that they are going to settle our differences. Friends, there are many difficulties in the way of the Congress going to the Round Table. We have entered into this truce and we are not going to break it."

Mr Sen Gupta concluded with a passionate appeal. He said: "Remember that never in the history of modern India did you see the spectacle of the high and mighty of British Government in India talking, negotiating and pleading on equal terms with Mahatmaji, the representative of the Indian Nation. For the first time in the history of modern India has this been done, namely, recognition of the power behind that frail man, the power of the nation. He offered to negotiate, because he knew that behind the Indian National Congress is the strength of the whole nation. Friends, give us that strength, give Mahatmaji that strength. You must go to a peace-table even after a bloody war. Even if you carried your revolutionary movement to a successful issue, what is that you do in the end? You must talk at the table with the enemy, whether in a non-violent war or in a violent war. It is for you to say we did not break the truce terms and we Congressmen led by the greatest of all honourable men, Mahatmaji did not fail in the balance of honour and honesty of the Indian nation (loud applause).

*Khan Abdur Gaffar*, Frontier Gandhi, came to the rostrum amidst deafening shouts of "Inquilab Zindabad," and spoke briefly. He said that he was really ill, but he could not disobey the command of Mahatmaji. He was only a soldier. He had once served Pandit Motilal and was just a servant. When a commander asked him what he knew, he replied that he knew only to obey. They in Afghanistan had great faith in Gandhiji. It was only he who made them friends with Indians and India. His hearers did not know the things that existed in Afghanistan. Many of them were slaves, but they knew how to get rid of their slavery as well.

*Mahatma Gandhi*, who followed Sardar Gaffar Ali Khan, now ascended the rostrum. A pleasing silence stole upon that unique gathering, and fifty thousand pairs of eager expectant eyes turned towards that frail speaker, and as many ears tried to catch in every word of the distinguished man. Not a disturbance affected the forty minutes' silence during which period the Mahatma spoke, Mahatmaji spoke in Hindi as follows:—

"Brothers and Sisters, it is getting on to be very late now. I thought I was not going to speak much but I see you are all awaiting to listen to something or other from me. So I will speak. I will speak to-day specially to my younger and more excited friends. They must know that I have great love in my heart for you all, because I can understand you all and know very well what is passing in your minds. My heart is full of sympathy for you all. Do not think that you have hurt me, or I am displeased by opposition from some of you. It saddens me to feel that I have had to displease some of you in doing what I feel it to be my duty now.

"As regards the Round Table Conference, we have been told by some that we will get nothing out of it all. R. T. C. is not a piece of magic. By merely going or attending the Conference do not think all good things will happen. Please also remember I do not hold out to you any such hope. I am just carrying your instruction and your mandate for Purna Swaraj. Sometimes I have felt within myself what is there in this conference after all, and of what use it will be. But then, when I think of the work I have undertaken and the promises I have made, I feel strongly I must do my dharma. It is my duty. If I do not do it, I will be committing an unpardonable sin. You and I are satyagrahis. It is our business as true satyagrahis to love every one, to love even those whom we consider our enemy. By our very love and forbearance we ought to be able to make a friend of him.

That is our duty. That is the real satyagraha. If you and I do not do so, we shall not be Satyagrahis, but Duragrahis. Are we Congressmen then going to be Duragrahis ?

"When the call came from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and the Viceroy, my conscience told me that I must take up their offer, and try my best to work it out as well. But then please remember whatever you will ask me to do, I will do. This is my dharma. This is the dharma of the Working Committee. My business is to keep up the prestige and status of our motherland. You may be sure, I will not lower it. It is up to you if you are dissatisfied with me, to deal with me as you will. You are a great body, and you are capable of telling where I fail to rise to your expectations. I tell you again that I go only in your name. I shall go and work honestly. So you see there is no question of anyone getting displeased or feeling bad about anything. Do not think that because you call me Mahatma I am above all things. I have no hesitation to tell the world that I am only your representative, and that while I speak, I speak with your voice, your words, your desires, your mandate.

"Now to talk of other things, you have heard our friend Sardar Gaffar Ali Khan. I am happy beyond words at the thought that it has been possible for him and his fine band to come to India. It is a fine gesture and I am sure you are also glad to see him. Through him I suppose we will be able to carry the message of goodwill to the Afridis and convert them into true satyagrahis. Now I have done."

Addressing the House briefly in English Mahatma Gandhi said :

"Several Andhra friends have requested me to say a few words in English. I am sorry that the time is really moving fast. Sirdar Patel expected to finish the whole of the proceedings to-day before 10 o'clock. But I find it is already 10-15 p. m. Therefore, I shall try to be as brief as I possibly can. I do not wish to cover the same ground which has been covered by several speakers, but I will say one or two words with reference to what has been left out in the resolution before you.

"One thing that has been left out is Federation. What is the meaning of the word Federation ? Is it a Federation between the Princes or of the Indian States on the one hand and the provinces put together on the other ? What are the conditions under which that Federation is to take place ? We do not know. But the Princes have taken up the position that there shall be no intervention on the part of the Federal Government in internal affairs. What all have suggested in connection with the Federation is that they should acknowledge that the right of the subjects of the States should be the same as the rights of the citizens in what is called British India. If those rights are guaranteed in the Federal Constitution then there should naturally be some Federal institution to protect these rights such, for instance, as a tribunal or whatever name you like to call it. I feel that it would be something of a derogation to the sovereignty which the Princes enjoy to do this. But if they would be a party to the Federation, surely by the spirit of absolute democracy it is up to them to part with some of their power, and that of their own accord and free will. I am hoping that some such thing will happen. That is why you find no mention is made of Federation in the resolution.

"The second question I should like to speak about is in connection with the Hindu-Muslim pact. Supposing we do not arrive at any settlement whatsoever as regards this very delicate matter, what is the position of the Congress ? So far as I can think at present, it would be useless for the Congress delegation, if we cannot possibly arrive at a proper communal solution, to proceed to England. But I am not able just now to give you my final decision on final opinion. I do not know. Many things may happen which may make it necessary or highly desirable that the delegation should take part in the Conference. But that is really for the future to decide. However that is how my own mind is running.

"One thing more I would say before I retire. You are not bound to accept the resolution because there is a Mahatma behind it, or because there is the Working Committee behind it. You are not bound if this settlement does not commend itself to you to accept this resolution. On the contrary, you are in duty bound, if this settlement cannot commend itself to you, to reject it summarily. And if the Congress rejects that settlement summarily, nothing can possibly be said against the Congress. The Congress is the paramount authority and the Working Committee is its creature. For a hundred reasons, the action taken by the Working Committee may not commend itself to you. Therefore, there should be no question of toleration or patronage. It is open to every one of you, to every section here, to reject this resolution, and also reject the Settle-

ment if you wish to. But if you want to endorse the Settlement, it is also your duty actively to support it and carry out all its terms faithfully and honourably and do the various things which will be set before you in the resolution, so that you may daily increase the power of the Congress and make it possible for the Congress delegation to vindicate the position of the Congress and possibly to bring the very thing for which we have suffered for the past twelve months.

"One thing more. If this delegation goes to the Conference, it does not mean that the delegation will bring in its pocket Purna Swaraj. If it does not bring Purna Swaraj, it does not mean that it returns humiliated. Nothing of the kind. All that we expect to be able to do is to go and tell the British Ministers that if we do not get what the Congress expects the delegation to accept within the terms of the resolution, we are bound to return empty-handed and receive compliments from you and not curses. But the country is entitled to give us curses if we return having sold the interests of the country. You have a perfect right to do so. But it will not be proper for you to say that we were not able to fulfil a promise. No promise has ever been made. No promise is being made now, that if the deputation goes to the Conference either here or in England and enters upon further negotiations, that delegation is going to bring Purna Swaraj. Purna Swaraj will come when it does come, when the full authority of the Congress has been manifested, and not a minute before. All that I promise faithfully to you, on my own behalf and that of the deputation that you may wish to send, is that we shall not be disloyal to the Congress in any shape or form." (Loud and prolonged cheering).

#### RESOLUTION CARRIED

The resolution was then put to the House and carried practically unanimously with but a few dissentients.

The delegates present numbered as many as 4,000 and the hands that were raised against the resolution could not be more than ten. The Congress then adjourned.

#### THIRD DAY—31st. MARCH 1931

The third day's sitting of the Congress met to-day at 6-30 p. m. and quickly passed eight resolutions put from the chair unanimously. The following are the texts :—

#### V—Civil Disobedience Sufferers

"This Congress congratulates all those who underwent great sufferings during the Civil Disobedience campaign whether through imprisonment, shooting, bayonet or lathi charges, emigration from their homes and loss of property by confiscation, looting, burning or otherwise as a result of repression. The Congress more specially congratulates the women of India who rose in their thousands and assisted the nation in its struggle for freedom and respectfully assures them that no constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that discriminates against the sex in the matter of franchise."

#### VI—Communal Riots

"This Congress regards the communal riots of Benaras, Mirzapore, Agra, Cawnpore and other places as highly injurious to the movement for India's freedom and strongly condemns those who are responsible for causing or provoking such riots and considers their peace-destroying activities deserving of the strongest censure. This Congress also deeply deplores the murders of citizens especially of women and children and sincerely sympathises with the living victims of the savagery and with the families of the dead."

#### VII—Prohibition

"This Congress notes with satisfaction the visible progress of the nation towards total prohibition during the past twelve months and calls upon all Congress organisations to continue the anti-drink and drugs campaign with renovated vigour and hopes that the women of the country will redouble their efforts in weaning the drunkard and drug addict from a habit that ruins both body and soul and desolates happy homes."

## VIII—Khaddar

"Experience gained during the past ten years through work in hundreds of villages has made it abundantly clear that the deepening poverty of the masses is due, among other things, to forced unemployment for want of a supplementary industry during leisure hours, and that only the spinning wheels supply that want on a universal scale. It has been further observed that the people having given up the wheel, and consequently khaddar, buy foreign cloth or cloth made in indigenous mills, thus causing a double drain from the villages—the drain in the shape of loss of fruits of labour and price of cloth. This double drain can be avoided only by the exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn and substitution thereof by khaddar, the indigenous mills supplementing khaddar only as far as it may be necessary. This Congress therefore appeals to the public to refrain from the purchase of foreign cloth and to the dealers in foreign cloth and yarn to give up a trade that seriously injures the interests of the millions of villagers.

"This Congress further calls upon all Congress organisations and allied bodies to intensify the foreign cloth boycott by increasing khadi propaganda.

"This Congress appeals to the States to associate themselves with this constructive effort and prevent the entry of foreign cloth and foreign yarn into their territories.

"This Congress also appeals to the owners of indigenous mills to assist the great constructive and economic movement by.

(1) giving their moral support to the supplementary village industry of hand-spinning by themselves using handspun ;

(2) by ceasing to manufacture cloth that may in any way compete with khaddar and to that end co-operating with the effort of the All India Spinners' Association;

(3) by keeping down the prices of their manufactures to the lowest possible limit;

(4) by refraining from using foreign yarn, silk or artificial silk in their manufacture ;

(5) by exchanging the existing stock of the foreign piecegoods merchants for swadeshi cloth and thus helping them to convert their business into swadeshi and by re-exporting the former ; and

(6) by raising the status of the mill-workers and making them feel that they are co-sharers with them as well in prosperity as in adversity.

"This Congress suggests to the great foreign houses that they will help international brotherhood and revolutionise commercial ethics if they will take the first step by recognising the soundness and necessity of the economic boycott by India of foreign cloth, and themselves denying themselves a foreign trade that has admittedly hurt the economic well-being of India's masses and diverting their attention to enterprises more in keeping with the wants of the nations other than their own."

## IX— Peaceful Picketing

"This Congress notes with gratification the great success that has so far attended the boycott of foreign cloth and the sales of intoxicating drugs and drink, and calls upon the Congress organisations not to relax their efforts in the matter of peaceful picketing provided that the picketing shall be in strict accord with the terms of the settlement in this behalf between the Government and the Congress.

## X—Indians in South and East Africa

"The Congress views with alarm the trend of events in South Africa and East Africa regarding the position of Indian settlers in those countries. The contemplated legislation in South Africa is in contravention of promises and in some respects constitutes an attack even on legal rights. The Congress appeals to the governments concerned to mete out to the Indian settlers the same measure of justice that they would claim for their nationals in a free India. This Congress tenders its thanks to Deenabandhu Andrews and Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru for their selfless labours on behalf of the settlers overseas."

## XI—N. W. F. Province

"Inasmuch as propaganda is said to be going on in the Frontier province that the Congress does not mean well by them and it is desirable that the Congress should take steps to dispel this suspicion, this Congress hereby places on record its opinion that in any constitutional scheme the N.-W. F. Province shall have the same form of government as the other provinces in India."



## XII—Changes in Constitution

"(a) In place of "two general secretaries and two treasurers" in line 1 and 2 of Art. XXIII, substitute "not more than three general secretaries and not more than two treasurers". (b) First clause of Art. XXIV shall read as follows :

"The Working Committee of the Congress, which shall be the executive authority responsible to the All India Congress Committee in all matters, shall consist of fifteen members of whom the President, the General Secretary or Secretaries and the Treasurer or Treasurers shall be ex-officio members. The remaining members shall be elected by the All India Congress Committee at its first meeting after the annual session of the Congress."

After these resolutions were passed, Maulana Kutubuddin Wali of Firangimahal, Lucknow, made a statement assuring the Congress that the large body of Muslims whole-heartedly associated themselves with the fight for Swaraj. There was no fear of conflict between Hindus and Muslim Raj. Muslims no less than Hindus demanded Indian Raj.

## XIII—Burma

Mr. Maung Ji moved the resolution on Burma as follows :—

"This Congress recognises the right of the people of Burma to claim separation from India and to establish an independent Burman State or to remain an autonomous partner in a free India with a right of separation at any time they may desire to exercise it. The Congress however condemns the endeavour of the British Government to force separation of Burma without giving adequate opportunity to the Burmese people to express their views and against the declared wishes of their national political organisations. The endeavour seems to be deliberately engineered to perpetuate British domination there so as to make Burma, together with Singapore, by the reason of the presence of oil and their strategic position, strongholds of imperialism in Eastern Asia. The Congress is strongly opposed to any policy which would result in Burma being kept as a British dependency and her resources exploited for British imperialist purposes and would also be a menace to a free India as well as to the other nations of the East. The Congress urges that the extraordinary powers given to the Government of Burma be withdrawn and the declaration by the Government that representative and important organisations of Burmese national opinion are illegal be also withdrawn so that normal conditions be restored and the future of Burma may be discussed by her people without hindrance in a peaceful atmosphere and the will of the Burmese people may prevail."

Mr. Maung Ji moving the resolution declared that 99 per cent of the people of Burma were not in sympathy with the agitation for separation. The Federation would provide for Burma what separation could never give, namely, participation through a Federal Commonwealth in all those imperial and international problems with which not merely the future of Burma or of India but the world in general was ultimately associated.

Pt. Jawaharlal seconding the resolution on Burma said that India should at once recognise the right of Burma to self-determination. Propaganda however was made in certain quarters that India wanted to retain Burma in order to exploit her. There was some truth in it as some Indians had actually exploited Burma, and that was why they had made it clear in the resolution that Burma's partnership with India was at her will. Pt. Jawaharlal said : "It was a fact that a large majority of the Burmans were in favour of joining the Indian Federation and Britain wanted her to separate from India because there was oil resources in Burma. The empires of to-day, he said, were floating on oil, and not on gold and silver.

The resolution was further supported by Rev. Kuka who spoke in Burmese and it was unanimously adopted.

## XIV—Frontier Peoples

Pt. Jawaharlal next moved the resolution on the forward policy on the frontier.

"This Congress declares that the people of India have no quarrel with the countries and peoples bordering on India and desires to establish and maintain friendly relations with them. The Congress disapproves of the so-called 'forward' policy of the British Government in India in the North-West Frontier and of all imperialist attempts to destroy the freedom of the people of the frontier. The

Congress is strongly of opinion that the military and financial resources of India should not be employed in the furtherance of this policy, and the military occupation of the tribesmen's territory should be terminated."

In moving the resolution Pandit Jawaharlal said that the Government had been intentionally raising the bogey of the Frontier in India in order to keep their control over India. For years past the Afghans had been painted as savages who were out to murder and pillage and the moment the British Government were out of India there would be universal loot. Pt. Jawaharlal said it was a totally false impression and he believed similar misrepresentation of India was made in the Frontier. He had known Pathans in his life who were honest, brave and loyal friends. He was confident that under Swaraj India would have most friendly relations with the borderland. The speaker then referred to the "No Man's land" and said that there the British Government were doing their utmost to enslave the people of that area by means of a policy which was called "forward policy". Indians who were groaning under the foreign yoke did not wish others to be enslaved but their silence to-day would be misinterpreted. That was why they were asked to pass the resolution which he placed before the House.

*Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan* supporting the resolution said that the Government had purposely kept Indians in the dark about the real facts in regard to the Frontier. The speaker relating the incidents of Peshawar shooting last April said that it was after the horrors of Peshawar and Charsada that the Afridis had demanded the release of Gandhiji and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. It was after the Government had failed to comply with their request and after their homes had been invaded and bombarded that the Afridis had taken to arms against the British. It was entirely an act of self-defence. The speaker said that times were gone when the British Government could keep India divided by the Afghan bogey. Pathans to-day had full confidence in Gandhiji and Gandhism. He assured Gandhiji and the house that if in future they were to launch civil disobedience, the Pathans would not be found backward in helping India to win Swaraj. "We will demonstrate what we are," he declared and made a touching appeal for communal unity. He said slaves had no religion and Hindus and Mussalmans should not fight over insignificant things. They would bring down the whole status of India which they had won under the banner of Gandhiji if they continued communal strife.

*Khan Gaffar Khan* also told the House that the Government had been carrying on propaganda against India on the Frontier. They were asking people what had they gained by the release of Gandhiji which they had been demanding for the last twelve months and what Gandhiji had done for them? The resolution therefore, if passed, would be a message of goodwill to those people.

*Khan Gaffar Khan* said it was reported that Lord Irwin had first assured Gandhiji that the Government would abandon the new road on the Khajori plain, but had refused the request after he had met the Chief Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province. He had given a message from the Afridis to Gandhiji in which the former had asked Gandhiji to come to the Frontier and see things for himself and how millions were squandered in order to keep India in bondage. The Afridis had also suggested that Gandhiji should be their arbitrator and if Gandhiji found the Afridis were faultless, he was to press upon the Government to leave their country and make them free. Concluding *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan* said that Gandhiji alone could restore peace on the Frontier and the borderland and thereby help in reducing the huge military expenditure.

*Moul. Peer Buksh* also supporting the resolution said that the Government were stunned to see the influence of Gandhiji in the Frontier and the spirit of non-violence in the last struggle. They smelt Bolshevist danger in all this and through their advanced policy captured Khajori plain in order to carry out blockade of the Afridis. This was not regarded sufficient and during the last nine months, bombs worth twenty-six lakhs were dropped on the Afridi country. The speaker said that in spite of all this, the Afridis had no quarrel with the Indians and they would prove most loyal and brave gatekeepers in the Swaraj Government of this country.

The resolution was unanimously passed.

#### XV—Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes

*Mahatma Gandhi* then moved the resolution on the declaration of Fundamental Rights. The following is the text:—

"This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what "Swaraj", as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position

of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide, for the following :

1. Fundamental rights of the people, including :
  - (i) freedom of association and combination ;
  - (ii) freedom of speech and of the press ;
  - (iii) freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion, subject to public order and morality ;
  - (iv) protection of the culture, language, and scripts of the minorities ;
  - (v) equal rights and obligations of all citizens, without any bar on account of sex ;
  - (vi) no disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling ;
  - (vii) equal rights to all citizens in regard to public roads, wells, schools and other places of public resort ;
  - (viii) right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf ;
  - (ix) no person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
2. Religious neutrality on the part of the State.
3. Adult suffrage.
4. Free primary education.
5. A living wage for industrial workers, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.
6. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom.
7. Protection of woman workers, and, specially, adequate provisions for leave during maternity period.
8. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories.
9. Right of labour to form unions to protect their interests with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes by arbitration.
10. Substantial reduction in agricultural rent or revenue paid by the peasantry and in case of uneconomic holdings exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary, relief being given to small zamindars wherever necessary by reason of such reduction.
11. Imposition of a progressive income tax on agricultural incomes above a fixed minimum.
12. A graduated inheritance tax.
13. Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one half of the present scale.
14. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments to be largely reduced. No servant of the State, other than specially employed experts and the like, to be paid above a certain fixed figure which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.
15. Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country.
16. Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.
17. No duty on salt manufactured in India.
18. Control over exchange and currency policy so as to help Indian industries and bring relief to the masses.
19. Control by the State of key industries and ownership of mineral resources.
20. Control of usury—direct or indirect.

It shall be open to the A. I. C. O. to revise, amend or add to the foregoing so far as such revision, amendment or addition is not inconsistent with the policy and principles thereof."

After reading the resolution Mahatmaji explained its meaning and scope.

"Brothers and Sisters", he began, "you have heard with great patience what I have read. Our main question and concern will be that of the poor people ple. What I wanted or meant about our minimum I have said in my eleven points already. It was my object too that we could place these eleven points before the R. T. C. But later it was thought that it would be of advantage to have a clear idea of our minimum and to elaborate those eleven points and to place them later before the R. T. C.

"I have already told you that this resolution is an elaboration of the eleven points. Now we are going to tell the world what exactly we want through our minimum demands. Please tell me if you are dissatisfied with this by making it known. We are all eager to get Swaraj. We will do everything to get it too but then for such a task as this, we must have our materials ready. We must, for instance, take up the question of Hindu-Moslem unity. Personally, I do not see why two fine cultures which have so many points common to them should not understand each other. After all the *Bhagawat Gita* and the *Qoran* are the same. I believe each could be done by working together.

"Secondly, from the resolution you will see that we have given equal rights to men and women. Even on the question of votes, we have given them equal rights. Why not? Have we not given women better facilities and treated them better than anyone else? It is not possible in the present scheme of things for a woman to become a Viceroy, but do you not know that in our Government everything is possible? Was not the first woman President of our Congress Dr. Annie Besant? Did not Sarojini Naidu become President? Did not women become dictators in our recent struggle? As regards religious neutrality, we are not going to make any difference, because of a man's religion. Religion will not be a barrier and the cause of any difference of treatment to individuals. As regards labourers, we are going to make their lives better in every way in the factories we run. We will manage the factories in such a way that the labourer's wife and children are happy. The Swaraj Government will give labourers their wherewithal. The hours of work will be eight hours per day. The labourer's material welfare will be looked after. We will think of him as our brother. His position is bad to-day because the government to-day is not ours. When to-morrow the government comes into our hands all these evils could be remedied. I will not talk at length over other details. If you ever keep a diary, please make a note in it of the fact that when Swaraj comes there will be no duty on salt. Salt will be free for all.

"Usury is forbidden," Gandhiji continued, "in Mahomedau Law. If anyone charges interest it is considered as crime. Hinduism however permits it, but our brethren do levy a terrible rate. We have Guzaratis, Banyas and Marwaris who do this trade. To prevent this we are going to ask them not to charge them more than six per cent or at most eight per cent in their dealing. We want to fix such rent as will be possible for poor men to pay and as will not materially affect the interests of the landlord zamindars. I must tell you that this scheme was prepared at short notice within twentyfour hours. I am aware it is incomplete and that there are many mistakes in it too. It is not a final document, nor is it God's last word on the subject. This is only for your guidance, but there is nothing very dreadful about it. Its acceptance need cause no alarm. I do not think therefore there is any need for amendments.

"It is up to you to give life to the skeleton of the scheme. I request you to adopt it and pass it and help us. With these words Gandhiji completed the narration of his "dream of Government."

Mr. Sen Gupta, supporting the resolution, said if, as some of us apprehended, negotiations with the present British Government would fail, and the masses would have to come once again to their rescue and fight the battle, it was therefore necessary that the masses should know exactly what was meant by Swaraj of which the Congress spoke.

Mr. Prakasam and Mr. R. K. Bose moved amendments and expressed the view that the present time was most inopportune to bring forward a resolution of this character. They also criticised some of the clauses as liable to misrepresentation.

Mr. Masilamani supported the resolution on behalf of Catholic Christians.

Mr. Nekiram Sharma also supported the resolution.

Closure was moved and the resolution was put and carried at 10-30 p.m.

At the stroke of 12, the President Mr. Vallabhbhai adjourned the session *sine die*. Earlier in the evening, Dr. Choitram Gidwani thanked the various sub-committees and workers who had made the Congress a success in such a short time.

Mrs. Naidu offered enthusiastic gratitude on behalf of the Congress to the Reception Committee. She referred to the death of Mr. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi in Cawnpore and hoped his blood would cement Hindu-Moslem unity. She concluded with a stirring appeal to young India to live and work for freedom and make India free.

## MR. VALLABHBHAI'S CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, in closing the session, referred to the work of the Congress and said they had passed two resolutions which might be regarded as a landmark in the history of India. One was in regard to the Delhi Truce and the second in the matter of the Declaration of Fundamental Rights. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel said that the decision of the Congress in ratifying the Gandhi-Irwin settlement show that the country regarded it as an honourable settlement entered into with due regard to the national prestige. In this connection he referred to the opposition to the pact by the younger people. Mr. Patel said it would only be a matter of six months by which time the result would be finally known. "What are six months in the lives of young men. For old people like me and Gandhiji it meant everything. We may not live for the next six months. But our ambition is to see India free before we die. It is befitting for young men to give us that chance."

Proceeding, Mr. Vallabhbhai said that the Congress was not the monopoly of any particular class of people. It belonged to the nation. It would one day pass on to younger people who should not be impatient of time. They should devote these six months in propagating khaddar and in effecting boycott of foreign cloth. In this connection, he gave a notice to foreign cloth merchants and said if they did not stop importing foreign cloth they might have to repent, because the Congress was going to have a hundredfold more power.

Proceeding, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel said that even if Gandhiji had made a mistake young men should not do likewise. Their aid should be to follow truth fearlessly and faithfully. Mr. Vallabhbhai said that talk did not count. It was service, it was action that made man respected. If they had strength behind them and if they did not approve of any constitution which the country had as a result of the Round Table Conference, they could always throw it into the waste paper basket. But if they had not the sanction of action behind, thousands of Gandhis could not get them freedom. Young men, he said, should be like the Frontier leader, Sirdar Abdul Ghaflar Khan who told Gandhiji that he was not concerned whether the settlement was good or bad. He was a soldier and his concern was to obey the orders of his Commauder Gandhiji.

In conclusion, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel referred to the anti-Gandhi demonstration on his arrival here on the 25th March and said the behaviour of young men like that could not enhance the prestige of the country. No man ever had such a large following as Gandhiji had to-day, and their insulting Gandhiji could not be regarded as anything but most reprehensible.

After "Bande Mataram" had been sung, the Congress was adjourned *sine die*.

## Mahatma Gandhi's Survey of the Congress

Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following in "Young India" :—

The Congress is finished. It was an object lesson in quick organisation. Without the willing co-operation of nearly three thousand volunteers men, women and children, and the public, a city accommodating twenty thousand persons with all the conveniences could not have been brought into being in twenty-five days. A band of merchants undertook the kitchen work, ensuring efficiency, economy and good service. The women volunteers vied with the men in hard work often involving prolonged vigils. But the real credit belongs to the Lord Mayor of Karachi, the great Parsi humanitarian and philanthropist, Jamshed Mehta. There are seasoned Congress workers who strove to make the organisation so perfect. These I need not mention. The chief architectural feature of the Congress was its vast pandal which had no canopy but that of the blue sky. It became thus possible to ensure freedom from suffocating air and to provide ample accommodation. It saved enormous expenses. Instead of building the dias and galleries they were obtained by excavation as at the time of the Allahabad Congress. Another feature was the great khadi exhibition which beat all the previous ones in scientific arrangement. Although it was not part of a big show it attracted vast crowds and was thoroughly successful from the financial standpoint.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's address was perhaps the briefest of all presidential addresses. He was able to finish the proceedings in two days—not a bad record. A day saved means much saving of expense and more of the fagged out exertion of the over-worked volunteers.

The Congress has endorsed the provisional settlement and issued in the clearest possible terms its mandate to its delegation.

#### DUTY OF ADHERING TO SETTLEMENT

Much has yet to happen before the delegation can take part in any conference that may be held. The duty of Congressmen is now clear. They must faithfully observe the terms of the provisional settlement. They must clear the atmosphere of every trace of violence and therefore first examine and purify themselves. The nation must achieve the boycott of foreign cloth and see that the gospel of the wheel spreads through every village of India. Before this can be accomplished we must develop much greater love of the famishing millions than we have. The drunkard and the drug addict must be induced, not forced to give up their vice. These things required greater organisation, greater cooperation among ourselves and a living faith in non-violence in thought, word and deed. Whether it is taken up as a policy or a creed, mind and body must act together while the policy or the creed is in operation.

While the truce lasts we must not boycott British goods as such. Last but not least, one must achieve Hindu-Muslim unity. How this is to be done I know. The Hindus have to dare to trust them and let the Mussalmans and the Sikhs take what they want. This rids the nation of all communal taint. But of this hereafter.

#### HINDU-MOSLEM TENSION

"But the hatred which was created and which has been shown in words and actions has been so intolerable that it must set one to think whether release of such mighty forces of hatred all round the country is advisable. From morning till late night one hear through talks, songs, through slogans and felt such mighty torrents of hatred that it was sickening to find such a degradation in a large mass of people. I use the word 'degradation' with full responsibility. It appeared that speaking lies was a matter of full licence and liberty. To attack Government officers, police officers, men who disagreed for something which was entirely untrue, for something which never happened, was a daily common event seen on the roads and everywhere. More than words can express the cruelties and the injustice inflicted on the traders of British goods especially, and some other foreign goods were wide, intolerable and unbearable. To request a man not to deal in one article and to request another not to purchase an article is one thing, but to force a man by abusing him, by obstructing him, by making his life miserable in every way is another thing, and there, I must admit non-violence has miserably failed. I am certain in my mind that the hatred created and the cruelties inflicted were far from non-violence and against all principles and teachings of Mahatmaji. It was a common practice to obstruct and inflict with all kinds of tactics to make persons' lives miserable whenever one disagreed with the general movement. In every province there were different types of activities and it appears that either one had to accept such dictation of somebody or one had to go through whatever was inflicted upon him by any small or large band of children, ladies or full grown up men. According to them, to differ in any way was pro-British, pro-Government or unfaithfulness to the country and to-day one can see clearly mental victims of these forces of hatred in several houses.

#### INDISCRIMINATE THREAT OF SATYAGRAHA

"But the danger is still greater. The taste of the blood-breaking laws has been so attractive that one finds to-day this blessed Satyagraha on the lips of every one. As soon as you differ any where, be it in a school, in a house, in a group, in a circle of friends, in business, in an office, you find immediately threat of Satyagraha pointed out to you at every time. Between employer and employees, landlords and tenants, parents and children, teachers and pupils, brothers and friends, everywhere this pointed bayonet of Satyagraha seems to be ready for use. To break laws and rules of society or of the State seems to be so easy and handy. If a college professor suggests discipline, if a Municipal officer recommends extra tax, if children are requested not to make noise, if hawkers are told to remove obstructions on roads, if changes or transfers are being arranged, if anything is done which does not suit anybody else, there is this dagger of Satyagraha pointed at you. Discrimination where to use and how to use seems to have been entirely lost in the whole nation and this a danger signal

for any nation or country. It is exactly like an aeroplane, which is being used generally to fly from one country to another speedily and is also used for throwing bombs. It is exactly like matches, which give light, and are also used for burning a house. One can clearly see this danger signal in the Satyagraha weapon also, Satyagraha can be used to advantage but it can also be misused to entire destruction. I feel that unless those who proclaim Satyagraha as the best weapon to the wide world, did feel their responsibility in this matter, they would soon find the tables turned not only against themselves but on the whole country. If I can humbly suggest, I feel that some of the rigidly trained leaders, free from hatred, should now do nothing else but pass some years of their lives in each province and each city and village to make people understand what real Satyagraha or true, non-violence means, how it can be brought into operation and when it can be brought into operation. I would humbly suggest a regular school of non-violence in every province where high-minded souls who thoroughly understand this subject scientifically and religiously ought to be teachers to the students of politics who in return should be kept as all-time workers to go round the country, give this message and teach what it is in reality. This can be the only safeguard for saving the country in my opinion."

Jamshed Mehta, the Lord Mayor of Karachi, is a patriot of the purest type. But for his identification with the Congress to the extent he was capable of and but for his having placed at the disposal of the Reception Committee all the resources of his municipality, the wonderful Congress city would not have been brought into being in the incredibly short space of twenty-five days. His sympathy for the Satyagrahis when the campaign was going on is well known. Any criticism from one like him must therefore arrest attention. The quotation given above is an extract from Sjt Jamshed Mehta's article in a Karachi Anglo-Gujrati weekly called "Parsi Sansar" and "Lokasevak". The criticism I have copied follows a glowing tribute paid by him to the Satyagrahis who bore sufferings without retaliation. But we have no reason to be puffed up with pride over certificates of merit. In so far as we observed non-violence we only did our duty.

#### THE TRUE MEANING OF NON-VIOLENCE

It is then the warning of this true friend of humanity and his country, that we must treasure and profit by. What he has said of Karachi is likely to be true more or less of other places.

Non-violence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Non-violence of the mere body without the co-operation of the mind is non-violence of the weak or the cowardly and therefore no potency. It is as Jamshedji says truly, a degrading performance. If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our destruction. For abstention from mere bodily non-violence not to be injurious, it is at least necessary not to entertain hatred if we cannot generate active love. All the songs and speeches betokening hatred must be taboo.

It is equally true to say that indiscriminate resistance to authority must lead to lawlessness, unbridled license and consequent self-destruction.

If Jamshedji's criticism was not more than balanced by his appreciation, that is to say, if the sum total of real non-violence had not overbalanced the unreal, India would not have gone forward as it has done.

But better even than the Karachi Lord Mayor's appreciation is the undoubted fact that the villagers have instinctively observed non-violence in a manner never before thought of. It is their non-violence that has conduced to the growth of national consciousness.

The mysterious effect of non-violence is not to be measured by its visible effect. But we dare not rest content so long as the poison of hatred is allowed to permeate society. This struggle is a stupendous effort at conversion. We aim at nothing less than the conversion of the English. It can never be done by harbouring ill-will and still pretending to follow non-violence. Let those therefore who want to follow the path of non-violence and yet harbour ill-will retrace their steps and repent of the wrong they have done to themselves and the country.

# THE MUSLIM CONFERENCES

## The All India Muslim Conference

### The Working Committee Meeting

NEW DELHI—7th. FEBRUARY 1931

A meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference was held at new Delhi on the 7th February 1931, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Mahomed Ismail Khan. Those present included Maulana Shah Masood Ahmad, M. L. A., Raja of Salimpur, Nawab Mahomed Ismail Khan Jafar Khan of Peshawar, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Mufti Mahomed Safique Hasan Raiz and Mahomed Safi Daudi. It passed a resolution expressing its profound sorrow and grief at the sad death of the great Indian Leader, Pandit Motilal Nehru and tendering its heartfelt sympathy and condolence to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other members of the bereaved family. It also passed the following resolutions:—

(a) That the Working Committee of the All India Muslim Conference, while noting that the Premier's declaration concedes to a limited extent the demand of the people of this country for transfer of responsibility to Legislatures, yet, in view of this suggested safeguards and reservations of some vital subjects to the control of the Governor-General for indefinite period, is unable to accord its approval and support to the said declaration, until specific proposals are framed for giving effect to it.

(b) The federal structure as evolved at the Round Table Conference is, in important respects, at variance with the federal form of Government demanded in the Delhi resolution of the Conference and is therefore unacceptable to this committee.

(c) The Working Committee records its profound disappointment at the failure of the Round Table Conference to find equitable and just settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question and expresses, with all the force at its command, that no constitutional structure, however plausible, will appeal to Mussalmans, unless their interests and rights are adequately and effectively safeguarded therein.

(d) The Working Committee expresses its strong dissatisfaction with the speech, recently made by the Premier in the House of Commons in which he treated the demands of Muslims for separate electorate in flippant and offensive manner thus showing that he had failed to appreciate the reasons which constrains the Muslims to insist on this demand.

(e) That having regard to facts that the Muslim demands have been conceded by the Hindus and not by Government the Working Committee calls upon Mussalmans to forthwith organise themselves and be prepared to resort to any action deemed necessary for expressing their just demands.

(f) That, in view of the momentous issues that confront the community, the Working Committee is strongly of opinion that a Special Session of the Conference be convened at an early date to decide the line of action to be pursued by Muslims for giving effective weight to their voice in the framing of the constitution and asks the executive board to make the necessary arrangements for it.

DELHI—1st. MARCH 1931

The next meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference was held at Delhi on March 1. The sitting lasted ten hours. Sixteen members of the committee attended. It was resolved that a special session of the Muslim Conference be held in the last week of March at Delhi, His Highness the Aga Khan presiding.

It was further resolved that the committee was of opinion that the Benares happenings were not a Hindu-Muslim fracas, but rather a calculated assault of



Hindus on defenceless Muslims. It approved of the procedure adopted by the U. P. Muslim Conference and was awaiting the appearance of its report with anxiety. The meeting further appealed to Indian Muslims to extend their helping hand to their afflicted brethren at Benares and send their contributions to the Raja Sahib of Salempur, president, U. P. Muslim Conference, Lucknow. In the opinion of the meeting it was further necessary that a deputation consisting of Muslim councillors and others should visit the Governor of the U. P. for impressing upon His Excellency the advisability of making good the losses suffered by the poor Benares Muslims.

The committee recorded its sense of abhorrence at the happenings at Utmanzai. It believed that the only panacea for such behaviour was the immediate grant of responsible government to the Frontier Provinces and further resolved that a deputation should at once proceed to Utmanzai to enquire into the tragic happenings.

#### THREAT OF CIVIL WAR

The following resolution was placed before the meeting by Maulana Hasrat Mohani. A discussion took place for nearly six hours. It was ultimately decided to postpone final decision till the ensuing special session to be held in March.

(a) Whereas the Muslim community is now convinced that the Hindus are bent upon establishing a Hindu Raj in India and whereas the Hindus and the British Cabinet have joined hands to ignore most of the important Muslim demands contained in the Delhi resolution of this conference, this committee believes that the establishment of Dominion Status in India and the vesting of responsibility in the legislatures is detrimental to Muslim interests and will, therefore, not be acceptable to them.

(b) In the opinion of the committee until a definite settlement of the Muslim demands is arrived at, the Muslims should boycott all further proceedings of the Round Table Conference.

(c) To secure the sympathy and active support of all political parties in England and to prevent the British Cabinet from pursuing further anti-Muslim policy, it is necessary to send a deputation to England to educate the public opinion and warn that any constitutional advance without a satisfactory settlement of the communal questions will result in a civil war in India.

### The Special Session Of The Conference

NEW DELHI—5th. APRIL 1931

The special session of the All India Muslim Conference opened on the 5th. April 1931 in the Sangham Theatre, New Delhi and was attended by a large number of delegates and visitors. The hall was full. Among those present were Sir Muhammed Shah, Sir Abdul Qayum, Sir Akbar Khan, Malik Feroz Khan Noon, Seth Abdulla Harroon, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, Mr. Abdul Aziz and Maulana Hasrat Mohani.

#### Welcome Address

*Begum Mohamed Ali*, Chairwoman of the Reception Committee, in welcoming the delegates referred to the sad demise of her husband in strange land and among a strange people. She said the present time was a very critical juncture for the Mussalmans of India, who should sink all personal differences and work for Islam and India. 'If you follow the path chalked out by my husband you will reach your haven of safety and freedom', said Begum Mohamed Ali. She made a stirring appeal to Muslim ladies to come forward to help the men in the work for Islam. Those who wanted to keep their veils on might do so and those who wanted to come out of purdah were welcome to follow their resolve. But, whatever they chose to do, it must be remembered that progress without Moslem women was an impossibility. She also appealed for the introduction of compulsory education among Mussalman women.

#### ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

In proposing Maulana Shaukat Ali to the chair, Maulana Abdul Majid Badauni felt that after the late Mohamed Ali there was no one more fitted to guide Indian Mussalmans than Shaukat Ali.

#### Presidential Address

*Maulana Shaukat Ali* then took the chair amidst cries of 'Allah-o-Akbar' and delivered his presidential address.

Maulana Shaukat Ali regretted the absence of their permanent president, His Highness the Aga Khan who served Islam and India selflessly at the Round Table Conference. He referred then to the loss of the late Maulana Mohamed Ali and said : 'I had watched him grow from a child to a man and took pride when he eventually became my guide and leader.' He referred to the last message dictated by Mr. Mahomed Ali on his death bed. 'He is gone from us but has left us a noble legacy and we have no time in these critical times to waste our energies in useless mournings. His brave death far off from home, in the cause of Islam and India, should stir us to shake off our lethargy.' Maulana Shaukat Ali referred next to the need for uniting their scattered forces. 'We have so many separate organizations. In my opinion the All India Muslim Conference must come forward as the working body calling upon all organisations like the Khilafat Committee, the Muslim League, the Jamiat-ul Ulema and Tabligh to give it whole-hearted support in its endeavours for internal organization.'

#### MUSLIMS' PART IN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The Maulana then touched on the part played by Muslims in the building up of the national movement. 'I want to say in clear and emphatic terms that we Muslims need not be ashamed of the part we have played in the building of a true national movement in India. There is no doubt that while many of us talk glibly about nationalism we are really at present communalists at heart and Maulana Mohamed Ali had once truly said that while the Hindus who pose as nationalists are really communalists at heart the Muslims who pose as champions of Islam are self-seekers. Between these two India has fared badly during the last few years and if there is no real change of heart there is great danger of civil war in this country. We will be not nearer Purna Swaraj but we will lose even the Ardha (partial) Swaraj. No sectional movement however well organized could bring us near our goal. We clearly see the results of this in what has happened at Benares, Mirzapur, Agra, and Cawnpore. Neither Hindus nor Muslims would tolerate any bullying or compulsion. When we compare this with what we saw in 1920 and 1921 we realize how very much astray we have gone. Mahatma Gandhi started the civil disobedience movement without the consent and in spite of the protests of his Muslim co-workers and the overwhelming majority of Muslims in India. If our advice was accepted and a Muslim-Hindu settlement had been brought about we would have gained ever so much more and India would have been spared those ugly and unfortunate scenes that we are seeing to-day. England herself had made a move for peace and the united demand of Hindus and Muslims could never have been refused. In courage and sacrifice the Muslims stand second to none, but they will not accept a dictator or bullying.'

#### PARTICIPATION IN R. T. C.

Maulana Shaukat Ali next referred to participation in the Round Table Conference and said : 'Maulana Mohamed Ali and I were really glad that we went to England. Our efforts have borne much better results than we expected. We made every Englishman and woman realize the changed conditions in India and how far we had advanced and that if our national aspirations were not satisfied then trouble was inevitable. The Muslim case had always suffered for want of proper enlightenment from the platform and in the press and for the first time Hindus and Muslims put their cases before the conference. Every one realized that the Muslims were not as black as they were painted, that they justified in demanding safeguards and that the majority had not dealt with them in a fair and just spirit. Maulana Mohamed Ali's frank speech and more than that his brave death, impressed the British people a great deal. So our going to the Round Table Conference was fully justified and the fact that the Muslims stood solid and were fair in their dealings with other parties impressed every one and our case did not go by default. It was a pity that our repeated requests to hold a Round Table Conference of our own in India for settling the Hindu-Muslim questions were not accepted. I have every hope that our Hindu brethren would now realize the seriousness of the situation and would accept our demands which are in no way unfair to them.'

There were four parties to the settlement of the problem. The first was the British people who must transfer power to the Indian people and Indians wished to live at peace with the Britishers. The second party was the Indian States. Their experience of administration would prove very useful and supply a stabilizing element in the future Government of Federated India with the provinces and the States. The Muslims were the third party whose

confidence and goodwill must be gained and the Hindus were the majority party on whose good sense and reasonableness and wisdom depended a good deal. 'No one should forget that we ruled in India for over 850 years and on the whole, I think, we ruled well. Others may try to belittle this fact, but I beg my Muslim brethren not to do so. We have got to rouse ourselves to realize that our future must be worthy of our past. England has offered us the hand of peace and we should willingly grasp it.

Continuing Maulana Shaukat Ali said: 'Let Indian States, Hindus and Muslims put their heads together and draw up a united demand and then present it to the British people who, I am sure, would never refuse it. When we are working for peace there should be no talk of threat and rebellion. In fact the British people are willing to satisfy 80 per cent of our demands at once and the rest would follow in the next ten years or so, if not earlier. Let us not quarrel over small things and try to win the confidence of the British people who are a little unnecessarily nervous about the future of India.'

Referring to the Frontier province he begged the officials of the province to stop their policy of repression. The best policy was to have friendly relations with King Nadir Khan and treat the Afgans across the border and in the N. W. F. Province with courtesy and consideration. They were better fitted for complete freedom than the people of any other province in India.

Maulana Shaukat Ali next referred to the unfortunate and disgraceful riots at Benares, Mirzapur, Agra and Cawnpore. If they did not take immediate steps the country might be plunged into a civil war. "The awakening in India to-day is general and no community would meekly accept the position of becoming camp followers of others and lose its own distinctive identity or individuality. Let us face facts as they are. There is no doubt that neither Hindus nor Muslims have any confidence in each other." He urged the Muslims to organise themselves all over the country. We must learn to defend ourselves as best as we can to stand on our legs.

'I regret to say our leadership is very poor and we are apt to quarrel over persons, honours and benefits and disregard the sacred duty of serving our weaker brothers. Rich Muslims are not doing their duty. There is urgent need for funds.

Maulana Shaukat Ali referring to the Muslim demands said: "These were formulated at the All-India Muslim Conference on the 1st of January 1929. Later on the Muslim League accepted them in toto and they began to be called Mr. Jinnah's 14 points. We stand by them to-day. Mr. Mohamed Ali just before his death drafted a memorandum about the Hindu-Muslim problem which solution ought to satisfy every body. These two documents are before you to-day. We Muslims without any outside pressure decided in March 1927 to give up our cherished right of separate electorate in favour of joint electorate and succeeded in making the Muslims agree to this, but the unfortunate mentality shown by our Hindu co-workers in discarding the Madras Congress resolution created bad blood. To-day it is absolutely impossible to make any big section of Mussalmans agree to unconditional joint electorates. We have to wait for a change in the Hindu mentality which would react favourably on the Muslims'.

Maulana Shaukat Ali referred to what he described as the greater Muslim world outside and the wonderful awakening among the brave and gifted Arab race. Their invitation for the burial of the remains of Maulana Mohamed Ali was proof of their high respect and affection for the Muslims of India and appreciation of their services to Islam and Muslim lands. Mr. Shaukat Ali narrating his experiences said that the opinion of western countries was veering round and he hoped that the Arabs would again be free, happy and prosperous.

Concluding Mr. Shaukat Ali said: 'I was glad to notice a new feeling among the British people for winning the goodwill of Muslims in general. I will beg you to accept the hand of peace when it is formally offered just in the same way as we will grasp the hand of our Hindu brethren when by accepting our demands they show us their goodwill and change of heart which we are expecting.'

#### Proceedings and Resolutions

After the presidential address was over the Conference adopted four resolutions, the first two relating to the deaths of Pandit Motilal and Maulana Mohamed Ali the third on the riots at Cawnpore and other places and the fourth on matters affecting Mussalmans *vis-a-vis* the future constitution.

RIOTS AND HINDU AGGRESSIVENESS

*Mr. Zahur Ahmad* next moved :—

"This conference deplures the wanton aggressiveness of the Hindus, culminating in the riots at Benares, Agra, Mirzapore, Cawnpore and elsewhere, accompanied with brutal and callous murders of innocent and defenceless Muslims, including women and children.

"This conference is convinced that the so-called non-violence of the Congress Satyagrahis, consisting in many cases of students of colleges and schools, is mere sham, but little short of an unclean political stratagem adopted in the face of the superior organised force of the State and cast off in dealings between communities.

"This conference is of opinion that a continuance of this attitude of the majority community will lead to a state of civil war in India and warns the Governments in England and this country that their spineless handling of the situation due to their continued pandering to the Congress will create a condition of things in India which will spell the complete ruin of this unfortunate country."

*Mr. Zahur Ahmed*, moving the resolution, referred to the 'inhuman atrocities perpetrated on Mussalmans in Benares, Mirzapur and Cawnpore'. He said the question before the country was whether Mussalmans could enjoy freedom of conscience and action or whether they were to be intimidated by the Congress, with the indifference or connivance of the Government, which largely could be attributed to fear of the Congress. If the Government could not protect the Mussalmans, they should say so and at least they should not turn on the Mussalmans all their engines of destruction when the Mussalmans took to arms in self-defence. The speaker then referred to the statement of Mahatma Gandhi, in which he had said that there would be civil war in India and it would continue till one of the two communities was completely exhausted. The speaker said: 'Why not test our metal to-day and take decisions thereupon?' ('Allah-o-Akbar.')

Continuing, the speaker said the apathy of the Government towards Muslims was largely due to the fact that Muslims had not shown their strength to the Government. In conclusion, he protested against the activities of "those self-styled leaders", who to-day, in the face of all the happenings in India, were discussing peace terms with Gandhi.

*Maulana Abdul Majid Badauni*, supporting the resolution, said: 'Blessed are the martyrs of Cawnpore, for they have banished fear of death from Mussalmans. He said the recent disturbances were not communal troubles but were exhibitions of the united force of Hindus.

*Mr. Fateh Mohamed* said that cries of 'Gandhi-ki-Jai' really meant 'Death of Mussalmans'.

*Haji Ali Mohamed* of Bombay said the Mussalmans of Bombay had taught such a lesson to the Hindus of that city that they would never wish for any repetition of Cawnpore.

*Maulana Shaukat Ali*, in putting the resolution to the vote, deprecated the fiery nature of the speeches on the resolution. He urged united action on the part of the Mussalmans, but not with the intention of any revenge.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

MUSLIMS AND REFORMS

*The Hon. Malik Feroz Khan Noon* moved :—

(a) "This conference, while approving of the recommendations of the Federal Structure Committee that the future constitution of India should take the form of a federation of autonomous units, reiterates the demand already made of the All-India Muslim Conference that the autonomy of constituent units should be complete, residual powers being vested in the constituent elements, and insists that in this respect there shall be no difference between the various units constituting the All India Federation.

(b) This conference approves of the decision of the Round Table Conference that Sind be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate Governor's province and demands that such separation should take effect prior to or simultaneously with the inauguration of the new constitution, the financial adjustments being so arranged as to make the provision of sufficient resources for development.

(c) This conference regrets that the constitution outlined at the Round Table Conference for the five settled districts of the North-West Frontier Province falls short of the Muslim demand and does not concede to that province the same mea-

sure of legislative and administrative responsibility as is proposed for the other British Indian provinces, and insists that the new constitution for that province should be identical with that of the other provinces of British India.

(d) This conference deploras the fact that the Round Table Conference ignored the question of reforms for Baluchistan despite the repeated demands made in that behalf by representative Muslim organisations.

(e) This conference is emphatically of opinion that all transfer of power shall be from Parliament to the provinces, and that no subject shall be made federal without the previous and mutual consent of the autonomous units.

(f) This conference reiterates the demands made by the All India Muslim Conference that (1) the Muslim community should have 33¼ per cent representation in the Federal Legislature, (2) the weightage at present enjoyed by the Muslim community in the provinces in which it is a minority be maintained, similar weightage being given to other minorities in Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, (3) the small Muslim majority in the Punjab and Bengal shall in no way be impaired in relation to their representation to the legislatures.

(g) This conference is emphatically of opinion that in the existing conditions the right enjoyed by the Muslim community according to the law of the land of representation in the central and provincial legislatures through their own separate electorate be maintained.

(h) This conference is of opinion that the franchise for the provincial legislature be widened so that the portions of the various communities in population.

(i) This conference endorses the proposal embodied in para 3 of the R. T. C. Minorities Committee's report, that the future Indian constitution must include a declaration of fundamental rights safeguarding the cultural and religious life of the various communities and secure to every individual, without distinction as to caste, race, creed and sex, the free exercise of their economic, social and civil rights. This conference further emphasises the necessity of including in the constitution a sanction for the enforcement of fundamental rights, including the right to redress when they are violated.

(j) This conference reiterates its demand that no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be discussed or passed in any legislature if a three-fourth majority of members of the Muslim community in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such a bill, resolution or amendment.

(k) This conference is emphatically of opinion that Muslim interests should be adequately recognised in the formation of the federal and provincial executives, an obligation to endeavour to secure such representation should be expressed in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General and the provincial Governors.

(l) This conference reiterates its demand that a provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims their adequate share in all services of the State, whether federal or provincial, having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.

(m) This conference considers it essential that no changes in the Indian constitution after its inauguration be made by the Federal Legislature except with the concurrence of all the States constituting the Federation."

*Malik Feroz Khan Noon* said that Mussalmans had not understood the implications of the coming reforms. They would have to consider whether they had enough confidence in the majority communities so as to entrust all matters affecting them to the federal legislature. Take the case of defence, he said, which the Congress to-day demanded to be a transferred subject. If that was conceded, he warned them that the Mussalmans would be reduced to the state of grass-cutters. Then, if Hindus predominated in the army, could Mussalmans trust them to protect their lives and property in the event of any riot as at Cawnpore? 'Under the circumstances, we are not willing to concede any such demands of the Congress till the Congress creates sufficient confidence amongst us that our interests will be well safeguarded in the future constitution of India. The transfer of power to the Congress would mean no power for Mussalmans. But if the Congress creates sufficient confidence in us, they would find that Mussalmans are not backward in making sacrifices. But the Congress should also remember that, just as they are to-day trying to wrest power from the hands of the Government, so we also could and would wrest our share from the hands of the Congress.'

*Mr. Hussan Imam*, supporting the resolution, said that they were only claiming their just share and not trying to usurp anything belonging to anybody else.

*Haji Abdulla Haroon* said that the mere passing of the resolution would not make it acceptable to the Government or the Hindus. They should work up an agitation in its favour in order to create the necessary sanction behind it. He also asked the audience whether they were in favour of separate electorates. He thereupon asked the audience to be firm in their resolve.

The result was unanimously adopted and the conference was adjourned.

### SECOND DAY—6th. APRIL 1931

#### RESOLUTION ON R. T. C. POSTPONED

Next day, the question of Moslem participation in the proposed Round Table Conference, formed the subject-matter of a resolution moved by Moulana Hasrat Mohani which caused considerable excitement and heated discussion.

*Moulana Hasrat Mohani* urged that, unless their demands as formulated by the Conference were conceded, they should abstain from participating in the second Round Table Conference and should also oppose the establishment of Dominion Status if responsibility in the Central Government was granted. Proceeding, the speaker said that at the last Round Table Conference, Mussalmans had forgotten to put forth their claims altogether, and had accepted the principle of responsibility at the centre without any guarantee about their position under that constitution. Subsequently, however, they lodged their protest with the Prime Minister, who treated their demands with scant courtesy. In spite of the Moslem protest, the Prime Minister accepted the principle of responsibility at the centre and told the Hindus and Mussalmans to return to their country in order to settle the communal differences. Since then, Moulana Hasrat Mohani said, Hindus had changed their attitude and the Congress had now decided to participate in the second Round Table Conference. The only course open to the Mussalmans, therefore, was to insist on the acceptance of their demands as a condition precedent to their participation in the conference.

*Mr. Mahomed Sadiq*, in seconding the resolution, said that the past events had shown that the Government had to yield before the stiff attitude of the Congress and would also give way to the Mussalmans if the latter presented a united but equally stern attitude.

*Moulavi Shafi Daudi* moved an amendment to the effect that the Moslem delegates should not accept transfer of responsibility at the centre unless their demands were conceded.

*Maulana Shaikat Ali* supported the amendment. Both the resolution and the amendment gave rise to a heated debate, which was not over before the conference was adjourned to the evening.

Earlier in the day, an amended resolution of Nawab Abdul Haasan asking for Muslim seats in the Federal Assembly through the system of separate electorates from Delhi and Ajmere-Merwara was adopted by the conference.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani's resolution, which had caused such a tense atmosphere in the morning, and which had necessitated a further sitting of the House at night had to be abandoned due to the thin audience of delegates and the vital importance of the resolution.

The Subjects Committee, which met in the afternoon, discussed the *pros* and *cons* of the resolution, but opinion was divided on the point. It was thought proper to consider the resolution at some later stage in a full House after giving full publicity.

#### MAULAVI DAUDI'S STATEMENT

In the open Conference in Fatepuri Hall where the proceedings commenced at 7 p. m. and which was attended by fifty delegates only, Moulavi Mahomed Shafi Daudi made a statement in which he stated that in such a thin House such an important resolution should not be considered, and while appealing to Maulana Hasrat Mohani to permit the adjournment, withdrew his amendment.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani agreed to Moulavi Shafi Daudi's request, and the consideration of the resolution was adjourned *sine die*.

A resolution thanking the people of Palestine and Egypt and the Governments of those places was passed for having shown respect to the last remains of Maulana Mahomed Ali. The Conference then terminated.

## The All India Muslim League

NEW DELHI—15th. MARCH 1931

The work of the Round Table Conference was reviewed by the Council of the All-India Muslim League which met at New Delhi on the 15th, March 1931.

The Council elected Sir Muhammad Shafi as president in place of Mr. Jinnah till the next annual session and also appointed Begam Shah Nawaz to membership of the Council, she being the first woman member of the Council.

The Council passed the following resolutions :—

### REFORMS FOR BALUCHISTAN

The Council of the All-India Muslim League entirely disapproves of the attitude adopted by the Simon Commission, the Government of India and the Round Table Conference in not considering the question of reforms for Baluchistan inspite of the repeated demands made by the League in respect of Baluchistan.

### MR. JINNAH'S SERVICES

The Council places on record its sincere appreciation of the invaluable services of Mr. M. A. Jinnah to the Muslim community in general and the Muslim League in particular during many years of his public life.

### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The Council endorses the proposal embodied in para 3 of the Minority Report that the constitution must include a declaration of fundamental rights safeguarding the cultural and religious life of the various communities and securing to every individual, without distinction of caste, race, creed or sex, the free exercise of economic, social and civic rights. The Council further emphasises the necessity of including in the constitution sanction for the enforcement of the fundamental rights including the right of redress when they are violated.

### CONDITIONS OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Subject to the following claims being fully met, namely, (1) Indian Muslims should have 33 and one-third per cent representation in the Federal Legislatures; (2) that the weightage being given to the Hindu community in Sind and N. W. F. Province; and (3) the Punjab and Bengal be in no way impaired, the Council is prepared to agree to the proposal that responsibility for the Government of India ought to be placed upon the legislatures, central and provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee during the period of transition the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances and also such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

### SEPARATE ELECTORATES

The Council of the All-India Muslim League expressed its satisfaction at the Round Table Conference conclusions that the British Government cannot with any chance of agreement impose upon communities an electoral principle which in some feature or other would be met by opposition, and demands that separate electorates shall be retained as the basis of the electoral arrangements under the new constitution.

### FRONTIER REFORMS

The Council of the All-India Muslim League, while approving of the decisions of the Round Table Conference that the N. W. F. Province should be constituted into a separate province, expresses its regret that the constitution outlined at the Round Table Conference for the five settled districts of the N. W. F. Province falls short of the Muslim demands and does not give the same legislative and administrative responsibility as is proposed for the other provinces of British India, and considers that this defect should be removed.

## RESIDUARY POWERS

The Council reiterates the demand made in clause (I) of the resolution unanimously adopted at the All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi on Jan. 1, 1929, that under the new constitution the residuary powers should rest with the provinces.

## SEPARATION OF SIND

The Council approves of the decision of the Round Table Conference that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate province, the financial adjustments being so arranged as to make the province self-supporting, giving it sufficient resources for development. The Council is further of opinion that the separation should take effect before or simultaneously with the inauguration of the new constitution.

## MUSLIM DELEGATES TO R. T. C.

The Council places on record its appreciation of the service of the Muslim delegates at the Round Table Conference under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan, inasmuch as they made it absolutely clear that they could not consent finally to any constitution until the Hindu-Muslim question was settled and that no constitution would work unless it embodied provisions which gave a sense of security to the Muslims and other minorities.

## The Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind

KARACHI—1st. APRIL 1931

Addressing the annual session of the Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind at Karachi on the 1st. April 1931, *Mahatma Gandhi* referred to the communal riots in Agra, Benares, Cawnpore, Mirzapur, etc. where the Hindus and the Mussalmans fought like enemies. *Mahatma Gandhi* could not apportion blame to any one community but at Cawnpore, according to the press reports, the Hindus started the mischief. *Mahatma Gandhi* said it was a great sin to use force in the matter of forcign hartals.

*Mahatma Gandhi* said the Congress has appointed a committee of enquiry into the recent communal riots which would commence work shortly. *Mahatma Gandhi* in the meanwhile assured the house that as a Hindu he felt more grief and shame for the use of force by his co-religionists. If one learnt the lesson of complete toleration communal riot would become impossible. I appeal to you, learned theologians of Islam, to use your good offices and eradicate the poison of communalism from the Mussalmans and teach the Mussalmans the doctrines of mutual goodwill and toleration. I will make a similar appeal to the Hindus not to return blow for blow but treat the Mussalmans as their brethren even if the Mussalmans are in the wrong.

*Mahatma Gandhi* said that Hindu-Moslem unity alone could achieve Swaraj for India and he was convinced that unless the inter-communal tangle was solved it would be useless to go to the Round Table Conference. Speaking personally, *Mahatma Gandhi* said that he was prepared to concede to the Mussalmans everything they wanted.

*Mahatma Gandhi* in this connection paid a glowing tribute to the people of the Frontier who had so thoroughly imbibed the doctrine of Satyagraha. He asked the Moulanas to give their blessing in his efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity for which purpose he was going to Delhi the next day.

He also referred to the Congress declaration of fundamental rights and said that the Swaraj they were working for would be Swaraj for the poor. He appealed to all present to join the Congress and strengthen their hands for winning Swaraj.

*Mahatma Gandhi* next referred to the question of the separation of Sind and said that ever since his arrival in Karachi he had been receiving frantic telegrams from Hindus asking him to oppose separation. This showed that there was a feeling of mutual mistrust between the two communities. It showed fear of being swamped away by the Mussalmans in the minds of the Hindus if Sind was separated. The remedy, he said, lay in creating mutual trust and he made an impassioned appeal to the Mussalmans to assure their Hindu brethren in Sind that there was no danger for their lives and property in the event Sind was separated. *Mahatma Gandhi* also appealed to



the Hindus not to play cowards and trust their Muslim brethren. 'By eradicating fear from Hindu minds and by creating mutual goodwill and trust both communities could come forward to demand the separation of Sind from Bombay, a demand which would be irresistible.'

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the Mussalmans to use *khaddar* and spin every day. *Khaddar*, he said, knew no communal barriers. He gave it as a piece of information that the majority of spinners in India were Muslim women who contributed largely to the production of *khaddar*. But even if it was otherwise why should not the Mussalmans benefit the Hindus who were their kith and kin instead of benefitting Lancashire? Mahatma Gandhi referred to the example of Hazrat Umar who was an apostle of simplicity and failed to understand why the Mussalmans had taken to luxurious ways in the midst of poverty in the country. If the Mussalmans had love of the poor which Islam taught so passionately they should use *khaddar*.

#### MAULANA AZAD'S SPEECH

*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, president of the session, thanked Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Malaviya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and others who had attended the meeting that evening. The Maulana said it was an irony of fate that those Mussalmans who had drunk deep from the fountain of modern learning had not joined the movement. But the members of the Jamiat who were scholars of Arabic on older lines had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the fray.

Maulana Azad felt assured that Mahatma Gandhi's message of love would find a ready echo in the hearts of the Mussalmans and they would soon prove it by their actions that they stood shoulder to shoulder with the Hindus.

The Maulana spoke appreciatively of the part which the Muslim generally and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema in particular played in last year's struggle. He also referred to the frontier Muslims' part. He asked the Muslims who demanded rights to understand the responsibilities that went with rights. As regards the representation of the Muslim community in the services of the State, he advised the Muslims to fight for it not on communal but on economic grounds. As for representation in the legislatures adult suffrage which the Congress had accepted would remove all disabilities.

He declared that in the past whenever efforts for communal unity were made communal disturbances invariably broke out. History was repeating itself now also when Delhi negotiations were going on.

Large crowds of Mussalmans, particularly Muslim women with their veils off, lined the half a mile route through which Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders drove to the Conference.

#### Resolutions

The Jamiat adopted the following important resolutions :—

The first, second and third resolutions, moved from the chair, paid a tribute to the late Maulana Mahomed Ali, Shah Mahomed Zubair and Pandit Matilal Nehru.

The fourth resolution expressed deep sorrow over the Benares, Mirzapur, Agra and Cawnpore riots and condemned the originators of the riots. The fifth resolution demanded the release of Maulana Habibur Rahman of Ludhiana, member of the Jamiat, who was still in Jail.

The sixth resolution thanked all Mussalmans, especially the Frontier Muslims, who had participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement in response to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema's appeal.

The seventh resolution expressed great resentment at the Government's proposal to create a new province in the territory of the independent tribes bordering on the Frontier of India, and condemned the throwing of bombs on the Frontier inhabitants during the last nine months.

The eighth resolution ratified the Gandhi-Irwin Pact as a truce.

The ninth resolution embodied the future programme of continuance of peaceful picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops in co-operation with the Congress and recruitment of volunteers in all provinces.

The tenth resolution appealed to Mussalmans to strengthen the voice of the Jamiat so that their personal law might be safeguarded.

The eleventh resolution expressed grief over the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

The twelfth resolution condemned the Government for the execution of Habib Nur.

The other resolutions passed demanded the release of all political prisoners, including Moplah prisoners, Bengal detenus, Punjab martial law prisoners, etc.

The Conference condemned the British Government's policy in Palestine.

The Working Committee was authorised to negotiate with the Congress and other Muslim parties for a Hindu-Muslim settlement. The Jamiat directed its Working Committee to be tolerant in the matter of Hindu-Muslim settlement.

The last resolution thanked Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President after which the Jamiat came to a close.

## The All India Shia Political Conference

MONTGOMERY—5th. APRIL 1931

The annual session of the All-India Shia Political Conference was held at Montgomery in the Punjab on the 5th. April 1931 under the presidency of Raja Nawab Ali. The *pandal* was packed with delegates and visitors. The president's address was heard with rapt attention. He said:—

If as citizens of India you mean to retain for yourselves the full benefits of its citizenship, you must no longer display an indifferent outlook. That will lead you to extinction as a factor in the practical politics of your own country.

The civil disobedience movement which was started last year, about this time, after spreading slowly all over the country, gathered formidable strength, commanding the sympathy of a much larger population than the number of its active workers. The people who participated in the various stages of the movement can scarcely be estimated to be less than many millions, but of those who were chosen for arrest and trial and were convicted by regular courts, the figure is about 53,000, and a close analysis of those who went to jail shows that each class of the population was almost duly represented. That is evidence of the fact that no class of people remained untouched by the outbreak of this non-violent warfare. The progress of this movement was responsible for the non-participation of Congressmen in the deliberations of the Round Table Conference. Delegates to the Round Table Conference did succeed in impressing upon all the three parties in England that India was in no mood to be trifled with. Then the progress of the civil disobedience movement was also partly responsible in exercising upon the British Government and the other British parties attending the Round Table Conference a chastening influence with the result that no unreasonable attitude was displayed by them. The attitude of the Indian Princes also helped the situation a great deal. In fact it made the distant ideal of a Federated India a matter of immediate realization and the present basis of work for the future constitution of India is proceeding on the basis of a Federation of Provinces in British India and Indian States. Non-participation of the Congress at the next session of the Round Table Conference would have been a serious menace to the smooth working of constitution but thanks to the Gandhi-Irwin settlement that contingency has for the time being disappeared.

### R. T. C. AND SAFEGUARDS

The members of the All-India Shia Political Conference are led to believe that a settlement between India and England will be arrived at on the basis of an equal partnership in the British Commonwealth of Nations and on terms that will not injure the interests of India or the self-respect of her people. The thanks of our community along with those of the rest of the country are due both to Mahatma Gandhi and H. E. Lord Irwin. The deliberations of the London Conference so far have yielded the unanimous view that India should be placed in the position of Dominion Status with certain reservations for the period of transition. This was due to the joint efforts of the Hindu and Muslim delegates.

Personally speaking and speaking on behalf of the Shia community I have no hesitation in saying that I accept all those safeguards and reservations as essential to the strengthening of the foundations of the new constitution, provided they are for the interest and benefit of India herself and that they are clearly limited that the conditions on which I accept the safeguards and the reservations as essential to

the development of India would be acceptable to all men of moderate opinion in the country.

Similarly we are disposed to give all other minorities the favourable terms deemed essential to their existence and advance, provided they are not of a character that might go clearly to perpetuate denationalising tendencies. Ultimately both Hindus and Muslims are bound to realize that unity of purpose alone will bring salvation to the country as a whole. Both Hindu and Muslim responsible men ought calmly to reflect upon this central fact and realise that a constitution agreed to by the principal factors in the country is the only durable constitution, which will be a moral obligation on all. The solution of communal difference must come from within. India cannot hand over her domestic problems to non-Indian bodies in order to have the various departments of her body politic refashioned by alien craftsmen. Therefore the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem has to come and must come as a result of mutual toleration and goodwill. The remedy of the League of Nations has proved to be no remedy at all. It is therefore no wisdom to fasten upon India similar measure of ineffective safeguards for the minorities and to have the way for the growth of civil strife and commotion. This domestic affair is our concern and the majority must learn to be generous to its minorities.

#### MUSLIM REPRESENTATION

The muslim community also must realise that no minority by any strategy can deprive the majority of its undoubted position and status. Once this simple proposition is learnt by heart all extravagant aspirations and apprehensions will be confined to practical limits. The Muslim minority in particular must make common cause with the majority for the progress and advancement of the country. I am perfectly in accord with the Muslim demand that Sind should immediately be raised to the status of a provincial government like other provinces. Similarly the Frontier province must be raised to the same status as the other provinces as I am convinced that the future well-being of India depends upon the contentment and co-operation of the Pathans who, I am sure, will never be satisfied with anything less. The people of the North-West Frontier Province are extremely sensitive on this question. Considering the grave economic helplessness of the Indian Muslims their recruitment to the public services in the country in accordance with the proportion of their population is very necessary.

The question of representation in Bengal and the Punjab can be settled by the introduction of adult franchise or by a franchise committee charged with the duty of so framing the conditions of the franchise as to give to the main communities inhabiting the two provinces votes in proportion to their population. This will do away with the necessity of separate electorates in these provinces. I am sure that separate electorates will not benefit Muslims in the long run. Once the truth of this statement is realised, the Muslims in the minority provinces will at once realise the harm they would be doing to themselves by standing for separate electorates.

#### THE FOURTEEN POINTS

It is due to this appreciation of the situation that your conference stands for joint electorates. I must, in this connection, note with regret the recent resolution of the Muslim League which met in Delhi, that if any of their 14 points of demand for protection are not conceded they would not be a party to the constitutional advance of the country. That goes to contradict straightaway the passionate demand for a full measure of self-government made by the Muslim leaders at the Round Table Conference.

In serious matters it is not possible to indulge in light-hearted bluffs. Will the Muslims of India prefer the opportunity for arriving at a frank and fair settlement with the Hindus to being ruined and split by their insistence, when it is obvious that such a method of electorate in the long run will neither prove beneficial to nor protective of Muslim interests.

#### Resolutions

After the president's address, several resolutions were passed in support of Swadeshi and Khaddar, deploring the Benares, Mirzapur, Agra and Cawnpore riots, expressing satisfaction at the Gandhi-Irwin settlement and condoling the untimely death of Maulana Mohamed Ali and Pandit Motilal Nebru.

The following resolution was unanimously passed :—“This meeting of the All-India

Shia Political Conference gives its general approval to the Muslim demands contained in the proposals now widely known as Jinnah's 14 points and, in view of the fact that in their opinion joint electorates will be conducive to the growth of nationalism in the country, supports the same and appeals to various Muslim organisations to concede their right of separate electorates, provided their following demands are conceded.—(1) Separation of Sind, (2) the same constitutional reforms for the Frontier Province and Baluchistan as for the other provinces, (3) reservation of one-third seats for the Muslims in the central Legislature, (4) present weightage for Muslims in the minority provinces to continue and reciprocal concession for Hindus in the Frontier Province and Sind, (5) the Bengal and Punjab Muslim majority not to be reduced to minority or equality, (6) the liberty of religion, culture and language to be vouchsafed in the future constitution, (7) proportion in services and cabinets for Mussalmans on the population basis subject to minimum qualifications, (8) franchise to be extended proportionate to the communities population till the ideal of adult franchise is realized, and (9) the residuary powers to vest in the province.

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Home Minister, Alwar State, and Syed Kalbe Abbas, advocate proposed and seconded the resolution in very impressive and fine speeches, the spirit of which was highly admired by the leaders of Hindus and other sections of Mussalmans present in the conference. The session then concluded.

## The All India Muslim Nationalists' Conference

LUCKNOW 18th. APRIL 1931

The All-India Muslim Nationalists' Conference opened its session at Lucknow on the 18th. April 1931 under the presidency of Sir Ali Imam. Among the delegates who attended were Dr. Mahmud, Professor Bari, Moulvi Ismail Shah, Mohamed Umar, Dr. Zainulabdin Nadvi, Kazi Ahmad Hussain and 25 others from Behar; Dr. Ansari, Mufti Kitayatullah, Moulvi Ahmed Said, Moulvi Mahomed Sajjad and five other from Delhi; Mr. Tasadduq Sherwani, Messrs, Yusuf Imam, Khwaja Abdul Majid, Hafiz Mahomed Ibrahim, M. L. C., Sarfaraz Hussain, Bar-at-law, Fyzabad, Moulvi Ahmed Said of Partabgarh, Wajid Ali, Raebareli, Karimur Raza, Shahjahnnpur, Haider Mehdi, Moulvi Tufail Ahmad and over a hundred others from different parts of the United Provinces; Moulvis Mujiber Rahman, Shamsuddin Azizul Haq, Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy, Maulvi Abdul Karim and twenty others from Bengal; Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Dr. Rajjabali Patel, Messrs. Abbas Tyebji, Meherali, Imam Bawazir and six others from Bombay; Seth Yakub Hasan and Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan from Madras; Mahomed Khan from N. W. F. P.; Malik Barkat Ali, Ferozdin Pracha and several others from the Puujab.

### Welcome Address

*Maulana Kutbuddin Abdul Wali* of Feringi Mabal, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, referred to the loss sustained by India by the deaths of Moulana Mahomed Ali and Pandit Matlal Nehru and expressed sympathy with their relations in their bereavement.

Proceeding the Moulana explained why he had dissuaded his co-religionists from participating in the civil disobedience movement in his speech at Amroha Conference held last year. The situation was now greatly changed. As a result of the Gandhi-Irwin pact, civil disobedience was a matter of the past and Mr. Gandhi, the accredited leader of the Congress, was trying his best to adjust the Muslim claims, but there were certain Muslim leaders who apparently with a view to impede a communal settlement, were insisting on separate electorates which admittedly were detrimental to the growth of Indian nation. "We are virtually at war with our fellow countrymen. If any group or community wants to come to terms with us we should not reject their offer. Do you think we can afford to fight both our own countrymen and the Government. as well? I should think not. Why then should we not make peace with the party that is extending the hand of friendship? If we want to organise the Muslims, is it necessary for that purpose to be perpetually at war with your fellow countrymen? I have not been able to understand

why there should ever be talk of civil war. I am sure the recent communal outbreaks are the outcome of provocative speeches. It is regrettable that even after these riots people should indulge in wild language without any consideration of the likely results in loss of life and property. From some speeches it is quite clear that there are some persons who are more keen on a free-fight between the communities than on communal settlement.

This Conference should discuss whether joint or separate electorates would suit Muslims. Both alternatives have been well discussed in the Press. All I want to impress on you is that before the introduction of separate electorates any member elected to the Legislature has to protect the interests of his voters who belonged to the different communities. - There are many Hindus in this city who won the election with the help of Muslim votes and naturally were grateful to Muslims for their support but the introduction of new system had brought this to an end and naturally they have now to look after the interest of one particular community. When members are elected by communal constituencies the majority communities are bound to suffer. I am personally in favour of joint electorates with reservation of seats. I consider that a joint electorate is in the interest of Muslims and necessary for the growth of an United Indian nation. Separate electorates and responsible government are two contradictory things and they can never go together. I am in favour of Muslims attending the Round Table Conference, but I want to make two things clear. First, Mussalmans should not forget that the grievance for which they started non-co-operation in 1921 still remained unheeded. Secondly, Muslims should not agree to a form of government which did not place in our control the army and finance.

#### Presidential Address.

Addressing the Conference *Sir Ali Imam* said that to-day's big gathering reminded him of the Morley-Minto Reform days when the number of the supporters of the joint Electorate Scheme barely exceeded the number of fingers in a man's hand. He himself belonged to that school of political thought which laid great stress on a separate electorate and was in fact a member of the Deputation that waited on Lord Minto in 1905, but in the interval between 1905 and 1909 he had time to carefully study the question and he had definitely come to the conclusion that the separate electorate was not only a negation of Indian Nationalism but also positively harmful to Muslims themselves. As early as 1909 he had raised the voice of protest against separation but at that time his views were condemned both in the press and on the platforms by Muslims almost to a man.

#### MUSLIM DEMAND FOR JOINT ELECTORATES

To-day after 22 years he found himself in the presence of a gathering of Muslims representative not only of all the Provinces of India but also of several powerful organisations and virtually the entire Muslim intelligentsia. To-day's Conference represented Muslim Nationalists, in other words people who were not wedded to a scheme of separation. The march during the last 20 years had been simply flooded with messages from every corner of India from different leaders who one and all insisted on the basic principle of joint electorates. Such a trend of events was extremely gratifying and showed that Muslims of India were not behind any other community in upholding the banner of a common and united Indian nation. "I venture to prophesy", said *Sir Ali Imam*, "that this movement among Indian Muslims will gather force which no power on earth can thwart. There is no need to despair. Time and tide are with us."

#### SEPARATE ELECTORATES A NEGATION OF NATIONALISM.

Proceeding, *Sir Ali Imam* said one had only to take note of the sufferings and trials of Muslim Nationalists in the last two years to know the contribution that Muslims had made in the recent struggle for freedom. In to-day's gathering there were many who had unflinchingly and cheerfully borne the troubles that fell to the lot of all lovers of their country. It was impossible that their sacrifices would go in vain. "If I were asked why I have such abiding faith in Indian nationalism my answer is that without that India's freedom is an impossibility. Separate electorate connotes the negation of nationalism. Political problems are but a reflex of social forces. If you erect an iron wall between community and community in their politics, you destroy the social fabric, and day to day life will become insupportable if you insist on building political barriers. Nationalism can never evolve from division and dissensions.

Consider the implications of separatist clauses in the constitution. The plea is that the Muslims are numerically inferior, deficient in education and economically backward. The argument then is developed and it is asserted that they would never succeed in the polls in the face of powerful Hindu opposition. It is taken for granted that every Hindu is a potential enemy of Muslims. I do not believe in these generalities but should they be assumed true what are the logical inferences? They are firstly that the Muslim is too weak to look after himself, secondly, the Hindu as enemy is relentless and finally the necessity for protective clauses in the constitution. I do not believe that such protective clauses will afford any protection unless they had some sanction behind them. If a Muslim cannot protect himself and a Hindu will not protect him, then the sanction must rest in a third party. Is not that a negation of nationalism? Does it not show that the separatist notion is based upon support which cannot be found in this country and this tantamounts to perpetuation of tutelage? Is it surprising then that the Nationalist Muslim who cherishes the idea of freedom scorns to subscribe to the embodying of a separatist clause in the constitution?

There is a school of thought that is desirous of implementing joint electorates with conditions. These have been referred to as reservation of seats, weightage, etc. Here again my personal view is that these are snares and on examination will lead to the inevitable result of the imperative presence of some extraneous authority. I take the liberty to impress upon you the obvious necessity of taking the straight course of insisting upon Joint Electorates undisfigured by conditions and hedgings. So much is said about the share of the Indian Moslem in concession loot. I do not believe that his share can be fixed by statute. His share will be in proportion to the contribution he makes towards the obtaining and maintaining of India's freedom. The Mussalman has nothing to fear. The stalwarts of the North-Western Frontier and the teeming millions of Bengal and the Eastern Frontier are his inviolable security in national India. In the future of India there will be no place for Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj. The sovereignty of the peoples of India will be broadbased upon patriotism unalloyed by taints of communalism. That should be your goal and towards that end you should make your sacrifices."

Continuing, Sir Ali Imam said that a new political orientation was clearly manifest among the people of the North-Western Frontier. That was a sure sign of nationalistic solidarity which was fast developing in India. There was another source of hope, namely, that even in such limited joint electorates, such as Universities and Chambers of Commerce, the communal factor was quickly disappearing. In his own Province of Bihar there were recent instances of the election of Moulvi Abdul Hafiz and Mr. Ali Manzar which clearly showed that the character and capacity of the candidates had successfully overcome communal prejudices. They had both been returned, one to the Provincial Council and the other to the University Senate by overwhelming Hindu votes against strong Hindu candidates. Once there were free joint electorates the character, capacity and personal lead of the candidates would surely overtop communal prejudice. The world has progressed too far to have any other code of political conduct. It was true that only recently terrible tragedies had been enacted at Benares, Mirzapur, Agra and Cawnpore. There were many who believed that they were due to *agents provocateurs*. Others believed they were brought about by the goonda element of either community. This was not the place to determine what was at the root of these disastrous happenings. He earnestly hoped they were ugly matters of past. It was a matter of regret that there should be serious endeavour to make political capital out of them. All efforts should be diverted to prevent these repetitions and to wipe off bitterness engendered by them.

This was the psychological moment for India and the plain duty of all Indians was to restore communal harmony and not to give handle to the Churchill Group to obstruct the introduction of great constitutional reforms that were in sight.

Concluding Sir Ali referred to the loss sustained by India in the deaths of two of her noblest souls, Maulana Mahomed Ali and Pandit Motilal Nehru. Their memories, he added, would ever remain enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen for all time to come.

#### SECOND DAY—19th. APRIL 1931

##### Proceedings and Resolutions

The Conference met again on the next-day, the 19th. April, at 7 in the morning and passed the following resolutions:—

## TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED LEADERS

The first resolution, which was put from the chair and carried unanimously, recorded profound sorrow at the deaths of Maulana Mahomed Ali and Pandit Matilal Nehru who had rendered great service to the country and whose presence at the present juncture would have been a source of great strength to the cause of Indian Nationalism.

## MUSLIMS' PART IN SATYAGRAHA

The second resolution, which was also put from the chair and carried unanimously, ran as follows :

"This Conference, while congratulating the nation on the splendid sacrifices it made in the recent struggle for freedom, notes with gratification the fact that the part played by the Moslem community, in particular the Moslems of the Frontier Province, was quite in keeping with its tradition inasmuch as over 12,000 Moslems went to jail and a large number of them lost their life and limbs and suffered in other ways, thus vindicating the honour of their co-religionists who are determined not to lag behind any other community in the fight for national freedom."

## DELHI PACT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Dr. M H. Farruqui next moved "that the Conference regretted that the Local Government in various provinces had not fully honoured the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement, as was evident from the continued detention of many Satyagrahi prisoners including Moulvi Habibur Rahman of Ludhiana, Mr. Hafiz Ali Bahadur Khan, Mr. Abdul Hamid and Mr. Mahomed Siddique of Bombay, Peer Mahomed Munis and Sheik Adalat Hussain of Behar, and hoped that they would forthwith be released."

Syed Abdullah Brelvi, seconding the resolution, said that there were innumerable instances of breach of the truce terms on the part of the Provincial Governments.

Mr. Abdur Rahim of Calcutta supporting the motion associated himself with Mr. Brelvi's remarks. The resolution was carried without opposition.

## COMMUNAL RIOTS

The last resolution occasioned a prolonged debate. It ran as follows :

"This Conference, while strongly condemning the communal riots which occurred in Benares, Agra and Cawnpore and other places, causing enormous loss of innocent life and property and dereliction of duty on the part of officials on these occasions particularly at Cawnpore, offers its heartfelt sympathies to the families of those who fell victims to the communal frenzy, and pays a tribute to the rare patriotic sacrifices of Mr. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi.

"This Conference appeals to all communities not to be influenced by the wicked propaganda carried on by certain interested individuals and in the face of the grave provocation, to preserve peace and thus refuse to play into the hands of the enemies of the country's freedom."

*Malik Barkat Ali*, moving the resolution, bitterly criticized the provocative speeches which were being made by certain communal leaders in connection with these tragic incidents and were thus attempting to rekindle the dying fire.

*Mr. Jaffer Ali* deplored that any person worth the name of a leader should deem it advisable to enter into a controversy on the most horrible details of the Cawnpore riot in order to foster the spirit of communal bitterness when every ounce of energy should be devoted towards the re-establishment of harmony and amity.

*Moulvi Jafar Hussain Wasti*, supporting the resolution moved an amendment to the effect that members of either community should be appealed to abstain from attributing acts of vandalism and incendiarism committed by mischief-mongers and misguided fanatics of the opposite camp.

The amendment was after a brief discussion adopted.

*Moulvi Shahid* of Allahabad proposed a second amendment urging that all cases arising out of communal rioting should be withdrawn. He said that he had not the slightest intention to protect scoundrels to whatever community they belonged, but the misfortune was that the real mischief-makers in the communal troubles could seldom be brought to book. They were far too cunning to be caught red-handed, and often operated from behind the scene. The Police could at best get hold of comparatively harmless fools who courted detecting and, were the worst sufferers.

*Seth Mr. Yakub Hussain* of Madras supported Moulvi Shahid's amendment but *Mr. Yakub Ali Khan* of Agra, opposing it, suggested that energetic enquiries should be made and the wrong-doers should be awarded exemplary punishment.

The last speaker got little support, and Moulvi Shahid's amendment was adopted by a majority.

*Mr. A. Rahim* of Calcutta proposed another amendment calling upon all Indians to raise funds to relieve the distressed and inviting volunteers and social workers to serve and help the looted and bereaved victims.

*Mr. Rahim* further urged that a committee of this Conference be appointed forthwith to give immediate relief to the Hindus and Moslems alike and to rebuild Mosques and compensate for temples destroyed.

*Dr. A. Karim* of Benares, seconding the amendment, said that such a committee would be useful in counteracting the mischief caused by the communal parties which went to the disturbed areas professing to render assistance to sufferers, but in reality were only rousing further bitter feelings and spreading the gospel of revenge.

The amendment was adopted and the resolution with its three amendments, was carried without any opposition.

The Conference adjourned at this stage, it now being 8-30 A. M. It was to re-assemble at 2 P. M. but due to prolonged discussion in the Subject Committee over the main resolution it could meet only at 4-30 P. M. Two resolutions were at the outset passed quickly.

The first resolution was put from the chair and lodged a protest against the detention in jail without trial of a number of persons in Bengal and the Punjab. The resolution was carried without opposition.

*Dr. Alam* next moved that the Conference condemned the action of Government in forbidding Moulanas Mohamed Ishaque and Mohamed Irfan from entering the North-West Frontier. The mover said that both the Moulanas were ardent National workers who were being penalised for their intense love of the country by being forcibly kept back from their homes in the Frontier for the last twelve years.

The resolution after a brief discussion was passed.

#### SUPPORT FOR JOINT ELECTORATES

*Dr. M. A. Ansari* then moved the resolution regarding the method of representation on the Legislatures, which he emphasised was the resolution that had attracted the present gathering. The following is the text:—

"Having secured general agreement in regard to the following matters which affect the interests of the nation at large (1) that there shall be a provision of fundamental rights in the constitution guaranteeing to all citizens protection of their culture, language, script, education, profession and practice of religion, religious endowments and economic interests; (2) that the fundamental rights and personal laws shall be effectively protected by specific provision to be embodied in the constitution; (3) that the future constitution of the country shall be Federal and residuary powers shall vest in the federating units; (4) that all appointments shall be made by the Public Services Commission according to the minimum standard of efficiency without, at the same time, depriving any community of its fair share in the Services, and that in the case of lower grades no monopoly shall be permitted and (5) that Sind shall be constituted into a separate province; (6) that the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan shall have exactly the same form of Government and administration as the other provinces in British India.

"The Nationalist Muslim Party strongly holds that the settlement of the outstanding questions relating to the measure and method of representation in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures should be based on the following principles: (a) universal adult franchise, (b) joint electorates, (c) reservation of seats in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures on a population basis for minorities of less than 30 per cent with a right to contest additional seats.

"Having regard however to the present unfortunate position of the country particularly the propaganda carried on by a body of Mussalmans as well as the attitude of a certain section of other communities, and with a desire to secure a speedy settlement and create a peaceful atmosphere in the country, the Nationalist Muslim Conference is prepared to negotiate for a settlement of the outstanding questions on the basis of joint electorates and adult franchise.

In moving the resolution *Dr. Ansari* observed:—Gentlemen, I need hardly remind



you of the immense responsibility that devolves on you during these deliberations and of the great significance which would attach to every step you might decide to take. The destiny of our dear Motherland, no less than the destiny of the great cultural heritage which has come down to us as Mussalmans, is involved. Hardly have men ever met to decide such momentous issues so consciously and deliberately. Time itself seems to watch us with suspended breath.

We are at the first successful stage in a great fight for the liberation of our people, a fight which due to the nature of its peaceful and non-violent heroism is without parallel in the history of humanity. But it is just a first stage and there is real danger that inner discord engineered by interested parties might deprive us of the fruits of victory.

It is an open secret, Gentlemen, that these interested parties are showing signs of feverish activity, communal riots have broken out almost out of nothing, and some people seem to be developing with alarming rapidity an unhealthy taste for dangerous emotional outbursts and delirious moods which are normally not a very becoming form of indulgence. An atmosphere is being created in which the central problem of Indian political life—an understanding and readiness to co-operate between the two great sister communities of India—is daily becoming more difficult to solve. I appeal to you, gentlemen, to strain every nerve to see that these mischievous designs are readily thwarted.

You are, no doubt, aware of the efforts which the Nationalist Muslim Party made to come to an understanding with other schools of Muslim political thought in order to pave the way for a settlement conducive to the best interests of our country and our community.

I deliberately say, 'country and community' for I wish to give the lie direct to accusations impertinently made against Nationalist Mussalmans that they do not have the interests of Islam at heart. Our accusers should know that it is the spiritual catholicity of our religious faith which has declared in a set of common ideals the brotherhood of man and the supreme shallowness of narrow bigotry that gives us the strength to take up the whole as against the piecemeal point of view. Basing, as we do, the claims of our country as well as of our community on justice, the conflict of country and community does not arise. It is only when the essentially un-Islamic tendency to be sectional asserts itself and finds expression in the desire to retire tortoise-like in a shell that the conflict becomes manifest. We are surely not worse Mussalmans because we refuse to turn our faith into a greedy superstition or an ignoble exercise in political hide and seek or because we take from it the inspiration of our lives and bring them to the service of the country in which Providence has destined us to live and serve. Our Nationalism is part of our loyalty to our faith and not a betrayal or an infidelity.

Excuse me, gentlemen, for this digression which was necessary in order to repudiate the mischievous attempts to misrepresent our point of view in Indian politics. You are aware, I was saying, of the sincere efforts we made to come to a common agreement with other schools of Muslim political thought. You know the result. In spite of all our attempts at accommodation and in spite of the assured possibility of a great measure of agreement on important issues, the conversations broke on the joint-separate electorate issue.

This is not the occasion to expatiate on the absolute necessity of joint electorate for the growth of a united nationhood. I am speaking to Mussalmans just now and I wish to tell the Muslim community through you that, apart from wider national considerations, the insistence on separate electorates would prove suicidal to the continuance of the Mussalmans in this country as a political and cultural force of any significance.

Politically, separate electorates are bound to prove the most effective method of perpetuating and accentuating communal bitterness and sectional exclusiveness. Knowing the ease with which in a democracy demagogues can play on the passion and fanaticism of the people, separate electorates cannot but prove most potent means of closing the door to the understanding and appreciation by the representatives of different sections of their mutual points of view. There can be no surer device for ruling out agreement by negotiation on matters even of common concern.

And what does this imply for the Mussalmans? It implies in the provinces where the Mussalmans are in a minority and in India as a whole, the absolute impossibility of their being at all effective as a political force in spite of the weightage that it asked. It implies political impotence, with consequent bitterness, sense of futility, demoralisation, ruin.]

In the majority provinces, except where the majority be preponderating, it implies instability, lack of initiative, weak handling of all situations on account of a constant fear of defeat by a determined irreconcilable opposition returned by an intolant electorate just to oppose!

If there is anybody anywhere anxious to see the Mussalmans reduced to absolute ineffectiveness in Indian politics; he must laugh in his sleeves at their own curious insistence on a measure so obviously calculated to bring about that result.

Culturally, the anxiety to hedge themselves round with impregnable walls would, I fear, result in a false sense of security which would rob the community of its dynamic cultural force and would mean fossilisation and decay. Those who like me look back with pride on the great cultural contributions of the Mussalmans to Indian life and who hope to see the Mussalmans play a still more important role in the Free India of the future, cannot but view with dismay the assiduous attempt—by some Mussalmans as the irony of things would have it—to remove all possibilities of fruitful contact and appreciation which a group with a living culture and a message should be only too anxious to cultivate. Those who by means of separate electorates seek to ensure the existence of Mussalmans as a cultural entity in this country seem to have no notion of the dynamic possibilities of the culture they claim to love. They would unconsciously help to preserve it as a dead specimen in a Museum of Antiquities. But I believe that Muslim culture in India is a living and life-giving force and would not suffer this ossification at the hands of its ignorant, albeit, well-meaning admirers.

These being the political and cultural implications of separate electorates and of the self-diffident mental attitude behind their demand, who would accuse us of not having the best interests of the Muslim community at heart if we ask the Mussalmans to refuse to be lured into a trap which some self-seeking men have laid for them and to which a number of honest but mistaken Mussalmans are leading them by their drum beating? It would be useless to try to convince the former of the unholy nature of their enterprise. They die hard; but they should know that the growing political consciousness among the Mussalmans and the realisation of their great cultural mission in Indian life would not long tolerate this self-aggrandisement to play with Muslim destiny.

But it would be idle to deny that there is a body of honest opinion on their side represented by men who have grown grey in the service of Islam and of India. I am confident they would soon see through the lure. I respectfully appeal to them in the name of Islam and of India—both of which, I know, are as dear to them as they are to me,—to see if the course they have been led to support, really and effectively protects the interests of the Mussalmans and if it can ever help to create that sense of common citizenship which is essential for all political advancement in the country. If it does neither, I do sincerely hope that they would not be led away by appeals to passion made by referring to and harping on matters absolutely irrelevant to the issues in dispute.

I am perfectly willing to admit that their anxiety to secure certain safeguards and guarantees for the Muslim community in the future constitution of the country are genuine and I need hardly assure them that so far as the nationalist Muslims are concerned, they will do their best to press all such genuine demands and to secure their acceptance by all concerned. But it is impossible for them to stand by a demand for separate electorates which, it is their considered opinion, would prove highly dangerous both for the country and for the community.

Gentlemen, the times ahead of us are sure to prove anxious times. Great issues are involved. There would be honest difference of opinion. There would be deliberately dishonest manipulations of the situation. There would be reasoned and dispassionate discussion and argument and there would be calumny and invective. Conscious of the justice of your position let us proceed with calm faith and fortitude, unruffled by contumely and oblivious of abuse. It is a difficult task; but all that is great is difficult and the process of the making of a great nation in which we are privileged to help cannot be a simple walk down a primrose path to the sound of flutes.

#### MR. SHERWANI SECONDS RESOLUTION

Mr. Tassadduq Sherwani, supporting the resolution, said that it was so worded as to leave scope for negotiation with other Muslims who did not see eye to eye with the Nationalists. The resolution embodied the cardinal basic rights of all Indians irrespective of caste or creed. With one vital exception the resolution included demands

put forward by other schools of Muslim thought. The exceptional clause was that insisting on joint-electorates. The advocates of separation wanted to erect insurmountable barriers between Muslims and other communities. To this the Nationalists could never consent. The evil effect of separate electorates was apparent from the fact that the spirit of separatism was penetrating among the Muslims themselves. Votes were being canvassed on the basis of a candidate being a Mirza or a Pathan, Quereshi or Ansari, Shiah or Sunni. That distinction between caste and caste which ruined the Hindus was creeping into the democratic Muslim ranks. Under any democratic institution the Government was bound to be in the hands of the majority. If the electorates were separate, the minority groups were sure to be the worst sufferers. Under the present scheme it was possible for 30 fanatic Muslims being pitted against 70 equally fanatic non-Muslims and the latter could conveniently ignore the former, but in a joint electorate scheme, no candidate aspiring for election could with equal convenience ignore even fifteen per cent of the voters. Whoever had personal experience of running elections could corroborate that. Even a single vote could not be ignored by the prospective candidate. Politically the minorities would be more powerful under a separate electorate scheme embellished with weightage.

At this stage, Mr. Sherwani was interrupted by a visitor who enquired whether Mr. Sherwani was saying this in spite of the Cawnpore incidents.

Mr. Sherwani retorted that Cawnpore was the outcome of separatism. He pointed out Mr. Hasrat Mohani, and said that Mr. Hasrat Mohani and his friends who insisted on separate electorates should be called to account for such tragedies.

Mr. Hasrat Mohani immediately asserted that he was not an advocate of separate electorates.

Mr. Sherwani, proceeding, said that the separate electorates scheme was being utilised by interested parties for their own benefit. He cited an instance of five Moslem members being returned to the Assembly in 1926 in spite of the fact that they knew not how to write either Urdu or English.

#### MR. MEHAR ALI'S AMENDMENT

Mr. Mehar Ali (Bombay) moved an amendment urging omission of the clause relating to reservation of seats for minorities on a population basis. He quoted the example of the Parsis of Bombay who formed barely five per cent of the population but were always returned in large numbers to all elected bodies. He thought that the reservation clause was added to placate communalist, and that the communalist was a walking plague and there was no place for him in the modern world.

Mr. Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, opposing the amendment, pointed out that reality always fell short of the ideal. As a Nationalist he was no believer in reservation, but deemed it expedient to include the clause in the constitution.

Mr. Yusuf Hassan, supporting the amendment, said that fifteen years back he was turned out from this very hall for opposing separate electorates. He would again risk that, and strongly oppose all silly reservations.

Mr. Hasrat Mohani, with the permission of the President, rose to support the amendment, although he was not a delegate. He expressed wonder that a Nationalist like Dr. Ansari should deem it fit to include in the resolution a communal clause insisting on reservation. It gave rise to the suspicion that even Nationalists were not sure of minority interests being saved unless artificially proposed upon reservations. Such an attitude lent support to the views expressed by some that Shia Mussalmans favoured joint electorates with reservations because they were an interested party to the extent that they had a better chance to get elected from a joint constituency than from a communal constituency.

Mr. Hasrat Mohani assured the Conference that he was always a Nationalist and the resolution minus the reservation clause had his whole-hearted support. He added that he never believed in half measures. He was either a communist or a communalist and nothing in between.

#### DR. ALAM'S APPEAL

Speaking immediately after Mr. Hasrat Mohani, Dr. Alam admitted that reservation was not an ideal thing to be embodied in the constitution, but for the sake of general agreement, the Subjects Committee had recommended the retention of the clause in the resolution. He failed to understand why this alone should upset Mr. Hasrat Mohani and his friends. If Mr. Hasrat Mohani believed in a free India, republican or otherwise, his place was in the Nationalist camp and not with those who obstructed the attainment of freedom.

Mr. Hasarat Mohani : I am with you if you do not talk of reservations.  
 - After a prolonged discussion, Mr. Meharali's amendment was rejected, and the resolution as moved was adopted amidst cheers.

#### WORKING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

Mr. Abid Ali Jafferbhai of Bombay moved a resolution calling upon Muslims to join the Congress in large numbers and continue to participate in the national struggle and fight for the attainment of independence which alone could ensure real security. The resolution further recommended that the Working Committee of the Muslim Nationalist Conference should arrange a deputation to tour the country with a view to popularising the aims and objects of the Nationalist Party, and organising branches and volunteer corps and starting newspapers. The resolution was adopted.

The following is the constitution of the Working Committee of the Conference :  
 Chairman : Dr. Ansari ; Joint Secretaries : Messrs. T. A. K. Sherwani and R. A. Kidwai ; Members : Maulanas Abul Kalam Azad, Moinuddin Aimin Kutbuddin, Abdul Wali Khan, Abdul Gaffar Khan, Dr. S. Mahmud, Mr. S. M. Khwajah, Mr. Afzal Haq, Dr. Alam, Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Mufti Kifayatulla, Chowdhury Khabiquzza-man, Mr. Mujibar Rahman, Seth Jamal Mahomed and Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmad.

## The Muslim Nationalist Party

### The Working Committee Meeting

The Working Committee of the Nationalist Muslim Party held its sittings on May 29 from 6 p. m. to 8 p. m. and on May 30 from 11 a. m. to 4-30 p. m. at Daryaganj, Delhi. The following members were present : Dr. Ansari, Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani, Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Chaudhuri Khabiq-uz-Zaman, Dr. Muhammad Alam, Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmed, Dr. Syed Mahmud and Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. There were also present Maulvi Ahmed Said, Maulvi Basir Ahmed, Maulvi Abdul Halim and Mr. Gulam Rasul. The following resolution was adopted :—

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Nationalist Party record its sense of deep sorrow at the death of the Maharaja of Mahmudabad in whom the country has lost a great patriot and the Muslim community a great benefactor and wise counsellor. This committee convey their heartfelt condolence to Raja Mohammad Hamid Ahmed Khan and other members of the great family.'

### The Bhopal Negotiations

The committee then proceeded to other business on the agenda. The resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the all Parties Muslim Conference at Lahore as well as the formula discussed at Bhopal were considered. Dr. Ansari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Sherwani and Chowdhury Khabiq-uz-Zaman were authorised to represent the party at the Bhopal Conference. They were given full instructions regarding further negotiations.

### Nationalist Muslims' Statement

The following statement on behalf of the Nationalist Muslims under the signature of Dr. Ansari was issued by their secretary, Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani on the 22nd June 1931 from Simla. In it are set forth in detail the history and outline of the negotiations from March onwards until a deadlock was reached. The statement runs :—

Now that the negotiations between the All-India Nationalist Muslim party and the All-India Muslim Conference have finally broken down, in fairness to ourselves and the public at large, I must, under the authority of the Working Committee of the Nationalist Muslim Party, state briefly the several stages of the negotiations held

soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations, as also the position taken up by the parties during the course of the conversations.

Leaving aside the informal personal talks that took place at Delhi during the time of the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations and soon after on March 8 and 9 between Maulana Shaikat Ali and a few friends, a formal meeting of both the parties as well as of the representatives of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and the Muslim League was held on March 19 in Delhi. After having discussed several disputed points in the meeting, it was thought advisable to appoint a small sub-committee, including Sir Mahomed Shafi, Sir Mahomed Iqbal, Maulana Shaikat Ali and others. The sub-committee held a few meetings at which *inter alia* it discussed the question of electorates in all its bearings, but before any final decisions could be taken, some of the members representing the All-Parties Muslim Conference left Delhi without notice and the committee had to disperse without achieving any tangible results.

Subsequently, however, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, at the suggestion and request of a few friends representing various schools of political thought among Muslims, tried to bring the two parties together with a view to finding a formula that would remove the differences that divided the Muslims into two camps, and with that object invited Sir Mahomed Shafi, Sir Mahomed Iqbal, Maulana Shaikat Ali and Nawab Ismail Khan of the All-India Muslim Conference and Mr. Sherwani, Chowdhury Khaliq-uz-Zaman and myself, on behalf of the Nationalist Muslim party, to Bhopal on May 10 and 11.

In a joint meeting held at Bhopal the following formulae were placed for the consideration of the Nationalist party by Sir Mahomed Shafi on behalf of his colleagues :—(a) joint electorates to be introduced at the end of ten years, with adult suffrage, provided that if a majority of Muslim members in any legislature, federal or provincial, agree to accept joint electorates at any time before the expiry of 10 years, separate electorates will be abolished *qua* such legislature, or (b) the first election under the new constitution to be on the basis of separate electorates, and a referendum on the question of joint *versus* separate electorates at the beginning of the fifth year of the first legislature.

Similarly, on behalf of my colleagues, I placed the following formula for consideration of those representing the All-India Muslim Conference :—(a) joint electorates to be adopted for the first ten years, on the expiry of which period a referendum should be held on the question of electorates : (b) in the first legislature 50 per cent. of the Muslim members to be elected by joint electorates and 50 per cent by separate electorates in the second legislature, two-thirds to be elected by joint, and one-third by separate electorates, thereafter joint electorate and adult suffrage.

The following formula also came up for discussion before the meeting as an amendment to the above :—'In the first legislature two-thirds of the members to be elected by separate and one-third by joint electorate, in the second legislature 50 per cent by joint and 50 per cent by separate electorates and thereafter joint electorate and adult suffrage. Separate electorate for the first 5 years, joint for the next five years and a referendum at the beginning of the ninth year to obtain the community's verdict on the two ; or two-thirds of the representative to be chosen by separate and one-third by joint electorates and a referendum to be taken at the beginning of the fifth year.

Maulana Shaikat Ali suggested the following proposition :—When joint electorates are introduced whether in whole or in part Maulana Mahomed Ali's formula should be accepted for the first twenty years.

After these various formulae were discussed at the meeting in Bhopal, the two parties dispersed to place each other's formulae before their respective committees in order to ascertain their views and get their formal authority to continue the negotiations, and, if possible, to come to a settlement. From the atmosphere which prevailed at Bhopal it appeared that a settlement was possible between the two parties and hopes were raised that the gulf that divided the Mussalmans into two contending groups would be bridged.

To our great surprise we found, when we met at Delhi on June 19 that the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference did not only throw out all proposals made by myself on behalf of my colleagues and other proposals that had come under discussion, but withdrew even the proposal put forward by Sir Mahomed Shafi on behalf of his colleagues, before these proposals could even be discussed by the Working Committee of the All-India Nationalist Muslim party, and, instead, suggested a totally new formula which proposed that the first election under the new constitution shall be held on the basis of separate electorates and, if before the

expiry of the life of any legislature, a majority of the Muslim elected members of that legislature demanded that a referendum be taken on the question of joint versus separate electorates, or if 10 per cent of the electorates on the Muslim electoral of any province so desired, a referendum shall be taken on that question.

The Working Committee of the All-India Nationalist Muslim party, on the other hand, after considering different formulae, gave its representatives ample power for compromise, as would appear from the following resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Nationalist Muslim party which considered the report made by Dr. Ansari, Mr. Sherwani and Chaudhuri Khaliq-uz-Zaman of the conversations held at Bhopal on May 10 and 11, the formulae discussed there and also the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-Parties Muslim Conference passed at its meeting held at Lahore on May 24 :—

"The committee considers the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-Parties Muslim Conference unacceptable inasmuch as it is inconsistent with the resolution of the All-India Nationalist Muslim party's conference held at Lucknow and repugnant to the spirit which, in the opinion of the Nationalist party, is essential in the interests of the country and the community. The committee regrets that the Working Committee of the All-Parties Muslim Conference has resided from the position taken up by the representatives at the Bhopal Conference. The Working Committee authorises its delegation to the forthcoming Bhopal conference to explore all avenues and arrive at such settlement as, while keeping in view the true interests of the country and community, will bring about unity among Muslims."

Though I had lost all hopes of settlement after the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the All India Muslim Conference at Lahore, I did not consider it proper to drop the matter at that stage. I therefore decided to go to Bhopal along with other colleagues for the meeting of the 5th. instant. When I reached Bhopal I found that the Conference had been postponed owing to the dates being found inconvenient by Sir Mahomed Shafi and Dr. Sir Mahomed Iqbal, even though they were originally fixed in consultation with them. However, during my stay at Bhopal, Maulana Shaukat Ali arrived with Maulavi Shafi Daudi. There was no formal conference, but advantage was taken of the presence of a few friends of each party to ascertain their views on the question. It was felt that the following formulae may be placed before the working committee of both the parties :—For the first five years, separate electorates; after that joint electorates with Maulana Mahomed Ali's formula. This formula, however, will be open to Muslim members of any legislature to drop by a 60 per cent. majority at a subsequent stage. One more suggestion, which runs as follows, was considered :—For the first ten years, separate electorates; after that, joint electorates, unless the Muslim members of any legislature by a two-third majority vote against the introduction of joint electorates. It obviously could not consistently with our principles be considered by us; still I promised to place it before my committee.

Members of both the parties were invited to meet at Simla to consider the various proposals. On our arrival here we found that the Simla atmosphere was very inauspicious for any compromise. Apprehensions have, alas, turned out to be only too true. The unfortunate Simla surroundings and influences, by now too well-known to the public to require specific mention, proved too strong for the forces working for unity, and all efforts to find a formulae that would unite the two parties were set at naught. We have been informed to-day that, inspite of the influence of some of its most important members being thrown into the scale of peace, the meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference has rejected all proposals of a compromise. We have done our best and gone to the utmost limit to meet gentlemen holding views different from ours; and, if our efforts have failed, it is not for want of an earnest desire on our part to have an honourable compromise. The negotiations have broken down but I and my party cannot sufficiently express our gratitude for the earnest effort made by His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal in the cause of peace. We shall always remember the extreme patience which he showed in trying to understand the different positions and view-points of parties, while keeping an attitude of strict neutrality. I have reasons to believe that left to themselves, the decision of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference might probably have been different; but sinister influence working behind scenes have brought the negotiations so well begun to an abrupt end.

### Maulana Shafee Daudi's Statement

Maulana Shafee Daudi, Secretary, All-Parties Muslim Conference also issued the following statement :—

A meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference was held in Simla on June 11 and again on June 22, 1931. After two days' discussion the following resolution was unanimously passed.

"Whereas the proposal formulated by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference on May 24, 1931, with a view to remove differences relating to the method of election to the legislatures existing between the Muslim Congressmen has been rejected by the latter ; and, whereas no counter-proposal has been communicated to this committee by them, the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference regretfully resolves finally to close the conversations."

Since according to this resolution the conversations which began with the Bhopal Conference on May 10 and 11 at Bhopal finally came to an end, I have been authorised by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference to place all the facts relating to these conversations before the public.

The Nawab of Bhopal invited the following gentlemen to Bhopal :—Maulana Shaukat Ali, Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi, Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Nawab Muhammad Iemal Khan, Dr. Ansari and Mr. Sherwani. Informal conversations continued there for two days. Various proposals to reconcile the opposing views on the question of electorates were put forward by the gentlemen present and it was decided that these proposals should be placed by the gentlemen taking part in the conversations before their respective organisations for discussion and decision.

In accordance with this understanding, a meeting of the All-India Muslim Conference was convened at Lahore and it met there on May 24 last to consider the proposals made at the Bhopal Conference.

It may be observed that the choice of the committee was determined by three conditions : (1) that the proposal should be one which was not opposed to the resolution of the All-India Muslim Conference dated April 5, (2) that it should be one which would be likely to be acceptable to the other side, (3) that it should leave the final decision of questions to Muslims, whose interests both sides profess to have in view.

Consequently the Working Committee unanimously adopted the following formula : The electoral scheme under the new constitution should be framed on the basis of separate electorates and if before the expiry of the life of any legislature, a majority of the Muslim elected members of that legislature demand that a referendum be taken on the question of joint versus separate electorates, or, if ten per cent of the electors on the Muslim electoral roll of any province so desire, a referendum shall be taken on that question.

It is obvious that the above formula is not opposed to the conference resolution nor should Muslim Congressmen have found any difficulty in accepting it in the absence of adult suffrage, on which alone their whole scheme of joint electorates is built up. It leaves the ultimate decision of the question in the hands of the Muslims themselves. A slight alteration was made in it in order to bring it in conformity with constitutional practice and usage.

The formula was forwarded to the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal and also to Dr. Ansari by the secretary. The secretary was informed later that the formula of the Working Committee was not acceptable to Muslim Congressmen. When the Working Committee met at Simla on June 21 this information was placed before the committee and it learnt with regret and surprise that its Lahore proposal was turned down by Muslim Congressmen and they did not even inform the committee which of the formulae, if any, evolved at Bhopal was acceptable to them. At this stage it was brought to the notice of the Working Committee by Maulana Shaukat Ali that on his enquiring from the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal whether the Muslim Nationalist party had come to any conclusion, he was informed by the Nawab Sahib that the following two proposals had been discussed by them and that the first one was probably acceptable to them, but on Maulana Shaukat Ali's asking about the second he was informed that it too would not be barred from discussion : (1) for the first 5 years separate electorates ; after that, joint electorates with Maulana Mohammad Ali's formula. This formula, however, will be open to Muslim members of any legislature to drop by a 60 per cent majority at a subsequent stage ; (2) for the first ten years separate, after that, joint electorates unless Muslim members of any legislature by a two-thirds majority vote against the introduction of joint electorates.

The Working Committee, although not formally possessed of these proposals, considered them but was unable to agree to any of them, mainly because they introduced joint electorates automatically, without any reference to Muslim electorates and because they were inconsistent with the spirit of the resolution passed by the All-India Muslim Conference on April 5, 1931. And thus there being no other proposals, the Working Committee had regretfully to close the conversations which began at Bhopal in May last.

## The All-India Khilafat Conference

BOMBAY—30th. MAY 1931

An emphatic reiteration of the Delhi All-India Muslim Conference demands as the irreducible minimum was voiced at the All-India Khilafat Conference which opened at Bombay on the 30th. May 1931 under the presidency of Maulana Abdul Majid Badauni. A large number of delegates and visitors filled the spacious open air *shamiana* at Chotta Kasrastan, where the conference assembled. Among those present were Moulvi Shafi Daudi, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Mir Mahomed Balooch and others.

In the course of his *presidential speech*, which was punctuated with frequent cries of "Allah-ho-Akbar," Maulana Badauni reviewed the work of the Khilafat Committee during the last year and dwelt at length on the political situation in the country and the future constitution. He expressed complete agreement of the Muslims with the Delhi conference resolutions and deprecated the contemptuous way in which the Congress Hindu majority and even Mahatma Gandhi had treated the Muslim demand for safeguards. He declared that they were, therefore, compelled to say that they would not accept any constitution which did not safeguard Muslim rights.

Continuing, he said : 'I refuse to believe that the plea for separate electorates is incompatible with nationalism. It is only an excuse to deny Muslims their rights for safeguarding their religion and culture. I wish to warn my Hindu countrymen that Muslims are not prepared for any change in their demands. They will sacrifice their lives but will not be prepared to give up any of their rights. On the question of separate electorates also our declaration is final and there can be no change in it.

Referring to the Round Table Conference, Maulana Badauni complained to the absence at the previous meeting of the representatives of the Khilafat and All-India Muslim Conferences and urged the Viceroy to repair the omission of the Conference whenever it reassembled. He also suggested a meeting of Muslim representatives at the Round Table Conference before their departure in order to give them a specific mandate on the Muslim attitude towards the future constitution. In conclusion, he appealed to Gandhiji to consider that there was still time before the conference reassembled for Gandhiji to accept the Muslim demands in the large interests of the country.

The Conference then adjourned but re-assembled on the next-day in the evening and adopted a number of resolutions. After expressing grief at the death of Moulana Mohamed Ali, the Maharaja of Mahmudabad and Pandit Matilal Nehru, the Conference adopted unanimously the following resolution on the constitutional question :—

"The conference considers it its duty to inform the British Government that if it does not accept the demands passed at the All-India Muslim Conference held at Delhi on April 5 and 6 at the special sitting under the presidency of Mr. Shaukat Ali and supported unanimously throughout India on May 10 by means of demonstrations, processions and meetings, the Muslims will not accept any constitution for India. In particular it requests the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference not to participate in the deliberation if they feel that there is no hope of acceptance of the demands.

Another resolution condemned the Italian 'atrocities' in Tripoli and urged all Muslims to boycott all Italian manufactures and in this connection called upon them to organise meetings throughout the country on June 26.



The conference further requested the Muslims, specially the Muslim sisters, to use Swadeshi, particularly those made by Muslims.

The fifth resolution recommended the revival throughout India of provincial and district Khilafat committees, appointed a committee consisting of Mr. Shaukat Ali, Mr. Shafi Daudi, Maulana Abdul Majid and Begum Mahomed Ali to keep this in the forefront of their programme.

The sixth resolution urged that the memorials in honour of the late Maulana Mahomed Ali should take the form of a Khilafat House in all centres of Muslim activities.

The last resolution criticised the Government of India's forward policy on the North-Western Frontier as designed to deprive the frontier tribes of their freedom and demanded withdrawal of all troops from the Khajuri plain.

After the concluding remarks of the president the Conference dispersed amid shouts of Allah-ho-Akbar.

## All India Muslim Volunteers' Conference

The first All-India Muslim Volunteers' Conference met at Bombay on the 2nd June 1931 under the presidency of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy of Calcutta and in the presence of a large number of delegates and visitors.

In a speech welcoming the delegates, Mr. Zahid Ali, Chairman, Reception Committee, recounted the volunteers' activities during the past year and congratulated them on their efficiency and on the work they had achieved. He exhorted them to double their efforts and to spread the volunteer movement in the villages and city alike and urged that it should be placed under a central organisation and made a permanent feature of Muslim activities in the country.

In the course of the presidential remarks, Mr. Suhrawardy entered a spirited defence of Muslim attitude as defined in the Delhi resolutions and asserted that the acceptance of these by other communities would result in a great united India marching forth irresistibly towards its high destiny. He deprecated the suspicion, distrust and hostility evinced by the Hindus and Muslims towards one another and said that Muslim demands were thoroughly reasonable and founded on practical statesmanship and commonsense, but these were regarded with suspicion only because they emanated from Muslims. A Hindu by calling himself a nationalist, aimed at perpetuating the Hindu oligarchy and dominating other races, for nationalism to him had no other meaning than the unfettered rule of the majority. To him the communalism of the Moslems meant encroachment on the vested interests he had acquired. The President added that this rule of the majority, misnamed democracy, was ill-suited to heterogeneous India where cleavages of caste and creed were without parallel in the world.

Mr. Suhrawardy repudiated the claims of Congress Muslims to be denominated Nationalists. He was prepared to prove that separate electorates could create a nation while joint electorates could only mean disintegration and Hindu domination. The Muslim creed to-day was the Delhi demand and it was their duty to see that the demand was incorporated in the future constitution either through the willing acceptance of the Congress, or by the Government. "If neither party accepts our demands, which is tantamount to the parties combining together to cursh us, then we have no alternative but to fight to the last," he declared.

In conclusion, the President appealed to the Muslims to organise themselves in every way, particularly through volunteer bodies and strive incessantly to improve the welfare of their co-religionists in every way possible.

### RESOLUTIONS PASSED

The Conference then adopted resolutions *inter alia* expressing sorrow at the death of Maulana Mahomed Ali, and voicing its whole-hearted support to the demands put forward by the Delhi Conference and declaring that if these were not accepted, the Muslims were prepared to make every sacrifice to secure their acceptance. The third resolution urged Muslim youths in every village and city to establish volunteer organisations, while another expressed regret at the recent happenings at Benares and Cawnpore and blamed the Hindu Congress volunteers and the Government for the occurrences in those places.

## All India Muslim Youth Conference

The All-India Muslim Youth Conference under the presidency of Mr. Noori of Ahmedabad was held at Bombay on the 3rd. June 1931. In his address which was characterised by outspoken criticism of the community the President made an earnest appeal to his co-religionists to unite and organise themselves and to be disciplined. They should equip themselves along with the rest of the country for the march to freedom. He opined that the present discouraging situation and backward state of their community could be remedied by a three-fold programme: (1) rational and earnest faith in religion, (2) mass education and training and (3) discipline and organisation and unity. He appealed particularly to the Muslim youths to organise themselves and form branches of the Youth League in all villages and cities and thus carry forward the programme for the uplift of the community.

Turning to the political side the President declared that they stood by the Delhi resolutions and warned the Hindus that it was idle to talk of co-operation if the Muslim minority did not feel a complete sense of security. He added that in all political developments tending towards the democratic form of Government, the minority must have certain definite statutory safeguards. Opposition to such safeguards bred distrust. What the Muslims wanted was a healthy and fair impetus to be given to their aspirations and ideals as a community, and it was the most sacred duty of the majority community who would be in power to respond to the claims.

The President concluded: "Let us remember, whether Hindus or Muslims, that New India wants a wholly different type of public worker of a more generous spirit and ampler mould, free from the egotism of sect and the narrowness of bigotry, one who could resist the temptation to crush the weak and yet would not quail before the aggression of the strong, who could rise above the petty pre-occupations of the day to the higher plane of devotion and service which alone could give people faith, hope, freedom and power."

### RESOLUTIONS PASSED

The Conference then passed resolutions reiterating the Delhi Conference resolutions and warning that if these were not conceded, the Muslim youths would make it impossible for any constitution to be worked.

Another resolution condemned the "atrocities" committed on Muslim women and children in Benares and Cawnpore by Hindus and appealed to the Muslim youths to organise themselves in Youth Leagues in every town and village in India.

The third resolution condemned the forward policy of the Government of India on the Frontier and demanded its termination, while another expressed alarm at the atheistic tendency of the youths of the world and urged Muslim youths to live up to the ideals of Islam and thus raise the prestige of their religion in the eyes of the world. The Conference then terminated.

## The All Bengal Muslim Conference

The Second Session of the All Bengal Muslim Conference was held in Calcutta on the 16th. May 1931 under the presidency of Maulana Shaukat Ali. In the course of his address the Maulana said:—

National questions cannot be settled through partisan newspaper propaganda. Certainly, propaganda in modern times can do a great deal but a real and just settlement is out of the question by such process. Take the Versailles and Sevres treaties after the great war and their consequence. These had to be scrapped and after a great deal of trouble the right solution was reached. Older history can give us a striking example. The Irish Union of 1804 was brought about by England using

all kinds of pressure and persuasion ; cajoling, bullying, bribery and corruption were made use of and the Union was brought into existence constitutionally. But the result was that Ireland and England had to fight tooth and nail for over a century and eventually the Union had to be undone.

We in India should take lessons from this. The Congress and Mr. Gandhi should not force a Hindu settlement on Moslems which would not last long and it is for this reason we have been trying to make efforts for a fair and honourable understanding all-round.

Representation in a country's Parliament is the real thing and how that representation is made is a matter of much less importance. Let us face facts. We are in a worse position in India to-day than we were 3 years ago when the Congress in Madras adopted a resolution that satisfied both the Moslems and the Hindus. The country liked it also. But Mr. Gandhi and late Pandit Motilal Nehru wanted to re-open the question in the face of clear opposition from the Congress Working Committee and their Moslem co-worker. Their objections were disregarded and through clever manouevring the Nehru Committee was brought into being with the result known to the country.

After two years of wearing and tearing propaganda it had to be drowned in the depth of Ravi. But then, instead of accepting the offer of the British people for the Round Table Conference which had been repeatedly asked for, a still more forward and risky movement was started at this time too in the face of an overwhelming opposition from the Moslem community and also from many prominent Congress Workers. No sectional movements, however useful and carefully organised, could succeed in the present circumstances and after a year of wasted energy, when thousands went to jail we find the position no better and feeling among the people more bitter and uncompromising. After all this trouble the Congress and Mr. Gandhi have agreed to go to the Round Table Conference but this time the condition is laid that the Hindu-Moslem question must be settled before taking part in the second session of the Conference.

Every one talks about the Hindu Moslem question but no serious effort is being made to solve that problem. It is not difficult to solve ; at least we Moslems think so. I regret to notice that a tremendous amount of breath is wasted in abusing communalism. Now what is communalism ? It means to-day the recognition of the fact that in a country like India there are different communities present and on the satisfactory consideration of their claims and requirements depends the real solution. Why should communities be abused when this fact is forced on the majority community that they require special consideration ? In fact if you go deep into their requirements you will find that their demands are not unreasonable. Take for example the Moslems. This fact is clear that for over 850 years they ruled in India and the foreign nation, who came here as pleaders and merchants, taking advantages of the disruption and disunity among the rulers of the country carved out an Empire for themselves. Association with a vigorous and living nation has however given new life to the people of India and they are forcing the hands of the foreign Government to share the administration of the country with them and are asking for more and more. The world position to-day is such that great Britain must part with a great deal of its power to keep itself alive and after repeated promises and evasions the British Parliament realises to-day that they have to make a serious effort to change the method of administration. They invited Indians, Princes and people alike, to a Conference for free discussions. The Congress representing the vast Hindu majority and also having under its banner communities was a most important party. It had made a pact three years ago with the Moslems and other minorities which, I think, was a very satisfactory arrangement. Some prominent Congress leaders however broke that pact and we had to face a new situation.

The minorities do not trust the vast Hindu majority. The non-Brahmins and the unfortunate untouchables amongst the Hindus have very real grievance against the higher caste Hindus who have deprived them of all that was decent in their lives. The Moslems with their historical importance have also received new and fresh blood and have no desire to merge their individuality and their culture into that of the all absorbing higher caste Hindus who have been unfair even to their own people. Then there are Sikhs, Christians, Jews, Parsis, Englishmen and other smaller communities who are all clamouring for special recognition. Now the vast Hindu majority have got so much that if they muster courage and exercise a little imagination and foresight they can satisfy all and win them over to their side.

The communities are not evenly distributed all over the country. In the North-Western Frontier Province, Beluchistan, the Punjab and Sind there is a fairly big patch where the Moslems are in majority scales as in Bengal. In the southern and Central Provinces the Hindus have an overwhelming majority. The Muslims are perfectly willing to give to the Hindus where they can all that they want from the Hindus where they are in a majority. In the Frontier Province, Sind and Beluchistan Moslems are prepared to give weightage so that the minorities may take an interest in the administration of those provinces. Similarly they want the same proportion of weightage in Bombay, Madras, the U. P., Bihar and C. P. where the smallest Hindu majority is 85 p. c.

#### THE RESOLUTIONS

The principal resolutions passed unanimously were as follows :—

"This Conference accords its whole-hearted support to the resolutions passed at the Special Session of the All-India Muslim Conference held at Delhi on April 5 and 6, 1931 under the Presidentship of Maulana Shaukat Ali. This meeting further demands that in the case of Bengal the representation of Muslims in all the legislatures should be separate electorate and in the local legislatures on the basis of population.

"This Conference urges on the British Government and the Government of India that in view of the participation of the Congress in the next stage of the Round Table Conference the Muslim representation on the Conference and in the Federal Structure Committee and other committees should be strengthened by the inclusion of such Muslims as are representative of the views of the overwhelming majority of the Mussalmans of India and command their confidence, and particularly in view of the fact that the representation of the Bengal Muslims at the Round Table Conference is inadequate and not commensurate with their importance the number of Muslim delegates from Bengal should be increased.

"This meeting declares that the so-called Muslim Nationalist Party is in no sense representative of the Muslims of India, but is merely a part of the Congress from which the overwhelming majority of the Mussalmans have dissociated themselves."

The Nawab of Dacca and several other speakers addressed the meeting. Amongst those present were Dr. Abdulla Suhrawardy, Dr. Sha'afat Ahmed Khan, Mr. Abdul Ali, Mr. Tamiz Uddin Ahmed, Mr. Abdul Munsoor, the Hon. Mr. Hussain Imam, Mr. Abdul Cassim and Maulana Shafi Daudi.

## All Bengal Nationalist Muslim Conference

FARIDPUR—27th. JUNE 1931

The first session of the All-Bengal Nationalist Muslim Conference was held at Faridpur on June 27 and 28 under the presidency of Dr. M. A. Ansari. Chowdbury Moazzem Hossain (Lal Mia), Chairman of the Reception Committee, in the course of an impressive speech, recalled the fact that it was at Faridpur that the last message of that prince among patriots, Deshbandhu Das, was delivered to the nation. He compared the India of the past with the India of the present and laid stress on the unmistakable indications which showed that a bright future was in store for her. The attention of a wandering world has been focussed on a wonderful phenomenon that has taken place in India—an unarmed depressed nation fighting a powerful nation equipped with all the modern paraphernalia of warfare. The nation, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, has given a new creed and new faith to the world—the world is watching with bated breath its wonderful non-violent war.

He gave expression to the view that no constitution which would meet the hopes and aspirations of the Indian nation could be evolved at the next Round Table Conference. If after Mahatma Gandhi had clearly presented India's case at the next Round Table Conference, a settlement could not be arrived at owing to insistence on unjustifiable claims by England, the responsibility will be with England's.

The need of the hour, he said, was to make up internal differences. Muslims looked upon freedom as their religion and so it was imperative upon all true Muslims not to spare themselves in their sacrifices and sufferings to attain India's freedom. "India is our Motherland : India is the heaven of our thought and the bliss of our dreams.

"I consider self-sacrifice in the cause of India's freedom to be a religious duty. That is why I am beside myself when I think Hindus and Muslims fighting shoulder to shoulder in the fight for the emancipation of India. That is why I am not prepared to hesitate for one moment to sacrifice individual or communal interest for the future of India. The time has come when we have got to forget all our differences and wrest from the hands of the English our right to love."

He strongly supported the system of joint electorate and said that Bengal Muslims had nothing to fear from such a system. On the contrary, it will help the Muslims to stand on their own legs. But to make this system a success the Muslim women should be given franchise as they are lagging behind in the field of politics.

#### Presidential Address

Presiding over the Conference *Dr. M. A. Ansari* said :—

I thank you sincerely and not in terms of mere formality for having invited me to preside over your deliberations here to-day—deliberations which owing to the magnitude of the issues involved are far-reaching in their effect and are destined to play a very prominent part in the making of the India of to-morrow.

We have been passing through anxious times. I need not recapitulate to you here the details of the heroic struggle that the people of India in general and Bengal in particular, have been carrying on for the last year. All of you are aware of it and most of you who are present here must have taken part in it. It has elicited praise from friends and foes alike and has opened a new chapter in the history of the emancipation of India from foreign bondage.

The contribution of our co-religionists in this fight may not have been quite proportionate to their glorious past, but in spite of the lack of political insight and the machinations of a few self-seeking and interested individuals, who have always been trying to give the community a wrong lead in the matter, their share in the struggle is not negligible. The Frontier Mussalmans in particular by their heroic sufferings and gallant fight, have added lustre to the pages of the history of this great fight for freedom.

#### "A GREAT CULTURAL HERITAGE"

It is up to you now, to see that the continuity of the great cultural heritage of the Mussalmans of India is not stopped or stunted in its growth by the unhealthy, narrow, short-sighted and selfish activities of a group of armchair critics and interested politicians who, without in the least acquainting themselves with the wishes of the Mussalmans pose as their true champions.

You must have been following the course of negotiations that have been going on between the Nationalist Muslim Party and the other group of Mussalmans that calls itself by the name of the All-India Muslim Conference. You would pardon me for a slight digression in order to expose the hollowness of the pretension of the All-India Muslim Conference and to show you the strength of the Nationalist Muslim Party and its representative character. No single group of Muslims is a representative of the Mussalmans of India to-day as the Nationalist Muslim Party is. The composite elements that go to make up the All-India Muslims' Conference defy definition and if you remove the members of the All-India Muslim League, the Central Khilafat Committee you would find that the real men who go by this name are an unknown quantity. Of its component parts the Muslim League has long ceased to be a reality. It exists only on paper. In its last annual meeting at Allahabad it could not gather the requisite number of 75 to form the quorum. The Central Khilafat Committee, once so powerful, in the country, is now but a shadow of its former self. It would, therefore, not be difficult for you in these circumstances to decide which is the real representative group of the Mussalmans of India to-day.

The National Muslim Party has its branches all over India. It has seven provincial and seventyone district branches. It has held during the last few months numerous Provincial and District Conferences and meetings all over the country. Its

members number in thousands and its last All-India Conference at Lucknow was really the one widely representative gathering of Mussalmans in recent times after the Khilafat movement. It had 619 delegates representing every province in India consisting of tried and elderly politicians, barristers, pleaders, journalists, doctors, Zemindars, Business men, Talukdars, Ulemas, Mujtahids and men of light and learning. We did not desire any separate platform for ourselves till now. It would not have been necessary for us to do so even now, had internal dissensions amongst Mussalmans not made it essential for us to have a separate platform. Our aims have all along been the protection of the legitimate rights of Mussalmans and yet to fight the battle of India's freedom with our Hindu brethren. Our strength is the strength of the Muslim intelligentsia backed by the Muslim masses, and who can deny the strength of the mass movement in India to-day? Can you now for a single moment doubt our representative capacity in India and believe the futile cry of those hastily grouped individuals of long defunct societies who falsely claim to represent Muslim India in Government councils to-day? The Nationalist Muslim Party has all through these months been trying to devise formulae whereby the two wings of the Muslim community should come to a compromise and close this disgraceful wrangle over the minor question of electorates and the measure and methods of representation in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures when far greater issues were awaiting solution and the freedom of India was at stake. The statement issued by me recently in the press gives all the details of the last attempt at bringing about peace and the causes of its failure.

Since the issue of my statement at Simla on the 22nd instant, I have seen the statement made by Mr. Shafi Daudi on behalf of the All-Parties Muslim Conference. As was expected, a clumsy attempt has been made to confuse the issue and shift the blame for the failure of peace negotiations on us. As a matter of fact the last two formulae, as we have stated, were given to both sides by H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal and they were under discussion for several days on both sides. Whereas we had kept the door for negotiations open as intimated to the other side through His Highness, the other party rejected both the formulae in spite of pressure of some of their own influential members and refused to continue any further peace negotiations. The statement of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, a member of the All-Parties Muslim Conference, fully corroborates me.

After the summary rejection of the last two formulae and refusal to continue further peace parleys, we had no other alternative but to close the chapter and leave Simla.

The resolution passed at the All-India Nationalist Muslim Conference held at Lucknow in April last, bears testimony to the fact that while in no way bartering away the vital interests of their community, the Nationalist Muslim party have kept aloft the ideal of greater unity among different communities inhabiting our motherland, which is essential for securing India's freedom.

But the resolution which was passed at Lucknow was only the first half of the resolution passed at the meeting held at Delhi on 18th March. As we were negotiating with the All-Parties Muslim Conference group, it was not considered wise to expose all our cards. To-day, I am placing before you the entire proposals drafted at Delhi which in our opinion would solve the communal problem. It is based on the principles of democracy and nationalism—not the democracy and nationalism of the Hindu Sabha which is but a cloak to cover the aggressive communalism of a majority, nor the militant communalism of the All-Parties Muslim Conference and the Sikhs, who delivered an ultimatum and desire complete surrender, however absurd their terms may be, however impossible of accomplishment and whatever injury their acceptance may do to the cause of the country's freedom. The proposals we are placing before you and through you before the country are based on the democratic principle that a majority, however small or large, must not be allowed to be converted into an equality or a majority, but must be placed in such a position as to function as a majority and the legitimate fears and apprehensions of a minority should be removed by just and reasonable safeguards, safeguards which do not cut across the basis of responsibility and self-government. Here are the proposals :

1. That joint electorates with adult suffrage should form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.
2. (a) That with adult suffrage, reservation of seats only for minorities less than 25 per cent on the federal and provincial legislature should be permitted on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.
- (b) That in the provinces where Muslims are in a minority of less than 25 per

cent, seats shall be reserved for them on a population basis with the right to contest additional seats but in case other communities are given weightage, Muslims shall be similarly treated and the present weightage enjoyed by them shall be maintained.

(c) If adult franchise is not established, or franchise is not extended so as to reflect the proportion of the population on the electoral register, in the Punjab and Bengal seats shall be reserved for the Muslims, until adult suffrage is established or franchise is extended so as to reflect the proportion of population on the electoral register, in such a manner that the Muslim majority is not reduced to a position of minority or even of equality.

That the representation of Muslims in the federal legislature shall be one-third of the respective houses.

4. That all appointments shall be made by a Public Services Commission according to a minimum standard of efficiency, without at the same time depriving any community of its fair share in the services and that in the case of the lower grade, no monopoly shall be permitted.

5. That in the Federal and Provincial Cabinet, Muslim interests shall be adequately recognised by means of a convention agreed to by all the parties in the different legislatures.

6. That Sind shall be constituted into a separate province.

7. That the N. W. F. Province and Beluchistan shall have exactly the same form of Government and administration as other provinces in British India.

8. That the future constitution of the country shall be Federal and the residuary powers shall vest in the federating units.

9. (a) That there shall be a provision of fundamental rights in the constitution guaranteeing to all the citizens the protection of their cultures, language, script, education, profession and practice of religious endowments and economic interests.

(b) That the fundamental rights and personal laws shall be effectively protected by specific provision to be embodied in the constitution.

(c) That there shall be no change in the constitution so far as fundamental rights are concerned except with the concurrence of a three-fourth majority of each House of the Federal Legislature.

We could for instance never agree to any proposal that would reduce Mussalmans, where they are in a majority, to the position of a minority or leave the Muslim population where it is in a minority without necessary safeguards at the mercy of a hostile majority. It would be neither fair play nor sound politics. I would go further and assert that provisions for the protection of the just rights of minority is as basic a principle of democracy as provision for the proper functioning of the rule of a majority. The Muslims in Bengal and Punjab should never be made to sacrifice their majorities, and the U. P. and Bihar Muslims must remain fortified with the conviction that the treatment meted out to them by the Hindu majorities shall not be worse than what the Hindu minorities would expect to receive in the provinces where the Muslims are in majority. Once this proposition is clearly understood all recriminations, all scrambles for the loaves and fishes of office and for seats in the legislatures would disappear and give place to a manly confidence and a spirit of healthy competition, which would ultimately change the entire outlook in so far as inter-communal relations in India are concerned. But the benighted Knights of Bengal and Punjab would deliberately ignore this position and create a false alarm by raising the cry of "Islam-in-danger." They would much rather let the Muslim majorities in Bengal and Punjab be converted into minorities for the sake of securing separate electorates than come round to the rational view point pressed by those Muslims who have always stood for nationalism, democracy, the unfettered rule of a majority and the protection of the just rights of minority, who have elected to suffer for their convictions and who have not allowed themselves to be obsessed by the fallacious arguments advanced to stampede the Indian Muslim into playing the despicable role of a coward and an impediment in the path of his country's freedom.

In a speech in the Minorities Committee of the last Round Table Conference one of these gallant champions of Muslim rights made proposals on behalf of the Muslims present there and characterised them as a great offer by a community to the majority community of India. The spirit underlying the offer is in agreement with the attitude of the All-India Muslim Conference Party adopted recently at Simla towards the solution of the inter-communal angle, although I am informed reliably that the gallant Knight himself pressed hard for a compromise. I am quoting from the report of the speech in the proceedings of the Minorities Sub-Committee.

"To-day I am authorised to make this offer, said Sir Md. Shafi, that in the Punjab the Mussalmans should have thorough communal electorates, 49 per cent of the entire number of seats in the whole House, and should have the liberty to contest the special constituencies which it is proposed to create in that province; in so far as the Minority Provinces are concerned the Mussalmans should continue to enjoy the weightage which they have at present through separate electorates, similar weightage to be given to our Hindu brethren in Sind, and to our Hindu and Sikh brethren in the North-West Frontier Province. If, at any time hereafter, two-thirds of the representatives of any community in any Provincial Legislative Council or in the Central Legislative Council desire to give up communal electorates and to accept joint electorates, then thereafter the system of joint electorates should come into being."

"And he concluded with the following words :—

"The result of the proposals I have made in Bengal will be that the Mussalmans will remain in a permanent minority, although they constitute a majority of the population. The special constituencies which it is proposed to set up in that Presidency are such that the Mussalmans can hope at the best to secure only one seat out of these special constituencies and that is the Dacca University seat. That is a mere possibility: even that is not a certainty. So that the Mussalmans will remain in a permanent minority in the Province. And in the Punjab they have a possibility of securing two seats through the special constituencies and thus have a majority of one, provided they succeeded in securing those two seats."

True, the sacrifice involved in the proposal is great, greater perhaps than ever realised by the mover, for the position of these provinces in the scheme adumbrated by him particularly that of Bengal is unthinkable either to the Muslims of India or their true representatives, the Nationalist Muslim Party, who have always fought for the just rights of the people and Provinces of India.

Gentlemen, it would be permissible to ask this gallant Knight of the land of the five rivers what great wrong you people of Bengal had done him or those holding his political views to merit the inferior position of a minority in a province where your numerical strength, your glorious history in the past, and your legitimate aspirations for the future has rightly given you a place of honour. It virtually means that you surrender all your constitutional rights and privileges and agree to remain in a "perpetual minority" because it serves the selfish interests of the so-called representatives of the Mussalmans, nominated by the Indian Government to the last Round Table Conference.

Therefore, the Nationalist Muslim Party after the bitter experience of separate electorates for the past twenty years, and with due regard to the constitutional advance of the country as a whole, has come to the conclusion that it is in the interests of the Muslims of India that "Joint Electorate with adult franchise" should be the basis of representation in the future constitution of India. It is only on these lines that you can live up to your glorious past and can remain as free citizens of a free India. We want freedom. We do not want to be slaves either of the white men or of the brown men. We stand for democracy which is only possible if we revolt against everything which prevents the healthy growth and development of Nationalism. It is only possible when there is peace and harmony between the two communities. I am confident that it is only achievable if you adopt the principles which the Nationalist Muslim Party have placed before you, which will make you successful in maintaining the peace and harmony so essential for the growth and development of any community. Not only that, but you will fully enjoy the benefits of responsible Government in your Province which otherwise you can not if you chose to remain in a perpetual minority. The system of joint electorates based on adult franchise or a franchise which reflects the proportion of a population on the electoral roll are the only means to lead you to happiness and prosperity. By widening the franchise you will at once give a death blow to communalism and destroy the communal mentality. Under the system a member of one community will be compelled to approach the voters of the other community if he wanted to be returned to the legislature. Having gone there on joint votes he cannot afford to work on any line but national. In a House returned on joint electorate with universal adult suffrage the party divisions will be not on communal lines but on a political and economic basis.

Economic salvation comes in the wake of political consciousness. If the Muslims of Bengal do not organise themselves politically on nationalist lines, it is feared, their position and power shall be undermined by their desire to depend on artificial safeguards and privileges. We have seen how political consciousness and good organi-



sation has helped you in making your influence felt in the last election to the local bodies. What is true of Bengal to-day shall equally be true of the Bengal of to-morrow provided your organised and independent efforts continue in the right direction. This alone can make you reap a good harvest in a free India and make you ignore the favours doled out to you by your foreign rulers. Bengal and Bengal is have been the torch-bearers of political freedom in India and I would like you, as the premier Muslim province, to give the right lead to Mussalmans.

I would urge you to rise to the occasion and acquit yourselves as true sons of Islam. Oris like "Minorities in Danger" and "Islam in Danger" should not make you panicky. Mussalmans are brave people. They are generous to their neighbours. Islam has not taught you to live under a foreign yoke. It made you free thirteen hundred years back. You have forced these fetters of slavery on yourselves. Shake them off and go down to history as the liberators of India.

#### Resolutions

After condolence resolutions on the deaths of Pandit Matlal Nehru, Moulana Mohamed Ali, Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Moulana Mazhrul Haque, Moulana Shah Abdul Alam, and Moulvi Muhammad Zan of Gaibandha were adopted, several resolutions were passed by the conference on the next day, *the 28th. June*, the most important among them being the following :—

"That in the opinion of the All-Bengal Nationalist Moslem Conference the following proposals do constitute a satisfactory and just solution of the communal question :

(1) That joint electorate with adult suffrage or suffrage based on payment of any amount of revenue, rent, cess or tax should form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India but if adult suffrage is not established, then franchise should be so extended as to include all persons paying any amount of tax, rent, cess or revenue.

(2) (a) That with adult suffrage, reservation of seats only for minorities of less than 25 p. c. in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures should be permitted on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.

(b) That the provinces where Muslims are in a minority of less than 25 p.c. seats shall be reserved for them on a population basis with the right to contest additional seats but in case other communities are given weightage, Muslims shall be similarly treated and the present weightage enjoyed by them shall be maintained.

(3) That the representations of the Muslims in the Federal Legislature shall be one-third of the respective houses.

(4) That all appointments shall be made by a Public Service Commission according to a minimum standard of efficiency, without at the same time depriving any community of its fair share in the services and that in the case of lower grade no monopoly shall be permitted.

(5) That in the Federal and Provincial cabinets, Muslim interests shall be adequately recognised by means of a convention agreed to by all the parties in the different legislatures.

(6) That Sind shall be constituted into a separate province.

(7) That the N. W. F. Province and Beluchistan shall have exactly the same form of Government and administration as of other provinces in British India.

(8) That the future constitution of the country shall be federal and the residuary powers shall rest in the federating units.

(9) (a) That there shall be a provision of fundamental rights in the constitution guaranteeing to all the citizens the protection of their culture, language, script, education, profession and practice of religion, religious endowments and economic interests.

(b) That the fundamental rights and personal laws shall be effectively protected by specific provision to be embodied in the constitution.

(c) That there shall be no change in the constitution so far as fundamental rights are concerned except with the concurrence of a four-fifth majority of each house of the Federal Legislature.

(10) That under the Federal Constitution (a) there shall be no special constituency for the Provincial Legislature and (b) no second chamber in the province."

# THE HINDU SABHA CONFERENCES

## THE ALL INDIA HINDU CONFERENCE

The All India Hindu Conference opened at Karachi on the 28th. March 1931 under the presidency of *Sj. Ramananda Chatterjee*.

*Sj. Govindram*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates exhorted the Hindus to strive and achieve full Sangathan and deplored the present predicament of the Hindus. Messages from the Hindu and Arya Samaj Sabhas in Sind, Punjab and Beluchistan were read pressing for non-separation of Sind. The Provincial Sabha's resolutions demanded Hindu-Muslim settlement agreed to by the Congress to be ratified by the Hindu Sabha.

In the absence of Malaviyaji *Sj. Chatterjee*, presiding, pointed out that though the Sabha was a non-political body circumstances forced it to become defensively political. Hindus should be conceded the rights of proselating and he gave an historical account of the ancient Hindu glories and colonies and said that their conquest was cultural. He exhorted the upper class Hindus to help the lower classes. "The Sind problem is on the same footing as Burma" he declared speaking on separation and he never could understand the case for separation. Sind is at present a deficit province and cannot demand separation. Urging the advantage of being a member of a large unit he said that the separatist lived in the dreamland if they expected privileges.

Deprecating the idea of a Moslem State of Sir Iqbal he said that coalescence with trans-Frontier people will worsen the Frontier problem. He pleaded for unity and unification for safeguarding the interests of all.

### RESOLUTIONS

Next day, the 29th. March, the Conference adopted resolutions emphatically protesting against non-representation of Sind Hindus on the last Round Table Conference, and repudiating the decision of its sub-committee, agreeing in principle to the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency.

The Conference demanded that Sind Hindus should be adequately represented at the next London Conference.

The Conference endorsed the objections urged against the separation of Sind by the Bombay Government's despatch and the Bombay Provincial Simon Committee.

The Conference next recorded a resolution abandoning, in the interest of all communities, separate electorates.

The Conference urged the Government to recruit from all communities for military and police services, and cease limiting recruitment to a few favoured communities.

### PANDIT MALAVIYA'S SPEECH

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who entered the pandal at the far end of the sitting, proposing a vote of thanks to the President, Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee said :

I am very glad to note that you are conducting the Hindu Sabha on national lines and not on communal lines. You do not lay much importance on the latter. There are dark and thick clouds on the sky. Rains of the rainy season are coming, although you don't have so much rain in Karachi.

You should be hopeful in spite of the clouds around you, because yours is the path of justice and equity. You are sure to win in the long run. Both the Hindus and the Muhammadans are brothers; both have to live in Sind. Both should live in a friendly and brotherly spirit. Both should be satisfied with each other. Even if one of the communities is displeased with the other, or uses force against the other, no reform can do good to your province. The first and foremost thing necessary for reform and the foundation of everything else is 'unity'. Trust each other. Otherwise no permanent Swaraj can be had. If the Hindus and the Mahomedans are satisfied with each other, no power on earth or in the heavens can stand

in the way of Swaraj. It is already known to you that all that every Hindu, young and old, wants is Swarajya. Is it not a fact? (Voices: Certainly all of us want Swarajya). Of course Swarajya is very necessary for us. We are suffering losses in innumerable ways in every minute of our life without having Swarajya. All the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs should combine to get Swaraj. Dis-unity must be removed. There should be no quarrels among us. How can a cart move if one of its wheels is broken? Differences of opinion there will always be. But no community should give up peace and thoughtfulness.

Proceed calmly and peacefully, and with mutual understanding. If there are differences, this does not mean that there should be enmity between the two communities. Sit together and explain things to each other. Justice is bound to win in the long run. The problem of unity must be decided one way, whether it is decided to-morrow, within two years or within ten years, but a decision there is bound to be. The Hindus and Mahomedans have to live peacefully after all. You will say: "We are ready, but the Mahomedans are not ready for it. They do not agree to anything". Do not despair. Go on explaining. You will certainly succeed. There is hope as long as there is life. A deceased person is not left over unless he dies. If any community does not agree to your view, do not give up loving them. God has bestowed upon us not only bodies, but also intelligence. Without intelligence, we will be worse than animals. Therefore discuss and explain. If justice is on your side, you will certainly win. If the other party is right, then you will have to agree to their demands. Keep your mind open, go on explaining your point of view. India belongs to the Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Sikhs, the Parsis and others. No single community can rub over the rest. Your hand has five fingers. If you put off the thumb, the power of your hand will be reduced to one-tenth of its original power. Act in such a way that all may unite. If there is a village in which the population consists of all Hindus and only one Mahomedan lives there the latter should live in such a way that he may have no fear from the Hindus. He should be confident that his brothers can never injure him and will always protect his life, his property and the honour of ladies and 'vice versa'. Let there be mutual trust. We will have to make such a law and such a constitution that nobody may be afraid of anyone else in the country in whatever circumstances he be placed. When we succeed in doing so there will be no questions of majority or minority. I again repeat: Go on discussing and explaining. Never say, "Now we break. Never say 'die'". One day's fight brings permanent loss to the country. It brings disgrace upon us. If one lady is teased in our country, we should think that Mother India has been teased or molested.

We hear that in Europe any girl can go from one end to the other without being molested by anybody. Let that time come in our country. Brothers and sisters, keep this picture before your friend. You are men, there is God's light within you. Have reliance upon yourselves. Unite among yourselves not to attack others but to defend yourselves, never to tease anybody else. Stick to justice: power will be engendered within you. Remove your fears. The other party is bound to be influenced by your fearlessness.

Gentlemen, we are passing through very critical times. It is very easy to create feuds. It is difficult to unite.

It is good to stick to one's own rights, but do it with peace. We are all ashamed to hear of Hindu-Muslim quarrels. Love each other, have mutual understanding. I need not take more of your time. If you will do the work of the Hindu Sabha in this spirit you will please your own soul and you will please God.

### The Working Committee on Constitutional Reforms

In May 1931 the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha adopted the following statement on the question of Constitutional reforms:—

"The Hindu Mahasabha desires to point out that it has, throughout and consistently, taken up a position which is strictly national on the communal issue. It believes that no form of national responsible self-government which India is struggling to achieve and which England is pledged to agree to, is compatible with separate communal electorate or representation in the legislature and administration which function for the general good and secular well-being of the country as a

whole. It is prepared to sacrifice and expects other communities to sacrifice, communal considerations to build up such responsible government, which can be worked only by a ministry of persons coming together as belonging to the same political party and not necessarily to the same creed, so that agreement on public questions, economic, social and political should be the basis of mutual confidence and co-operation. The position of the Hindu Mahasabha is embodied in the following propositions :—

1. There should be one common electoral roll consisting of voters of all communities and creeds as citizens and nationals of the same State.
2. There should not be any separate communal electorate, that is, grouping of voters by religion in community constituencies.
3. There should not be any reservation of seats for any religious community as such in the legislatures.
4. There should not be any weightage given to any community as it can be done only at the expense of the other communities.
5. The franchise should be uniform for all communities in the same province.
6. The franchise should be uniform all over India for the Central or Federal Legislature.
7. There should be statutory safeguards for the protection of minorities in regard to their language, religion and racial laws and customs as framed by the League of Nations on the proposals of its original members including India and His Majesty's Government and now enforced in many a State of reconstructed Europe including Turkey.
8. There should be no question of the protection of majorities in any form.
9. There should not be any alteration of existing boundaries of provinces without expert examination of linguistic, administrative, financial, strategic and other considerations involved by a Boundaries Commission to be specially appointed for the purpose.
10. In the proposed Federation residuary powers should rest with the Central or Federal Government for the unity and well-being of India as a whole.
11. Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Indian national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civic or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employment, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries.

## The Punjab & Frontier Hindu Conference

"A communal constitution is a negation of democracy and responsible Government. The position of Hindu Mahasabha has all along been nationalisation. In the Punjab we are in a minority and with the aggressive and bigoted mentality of the Mahomedans of the north a purely non-communal representation would be most injurious to the interests of the Hindus for a long time to come. But knowing at the same time that communal representation is essentially opposed to a democratic constitution the Hindus of the Punjab did not care to ask for any communal privilege and thus introduce a communal virus in the constitution of the country. We feel confident that though we might suffer for some time, the country as a whole, including ourselves, would be a great gainer in the long run"—thus declared *Bhai Parmananda* presiding over the Punjab and Frontier Hindu Conference held on the 9th. May in the afternoon in the D. A. V. College hall Lahore which was packed to overcrowding with delegates and visitors from all over northern India.

The Conference opened in the afternoon. About one hundred delegates from almost all districts and a large number of visitors attended. Among the leaders present were Dr. Moonje, Prof. Chhablani, Pandit Nekram Sharma and Raja Narendra Nath. Messages were received from several Princes including the Maharajas of Bikaner, Alwar and Patiala.

### CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

"No one who loves peace and tranquility or who advocates harmonious relations between communities and wishes to promote social intercourse between them can look upon with equanimity on a system of Self-Government based on communalism",

said the Hon. *Rai Bahadur Ramsarandas*, Chairman of the Reception Committee in welcoming the delegates.

He said there was nothing to show that the idea of communalism did not originate with British Officials and therefore the responsibility lay with the British Government of abolishing communal representation if there was a genuine desire on their part to redeem the pledge given in the Parliamentary declaration of 1917. Under the scheme of dyarchy there was the official block and its presence in councils prevented to a great extent the harm which separate electorates might do to the minorities. It was by no means on the part of nationalists to demand that there should be a board of arbitration set up, consisting of nominees of the League of Nations conversant with minority problems, as they existed in the modern States of Europe.

Concluding he said that hitherto the most important, influential and best organised political body, namely, the Congress, had refrained from taking part in the framing of the future constitution. "We now hope that this abstention will no longer continue.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*Bhai Parmanand*, President, in the course of his address said: "It is a great pity that Mr. Gandhi and his friends in counsel do not, or cannot, realise the seriousness of the situation. They talk about this matter very light-heartedly when they say that they are prepared to give blank cheques to Mahomedan leaders provided their demands are unanimous. The Punjab Muslims continued to insist on their demands. The only change that has come during the last month is the proposal put forth by the Nationalist Muslim Conference at Lucknow. It slightly modifies the position taken up by the Mahomedans, so far as it accepts the system of joint electorates, but does not allow the Hindu minority of the Punjab, because it is less than thirty per cent, to claim for reservation of seats and further rights to contest the general constituencies. I do not think the Hindus can tolerate this differential treatment. They have always stood on purely nationalistic ground and beyond this, if any concessions are made to the Muslim minorities, the Hindus should certainly want a uniform principle and demand similar concessions for themselves in their province and in case the Mahomedans do not consent to any of the above two alternatives, then we should support the Sikh proposal of partitioning the Punjab into two, rather than three different parts."

Referring to the Muslim demand for continuation of communal representation for a further period after which it should be abolished the President said:—"I think this kind of makeshift would be a source of greater trouble. The love of communalism is just like the habit of taking opium. You can't cure an opium eater of his habit by giving him a greater dose of opium. Any yielding to communal desires would be pouring oil over burning fire."

He suggested that the five regularly administered districts of the N. W. F. Province being placed on the road to responsible Government should be placed on a footing of financial independence in the same way in which other provinces of the country are. The new province should be raised to the status of a frontier agency and placed directly under the control of the Governor-General-in-Council. All expenditure under headings of defence, foreign policy and control of tribes should be under central subject and be borne by the Central Government. The same person may be the Governor and the Agent, but the two areas should be treated as quite distinct from each other.

#### Resolutions

The Conference met again on the next day, *the 10th. May*, to discuss resolutions and was largely attended by prominent Hindu leaders of the two provinces including Dr. Gokachand Narang, Minister, Local Self-Government, Punjab, Raja Harikishan Kaul and Mahatma Haneraj. Ten delegates had also come from Sind including Mr. Verumal Begar, President, Sind Hindu Sabha, Dewan Dimal, Prof. Chablani and Mr. Aritmal. These gentlemen had wired to the General Secretary of the Conference to add the name of Sind. But owing to some mistake, it was not added. It was, however, decided to name the conference as the Punjab, Frontier and Sind Hindu Conference and resolutions were passed affecting the interests of Hindus of all the three provinces. Dr. Moonje was also present at the Conference and contributed materially to the deliberations of the Conference, which took place at the Subjects Committee.

Bhai Paramanand, President of the Conference, who felt keenly over partitioning the Punjab into three parts in order to create balance of power between the three communities inhabiting the Punjab, pressed for such resolution at the Subjects Committee, but after two hours' discussion and at the request of Dr. Moonje, dropped the matter for the present.

Six resolutions were moved from the chair including a condolence resolution deploring the deaths of Pandits Motilal Nehru, Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi and Devrattan Sharma. Resolutions whole-heartedly welcoming the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement and congratulating Mr. Gandhi and Lord Irwin for initiating a policy of mutual reconciliation and good-will and trusting that the people and the Government would carry out the Agreement under all circumstances and appointing a committee of seven gentlemen to explain, discuss and negotiate with Gandhiji the position of minorities in the Punjab Frontier and Sind with Bhai Parmanand as convener were passed.

#### ELECTORATES QUESTION.

The most important resolution of the Conference was about communal representation and joint electorates. It ran as follows:—

"This Conference is opposed to separate electorates as being incompatible with nationalism and democratic form of government. If open elections with joint electorates without reservation of seats for any community are introduced all over India, this Conference will welcome this system of election in the interests of the nation as a whole though, Hindus as a minority community, will suffer. Failing the above, the Conference will be satisfied if a general rule is adopted for reserving seats for all minorities in each province on the basis of population or voting strength whichever is favourable to them, with power to contest additional seats in joint electorates. Failing these the whole minority question should be referred to the League of Nations for decision."

The resolution received the support of majority of the delegates who welcomed the idea of referring the matter to the League of Nations. Only one delegate opposed the latter idea and condemned the mentality of referring internal disputes to outside powers. He suggested that the minority question be referred to Mahatma Gandhi whose arbitration the Hindus should accept. There was an outburst of feeling against his suggestion, Dr. Gokul Chand Narang then addressed the gathering at this stage. He also strongly condemned the system of communal representation and separate electorates and warmly welcomed the idea of referring the minority question to the League of Nations. The resolution being put to vote was passed by an overwhelming majority.

#### SEPARATION OF SIND

Professor Chablani then moved a lengthy resolution protesting against the proposal of separating Sind from the Bombay Presidency. In his speech, he pointed out the hollowness of the demand for the separation of Sind which, he said, had been got up by certain politicians. He said that the Hindus of Sind had uniformly condemned the demand and expressed their strong indignation against certain politicians making Sind a pawn in the Hindu-Muslim negotiations outside Sind and he hoped the every true nationalist would oppose the creation of a new province with a view to give majority to any particular community and considered the present time most inopportune for it. From the economic point of view, he said the proposal was very unsound as it would not only lead to a crushing burden of taxation for them in a period of unprecedented depression in trade, agriculture and industry, but would also deprive the backward, ignorant and fanatical population of many educational, political, and economic benefits of associations which they had been enjoying for the last eighty years. The resolution was supported by two Sind and two Punjabi delegates and passed amidst acclamation.

#### REPRESENTATION AT R. T. C.

The Conference then passed another resolution inviting the attention of the Viceroy to the desirability of nominating to the Round Table Conference an adequate number of accredited representatives of Hindu Sabhas and other organisations, particularly those representing Hindu minorities in the Punjab, Sind and Frontier Province and requesting that the glaring injustice done to the Hindus in the province in which they were in a minority be redressed as soon as possible.

About public services, the Conference adopted a resolution opining that there should be no communal representation in public services which should be open to nationals of all races, and creeds and filled by open competition on the basis of merit.

The Conference then concluded.

# PROVINCIAL POLITICAL CONFERENCES

## The U. P. Political Conference

The U. P. Political Conference opened its session at Mirzapore on the 2nd. May 1931 under the presidency of Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani in a spacious and tastefully decorated pandal with 'Bandemataram' and national songs sung by school girls. After the Reception Committee Chairman's speech had been read, Mr. Sherwani rose amidst cries of slogans to deliver the *presidential address* and spoke as follows :—

'I am duly grateful to you for the confidence you have placed in me by selecting me to preside over your deliberations at such an important juncture when the whole country is full of anxiety and doubt as to the course which events may take in the near future. I responded to your short notice because I have realised in our present struggle that in these provinces the national consciousness has fully awakened and you do not stand so much in need of any guidance. There were periods in our struggle when all those who were supposed to guide the movement were locked up; still the movement went on as efficiently as ever.'

Proceeding, he said : 'All of you know that during the last few months we have been most cruelly treated by the hidden hand of destiny by snatching from us for ever the three of the best sons of the soil. In Pandit Motilal Nehru we have not only lost a great leader but a gallant warrior, a clean fighter, and a most loving friend. His unabated energy, his unparalleled straightforwardness, his marvellous foresight, his unbounded love, his unequalled hospitality, his best taste, his most neat humour and his hearty laugh were wonders to those who had the good fortune of coming into contact with him. I cannot resist the temptation of sharing with you what he said only a fortnight before his death. On that memorable night of Jan. 21 when we, members of the then Working Committee, were discussing with him the resolution which we proposed on the speech of the Prime Minister, he said, 'If nobody would fight, I will leave my death bed and fight single-handed.' He went on discussing till late in the night and his temperature which was sub-normal suddenly went up. I told him that it was the result of such hot discussion. He in his usual way smilingly replied that if you people want to keep my temperature down, keep your temperature up. Friends, this great patriot is gone but he has left the priceless legacy for the nation in his son, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

'I also mourn the loss of my political *guru*, the lamented Maulana Mahomed Ali whose undaunted spirit, courage of conviction, unrivalled enthusiasm, excellent wit and choicest diction shall ever be remembered by all of us. Some people carry a wrong impression about Maulana Mahomed Ali that towards the end he swerved from the path of nationalism. He had, no doubt, his own differences with us but I assure those who are under this misapprehension that he died a greater nationalist than many of those who doubted his nationalism. It is not only my opinion but I have also seen some correspondence which confirmed me in my opinion. The correspondence was shown to me in confidence and before I disclose the contents I ask that gentleman for the first time from this platform to publish it as by keeping it back he will do the greatest injustice to the departed soul and greatest disservice to the country. I, however, may tell you the gist of his one letter which he wrote to the Khilafat Committee as its President. In that letter he said : "I wish you had fought shoulder to shoulder with the Congress but since I am going to England I ask you never to put any obstacle in my absence in the way of those who are fighting the battle of freedom for India".

'The third loss which all of us deeply mourn is that of Pandit Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He lived all his life a true Satyagrahi and died as a true Satyagrahi. He has left a most noble example by dying in saving the lives of others. It is the most enviable death and my sentiments are that I would consider it the happiest end if I die in saving the life or lives of my Hindu brethren. I offer my respectful condolence to all the three bereaved families as well as those families whose members have died in the cause of the Motherland.

Continuing he said : 'I congratulate you and through you all the workers of these provinces for the splendid works and big sacrifices you and they have made during the ten months the country fought the battle of non-violent non-cooperation.

The biggest share goes to the womanhood of these provinces. Personally, I would have been happier if the lion's share were taken by the youth of the country; but I hope and trust the youth, especially the student community, will take its true share in the future struggle. In this struggle we have proved beyond question to the world that violence can be conquered by non-violence; and thus have taken a big step in stopping the exploitation of weaker nations by the strong ones. We will, I hope, successfully teach to the exponents of modern civilisation that the real guarantee for the future does not lie in combinations, pacts and treaties but in moral disarmaments and to make the human race happier they must put an end to their greed and also to their fanatical chauvenism called 'the white man's burden.'

Referring to Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru the president said: 'Let us hope their example will evoke the spirit of self-sacrifice in the youth of the country but their method will not at all be followed and the Congress after the success it achieved will be allowed to follow its course of non-violence unhampered by the occasional outbursts of violence. I admit to you frankly that before 1930 I took to non-violence only as a matter of policy but the last struggle has fully convinced me that not only the best but the surest way to get India free is through non-violence. Their execution has once more brought home to us our utter helplessness, the entire country put together could not save the life of these three.'

As regards the Gandhi-Irwin pact, Mr. Sherwani said: 'The Gandhi-Irwin pact has been ratified by the country at Karachi. I do not want to waste your time on the merits or demerits of the case. What I want to say is this that our discipline was a greater wonder than our sacrifices. Many people not only thought but were sure that this pact will break up the Congress and the left wing of the Congress will be absolutely isolated, but to-day we see that the Congress is more solidly united than it was ever before, and the left wing, if there is any left wing in the Congress, commands greater confidence of the people to-day.'

Proceeding further the president said: 'Every one of us who took part in the struggle knows that during this period of ten months all possible efforts were made and the interested persons did not leave any stone unturned to bring about a clash between the two sister communities but so long as the Congress had control over the people, the whole mischievous and well-organised propaganda failed but as soon as our activities were relaxed the demon of communalism had begun to show its head. We as Indians hang our head low in shame when we see barbarities committed by the individuals of these two great communities upon each other at Benares and Cawnpore. Of course, Agra pales into insignificance after Benares and Cawnpore. I am further pained to recollect that the fair name of this your district, which was an example for communal harmony, has been blackened by the fanaticism of a few of its individuals. I implore you, the workers of the Congress, never to be off your guard so far as this demon is concerned, the biggest enemy of the country; even bigger than foreign bureaucracy is this communalism. I assure you with all the emphasis at my command that we cannot win the real freedom so long as there is even a tinge of communalism in the country. I know in every country national awakening is followed by narrow patriotism which is bound to foster communalism and communalism is the inevitable consequence of mass movement. It starts as an antidote but itself becomes a menace, for communalism in one community tends to awaken communalism in all the surrounding communities and soon becomes an epidemic of the worst type. I assure you, brother delegates, that religion has got nothing to do with this base instinct of human nature because I believe that bigotry in religion is a degradation of a lofty ideal. It is only a state of reactionary mind which starts with the justification that his activities in the direction are based on the love of his own community, but this love of his own community is soon converted into hatred for the other community and not love but hatred becomes the normal feature.'

Each communalist movement deludes itself into the belief that it can carry on its activities without provoking reaction in another community; but when communalism is certainly an attitude of suspicion of one community towards the other or others, it cannot fail to evoke suspicion in others. One community takes communalist attitude, the others are obliged to follow in its footsteps and the inevitable result is violence both in thought and deed of all the communities. Therefore communalism is not only wicked but stupid, and that is worse for the people than wickedness. Either a community must dominate the other community or live at peace with them. The former in the long run in history seems impossible and



therefore the latter is the only alternative. Look at communalism from any point of view; at its best it is a policy of destitution and all of you know that if it helps any body it helps the self-seeker, the unscrupulous and the degenerate newspaper proprietor. Communalism has in it all the seeds of violence and when violence breaks out they, instead of blaming themselves for their own creation, most wickedly put the blame on the non-communalists by putting forward communal bickering as an example for justification of their policy. However, it is the first and foremost duty of all Congressmen who profess and preach non-violence to make up their mind once for all to destroy communalism root and branch.

I may be here permitted to say a word to my Hindu brethren and, knowing my views as they do, I hope they will take it in the spirit in which it is uttered. Communalism in a minority may be based on suspicion but communalism in a majority may be the outcome of hatred. The hatred may have been excited by justifiable or unjustifiable suspicion but hatred is hatred whatever may be the cause.

Before leaving the subject I must say a word to my own community. I have given my most anxious thought to this problem and the more I think the more convinced I become that the separatist policy pursued by the Mussalmans has got a great deal to do with the spirit of communalism prevailing in the country. You have tried this policy for the last 20 years and you have seen the result; the communities instead of coming together have drifted far apart. Distrust can never beget trust. Safeguards are not the cure and even if they are a cure, the best safeguard is the goodwill of the sister community which you can only secure by making a common cause with them. The rewards of every community will be judged by the sacrifices it makes and not by the uproar which the votaries of separatist policy suggest. The advice to remain aloof from the struggle till you get your rights acknowledged is just like the silly advice to put your arm in a sling till it gets stronger.

'Just think what Congress means to do once put in power.' Here Mr. Sherwani explained in detail the Congress resolution regarding the programme of Swaraj and said: 'Personally I do not quite agree with certain details of the resolution, for instance, I do not quite see the utility of retaining the uneconomic holdings so as to make them free of rent, as in these provinces quite a big proportion of holdings are so small that they are uneconomic and if they are made rent free it will be an irreparable loss to the revenue of the province. It will be highly uneconomic to retain that which you yourself believe to be uneconomic. Further I am not quite satisfied with fixing the maximum pay for the civil servants until you have brought the different standards of life prevailing in the country into close proximity with one another and until you have fixed the maximum in other departments. I further do not think the relief promised to Zemindars is adequate under the peculiar conditions of these provinces but taking the resolution as a whole, there can be no two opinions that with slight modifications it is the best programme to start, because Swaraj, if it means anything, means that it must stop the exploitation of the masses and must relieve the starving millions from the miseries of their present lot.'

### Resolutions

The address being over, three resolutions were put from the chair and passed. The first recorded the condolence of the conference on the death of Maulana Mohamed Ali, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Ramdhan Ojha and Syed Imtyaz Ahmad Ashrafi.

The conference by the second resolution honoured those men and women of the province who during the last struggle died as a result of firing, lathi charges or in the service of the country otherwise, and assured the bereaved families that the whole province shared their grief.

### COMMUNAL RIOTS

Dr. Murari Lal of Cawnpore moved that while the conference expressed profound sorrow at the communal riots at Benares, Cawnpore and Agra, it condemned the participators in the riots. In its opinion such disturbances were a formidable hindrance to India's political progress. The desecration of places of worship and assaults on women and children were inimical to Indian culture. The loss of life and property inflicted was in every way condemnable. It expressed pride on the death of Babu Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi in saving the lives of Hindus and Mussalmans and hoped his unrivalled sacrifice would strengthen the foundation of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Dr. Abdul Karim, Maulana Shahid and Mr. Sant Singh also spoke on the resolution which was passed. The conference then rose.

#### SECOND DAY—3rd. MAY 1931.

The conference re-assembled at 7 p. m. to-day. On the motion of Babu Mohanlal Saxena, Babu Purshottamdas Tandon was voted to the chair in the absence of the president. The proceedings began with the singing of *Bande Mataram* and other national songs. The following are the text of the resolutions that were passed:—

#### BOYCOTT

Maulana Abdul Halim (Lucknow), moved a resolution on boycott and promotion of *khaddar*. He said one of the most glorious achievements of the last struggle was boycott. *Khaddar* was an item of the programme which could be followed by both the coward and the brave. One who loved foreign cloth could not have love for liberty. Before foreign rule disappeared foreign cloth must go. If foreign cloth again got a foothold in India it would be a hard nut to crack.

#### IMPLEMENTING THE PACT

Babu Mohanlal Saxena moved the next resolution which wanted to make it clear that though the Congress Committees of the province had completely observed the terms of the truce, the officers of the Government had failed to do so in many matters: (1) Many political prisoners had not been released; (2) some cases not involving violence had not been withdrawn nor confiscated property returned; (3) those who were removed from the membership or chairmanship of local boards had not been allowed to resume office; (4) grants-in-aid to some institutions such as Carmichael Library and Aminabad School had not been restored; (5) dismissed officials had not been reinstated; (6) licenses had not been restored; (7) expelled students had not been readmitted and fines realized after the truce had not been refunded; (8) certificates and vendors' licenses had not been returned; (9) in realizing rents and revenue, undue coercion was being used, sec. 107 being applied against workers and no help being given to tenants so that they may get back their land. The conference wanted to warn the Government that the responsibility for the situation that was being created would be theirs. Still the conference enjoined upon all Congress Committees to continue to observe the terms of the pact as before.

#### SAFEGUARDS

Babu Raghodas then moved the following resolution:—

"This conference, while reaffirming the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj (complete independence) desire to make it emphatically clear that no constitution will satisfy the people of India which does not give the nation full control over the defence forces, external affairs, finances and fiscal and economic policy.

"It is further of opinion that under no circumstances any safeguards will be acceptable, unless they are demonstrably in the interest of India."

Mr. Balkrishna Sharma moved the following amendment:—

"For the last sentence of the resolution substitute the following:—

"Further, in view of the attitude of responsible British statesmen in regard to participation by the Indian National Congress in the coming Round Table Conference, the conference desire to state it clearly that it does not regard the provisional safeguards and reservations discussed at the last Round Table Conference as in any way constituting an inseparable accident of any future constitutional scheme for India. In the opinion of this conference clause 2 of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, makes it abundantly clear that only such safeguards, as are demonstrably in the interest of India, can be acceptable to the Indian nation.

"The conference recommends to the Working Committee of the A. I. C. C. to take steps to clarify issues on the point of safeguards and reservations in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government and in the event of the British Government insisting upon safeguards in their present form, the conference requests the Working Committee to refrain from sending its representative to the forthcoming Round Table Conference or to have anything whatever to do with it."

Both the mover and the seconder spoke vigorously on the amendment. Mr. Balkrishna Sharma asserted that the utterances of the British statesmen and the provincial Governors, specially Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, raised suspicions that they were not going to get fair-play. True, the present Government were not a party to these utterances, but the Labour Government may be turned out any day

and then those opposition politicians who were delivering mischievous speeches to-day would be in power. He saw a clever move in all this and pressed his amendment on the house.

Pandit Govinda Malaviya said that he did not want to disguise the fact that he did not hope to get acceptable reforms at the R. T. C. and an intenser struggle would have to be waged till the goal was achieved. He thought that Mahatma Gandhi was also feeling that way and this amendment was meant to tell him and the Working Committee that they must decide not to go to the conference. Why should not the British politicians be straight-forward and tell plainly that the present safeguards were essential to next reforms?

Mr. Gopinath Dikshit wondered if the supporters of the amendment had forgotten the discussions at Karachi. It had been made clear that the safeguards which were not in the interest of India would not be accepted. The Mahatma had been appointed the sole delegate and the country had faith in the Mahatma and his judgment. Concluding, he said: 'If you have faith in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, then put this resolution, as originally moved.'

The mover replying to the debate said that the Mahatma was a shrewd politician and the conference must strengthen his hands.

The amendment was passed and then the resolution was carried as amended.

The Conference rose after 11 p. m.

### THIRD DAY—4th. MAY 1931.

The proceedings began to-day at 7-15 p. m. Three resolutions were put from the chair and unanimously passed. The first heartily praised the great sacrifices of those women and children who took part in the civil disobedience and expressed full faith that they would be ready to join the fight for freedom whenever they might be needed.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF PRISONERS.

The conference by the next resolution condemned the policy of classification of political prisoners convicted for the same offence and expressed its confirmed opinion that all political prisoners should be placed in one class separate from the other prisoners and treated as prisoners of war.

It also recommended to the Provincial Congress Committee to decide its policy as soon as possible in connection with the treatment of political prisoners in the districts and, in particular, drew the attention of the Committee to the desirability of laying down rules in regard to acceptance of class, and submitting to parade, work etc.

#### MIRZAPUR RIOT.

Profound sorrow was expressed by the third resolution put from the chair to-day, at the disturbance in Pannuganj Manchi in the Mirzapur district, and the opinion was expressed that disturbances of the nature created an obstacle in the progress of the country in all spheres. It expressed condolence on the death of those who lost their lives and sympathy with the bereaved families and with those who were injured.

#### SUSPENSION OF HAMIRPUR BOARD

Mr. Yusuf Imam, moved a resolution conveying the congratulations of the conference to the district board of Hamirpur on its suspension due to courageous participation in the fight for the political advancement of the country and drawing the attention of the Government that the continued suspension of the elected members of the board was against the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

#### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Mr. Sampurnanand moved the next resolution on fundamental rights and explained it clause by clause. It welcomed the resolution on fundamental citizen rights and relating to the economic condition passed at the Karachi Congress and recorded the opinion that no system of government for India would be acceptable which was not based on the principles laid down in the resolution.

#### AGRARIAN DISCONTENT

Mr. Sitla Sahai next moved:—

'Owing to the continued cheapness of agricultural produce and to bad crops the condition of the peasants of this province is daily getting worse. It has been for a

considerable time impossible for the tenants to pay full rents. The land-holders also are in trouble since full rents are not being realised. The Government inspite of all this have stuck to their policy of realising land revenue with strictness, with the result that landlords are perpetrating excesses on the tenants for the realisation of their rent. This Conference is grieved at and condemns this policy of the Government and other excesses which are being committed by the landlords.

The communique issued by the U. P. Government on May 2 shows that the Government have changed their attitude and have felt that revision in revenue and rent is essential. But in the opinion of this conference the fixing of the year 1323 B.S. as the year when the rents were fair is entirely wrong. This conference urges that in making remission the principle to be kept in view should be that the present rents should on no account exceed the rents prevailing at the time when the prices of agricultural produce were what they are now.

The conference directs the District Congress Committees to place before the provincial and district authorities the real economic condition of the peasantry and to approach the landholders and persuade them to give a fair remission in rents, to stop further ejections and to reinstate the ejected tenants in their lands on payment of a fair rent. The conference further directs these committees to render help to the landholders in realising rent according to the settlement arrived at with the Congress.

This conference appeals to the landholders not to adopt illegal means for the realisation of rents, not to eject tenants as far as possible, and to reinstate all the tenants whom they have ejected during or after the civil disobedience movement on payment of fair rents, for if they do not act in this manner feelings of illwill and animosity are likely to develop between them and the tenants. This conference strongly advises the landholders to arrive at settlement with the tenants through the Congress and realise their rents amicably. This conference congratulates these landholders who have made settlements with their tenants through the Congress and are realising rents peacefully.

This conference advises the tenants that they should not harbour feelings of antagonism and hatred toward the landlords and that in view of the fact that owing to the Gandhi-Irwin settlement the no-rent campaign has been stopped, they should in spite of difficulties duly pay the rents fixed by the Congress after arriving at an understanding with the landholders.

#### VIDYARTHI MEMORIAL

Babu Purshottamdas Tandon put from the chair a resolution recording the support of the conference to the appeal for funds issued by the Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi memorial committee and appealing to the province to co-operate with the committee by financial contribution.

Babu Purushottamdas Tandon said the heroism of Mr. Vidyarthi would serve as a beacon light in the darkness of Hindu-Muslim disharmony.

#### CONGRESSMEN AND COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS

Mr. Yusuf Imam next moved :—

This conference strongly draws the attention of the Congress Committees of the province to the fact that communal tension and strife seriously impede the fight for freedom and the advancement of the country. It therefore advises them,

(1) to clearly explain to the people within their circle the evil and danger of communal movement.

(2) to forbid their members and workers from any share in communal matters or efforts in that behalf; and

(3) to remove communal misunderstandings in the area under their charge and try to promote relations of friendliness, social intercourse, sympathy and love for the future.

#### PANDIT MALVIYA'S SPEECH

This finished the resolutions and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who had arrived at an earlier stage of the proceedings was allowed by the acting president, Babu Purushottamdas Tandon, to address the conference.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was greeted with cries of *Bande Mataram* as he rose to address the meeting. He apologised for the failure to come yesterday due to indisposition and expressed pleasure at the sight of the large gathering on the third day of the session. He was grateful to

have been allowed to address them in the middle of the proceedings and for the young men having given way to an old man. (Laughter).

He referred to the present situation and said that the Hindu Muslim disharmony was the greatest hindrance to political progress. It was a pity that after living for centuries together, they should fight one another to the joy and amusement of the opponents of India's advancement. He drew a picture of India rent with communal discord, a life of slavery, poverty and humiliation and India under Swaraj with all communities enjoying equal rights, with equal opportunities for all in the civil and military services and other walks of life and with power to alleviate poverty and injustice, a life of honour and respect. He asked: 'Which do you prefer?'

If the latter, every Indian should do his best to create love in every corner of the country, do nothing to injure the feelings of your brother and settle whatever differences arose. 'Establish relations of sympathy and friendliness between the two communities,' he said 'and leave the bigger issues to Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders.'

Pandit Malaviya was happy that nationalist Muslims were active now and expressed the hope that the Muslim community as a whole would agree on joint electorate. A high placed European told him the other day: Why not agree to separate electorate if Muslims demand it? But separate electorates struck at the very root of nationalism and were opposed to all principles of responsible self-government.

The truce, he pointed out, was a great thing and had been concluded after the fullest deliberation on both sides. It was the duty of every body concerned to carry out the terms in the letter and the spirit. Mahatma Gandhi was trying every nerve to continue and further promote peace and it behoved them to do their bit in co-operation with him. The honour of Mahatma Gandhi and the nation was at stake. There had been complaints against the Government in the matter of completely implementing the settlement. It was the duty of the leaders to bring to the notice of the Government whatever grievances were felt in this connection. They must surely fight for their right.

Dealing with the agrarian situation he said it was unjust to extort from the tenants a pie more than they could pay. He was glad that Sir Malcolm Hailey had returned to the charge of the province. In the Punjab Sir Malcolm Hailey brought about a settlement between the tenants and the zemindars. Sir Malcolm Hailey had published a communique announcing the Government's policy in connection with the present agrarian situation, and Pandit Malaviya was aware that there was much dissatisfaction against it. Pandit Malaviya condemned the coercive measures employed against the zemindars by the Government as also those adopted by the zemindars against the tenants.

'Ask for as much remission', he appealed, 'as you consider legitimate, but do not talk of breaking the truce. He deplored the light talk that was being indulged in by some officers of the Government and some British politicians. Referring to the speech of Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, he said he wanted it to be known to the Government that grave consequences would follow if the truce was broken. A responsible head of a province should not have talked as Sir Geoffrey did. He prayed that the occasion might not come, but the truce would be broken only when the Mahatma, the Viceroy and others had sat together and deliberated upon the situation. Either the Government must prove where the truce had been violated by Congressmen or they must act on the terms of the truce in cases which were brought to their notice. It was incumbent on the officers of the Government to implement the settlement and, to save the Government from blame, they must do it soon. For the truce was the necessary preliminary to create the required conditions for the discussion of the higher issues.

Some people did not like the term peaceful picketing. Whatever term might be employed, Indians had the right to ask their fellow-countrymen to use Swadeshi goods. King George, as Prince of Wales and later as King, had advocated the use of British goods by the British people which caused a tremendous enthusiasm. 'It is no crime', declared Pandit Malaviya 'if we preach Swadeshi.' He exhorted the audience to continue the work of Swadeshi. 'Use Swadeshi cloth,' he said, 'and preferably hand-woven and hand-spun Khaddar.' The propaganda against drink also should not be slackened.

Concluding he said: 'Work for unity, Swadeshi and prohibition and respect the truce implicitly. Swaraj is coming and no one can stop it.' (From the 'Leader').

## The Kerala Provincial Conference

The fifth Session of the Kerala Provincial Conference was held at Badagara on 3rd. May 1931 under the presidency of Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta. The following is the text of the presidential address :--

I need not remind you of the causes and the circumstances that led to the inauguration of the Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. They are too well known. I need not tell you how the battle was fought, how lives were sacrificed and how the message of freedom inspired every Indian soul to action. It would be presumptuous on my part to recite a history to a people who have contributed in no mean measure to the building up of that history. For about twelve months dry bones of the valley were instinct with life and in the eyes and brows of men, women and children were to be read not only the pangs of national suffering and humiliation but also a determination to liberate the nation from foreign domination and from social and economic injustice. When we peruse the history of last year's struggle for independence, our hearts beat high with exultation, our emotions are profoundly stirred and our souls are ardently expanded. Where is that boy in India to-day who reads the life of Mahatma Gandhi and the story of the great organisation of which he is the accredited leader whose pulse does not beat at the name of Dandi and whose nature is not deeply thrilled at the contemplation of the prestige that the Congress has gained in the eyes of the world?

### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND AFTER

Gentlemen, the war has been suspended as the result of an agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin. I shall not examine to-day the specific terms of that agreement one by one. But of one thing I am certain. Never before in the history of our relations with Britain has the representative of the King invited the tribune of the people, seditious and half-naked, to parley with him on terms of perfect equality. I do not ascribe this change in outlook to the Christian virtue of Lord Irwin or the generous impulses of his heart. I do not ascribe it to the return of sanity and wisdom in the counsels of Lord Irwin's Government. I believe the credit is yours. The credit lies with the millions of determined men and women of India to whom no sacrifices were too great for the deliverance of the motherland. It is they who created a situation which the head of the Government could not afford to ignore. Lord Irwin was convinced of the strength of public support behind the seditious Fakir. He felt that it was impossible for him to carry on administration for any length of time by Ordinances and Proclamations. He felt that with Mahatma Gandhi in active opposition to his Government, the administration ran the risk of being reduced to a farce and a nullity. The Agreement, as we all know, is an agreement on suspension of hostilities on both sides. The period through which we are passing is not a period of peace but of truce. The suggestion implicit in the agreement is that if its ultimate object is not realised it would be open to the Congress as much as to the Government to resume struggle. Mahatma Gandhi has already stated that "we shall have Purna Swaraj within the next few months or Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and myself will again be behind prison bars." The victory has not yet been achieved. The promised land has not been reached. Peace is yet to come. Whether the struggle is to be resumed or not will depend upon this attitude that the British people take at the next Round Table Conference. You must have nothing in the agreement which would prevent the Congress delegation from demanding for India full and complete independence. Our political independence may exist in partnership with Britain or in isolation from it. It is for the people of India and for them alone to decide which way is better for them. But a great deal will depend on the mentality of the British people. The country will not be satisfied, the Congress will not be satisfied with anything else or less than a political status in which she will be able to exercise her inherent right of controlling her internal administration and foreign affairs. On this hard fact there can be no doubt. There can be no compromise with the principle of political sovereignty.

## THE QUESTION OF SAFEGUARDS

But gentlemen, what about the safeguards which are proposed to be incorporated into the future constitution of this country? The Prime Minister of England has divided them into three categories. The first category he calls a group of reserved powers to some body—the Governor-General or the Crown—and that category, we are told, is found expressed or implicit in every free constitution on the face of the earth. The powers reserved to the executive heads under this category are intended to be exercised in the event “of the break-down of the constitution.” In examining the question, we have to draw a line of distinction between Parliamentary Governments and the Governments that are not Parliamentary. The powers assigned to the head of a Parliamentary Government for emergency purposes are not identical with those reserved to the head of a non-Parliamentary Government. The President of the United States of America is not in this respect in the same position as the King of England. According to the policy formulated at the last Round Table Conference the structure of Government of this country will be based on the principle of responsibility of the executive to the legislature. Therefore, the powers, which may be conferred by statute upon the Governors, of the Governor General or the Crown as the case may be, should not in actual fact be as wide and as extensive as those exercised by the President of the United States. That is an elementary principle of constitutional law.

Now, the King of England has in law very extraordinary power which he is entitled to exercise against the clear advice of his Ministers, but in modern times they are not at all exercised. The King has, according to conventions, to listen to the advice of his Ministers. He has to sign documents and papers submitted to him by his Ministers. He has to dissolve the House of Parliament if his Ministers ask him to do so, although Lords Oxford and Asquith held the view that the King was in his rights to ignore the advice of his Prime Minister in this respect under certain circumstances. In the Dominions, extraordinary powers are those relating to disallowance of Acts passed by the Dominion legislature and withholding of assent by a Governor-General or a Governor from a bill similarly passed in order that His Majesty's pleasure may be taken thereon. The powers of disallowance conferred upon the Crown are there in the New Zealand constitution, the British North American Act, in the constitution of Australian Commonwealth and the South American Act. The Irish Free State constitution contains no provision for disallowance. The existence of such powers in law does not mean that they are actually exercised. In the early stages of Colonial history, intervention by the Crown frequently took place but it did not long survive. As a matter of fact, since 1873 no case of disallowance has occurred in the matter of Canadian legislation and none in New Zealand since in 1867. The power of disallowance has never been exercised in regard to Acts passed by the Parliaments of the Australian Commonwealth and of the Union of South Africa.

Provision for reservation of Bills may be divided into two classes, namely, those which confer upon the Governor-General discretionary powers of disallowance and those according to which he is under obligation to reserve bills dealing with particular subjects.

So far as the second class of reservation is concerned, there is no provision for it either in the Canadian constitution or in the Irish Free State. I shall not take you through the history of the origin of the special powers conferred upon the Crown or the Governor-General. Suffice it to say, that whatever the legal powers, the fact does not correspond with law. These provisions have been rendered all the more nugatory by the Report of the Imperial Conference of 1926 in which the position of the Dominions and the relations of the representatives of the Crown to the Dominion Parliaments have been clearly defined. A step forward has also been taken by the Conference on the operation of Dominion legislation and merchant shipping legislation of 1929. That Conference has recommended that the Dominions which possess the power of amending their constitutions, should so amend them as to abolish the legal power of disallowance or reservation if they so desire, for in their opinion, there is not the slightest justification for the continuance of these practically obsolete laws. It ought to be added in this connection that nowhere in the Dominions are the Governors-General or the Governors vested with affirmative powers of legislation such as those proposed to be incorporated in the Indian constitution by the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and indicated clearly in the speech of the Prime Minister.

## FINANCE AND FUTURE GOVERNMENT

Then there is the second category of safeguards on which the Prime Minister has laid special emphasis. This refers to the financial and credit policy of the future Government of India. The plea on which Mr. MacDonald seems to justify the retention of control in this matter in the hands of the executive independently of legislature is that in the absence of such control, the credit of this country is bound to be seriously affected. The plea in short is a plea of Indian interests and not of British or Imperial interests. I say that it does not lie in the mouth of the Prime Minister of England to tell the world that England alone is competent to discharge impartially the obligations of credit and finance. This history of British financial and credit policy in India is one of the most scandalous chapters in world history. Take the case of India's public debts and you get in part the story of merciless exploitation. Take again the case of the currency policy of the Government of India and you will find that it has all along been designed to help and stimulate British trade and commerce. Am I to tell you of the disastrous consequences of the ratio that has been officially fixed by the Government? Am I to tell you of the various methods by means of which they have for several years contracted the currency, starved the currency needs of Indian trade and industry in order to keep up the exchange? Are you not aware that the official ratio has consistently failed to keep pace with the movement of trade and that it has been sought to be propped up by resort to indiscriminate withdrawals of currency from the market by silver sales, issue of Treasury Bills and 'ad hoc' securities? Are you going to hand over the interests of indigenous trade and commerce to a handful of British people whose business is exploitation but whose profession is pious charity? No self-governing country has ever allowed foreigners to control their credit and currency. And we are not prepared to allow Mr. MacDonald's people to retain control of our purse and credit.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. MacDonald's third category of safeguards refers to the protection of minorities which, I think, includes the so-called rights of the British trading community in India. The Nehru Committee dealt with this question in 1928. Much has since been said and written on it. The latest is the clause substituted for paragraph 14 of the Report of the Minorities Sub-Committee which reads as follows:—

"At the insistence of the British commercial community, the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian born subjects and that an appropriate convention based on reciprocity should be entered into for the purpose of regulating these rights."

## DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

This clause, it will be seen, raises a number of legal and constitutional issues. It takes for granted that the Europeans trading in India should be treated as nationals of this country as Indians themselves. The suggestion implicit in this presumption is that no difference should be observed as between those Europeans who have been in this country for a number of years, if not for generations, and those who may come hereafter for purposes of trade, commerce and industry. Having laid this principle, the clause proceeds to state that there should be no commercial discrimination as between one class of citizens and another—the expression 'citizen' including both Indian and Britishers. The last part of the clause makes it clear that, if there is to be any differential treatment, it should be by an appropriate convention based on reciprocity between England and India. Taking the last part of the clause first, it may be said that a convention based on reciprocity is meaningless because for any large number of Indians to settle in England and to carry on business there is not a practical proposition. England is not a developing or growing country in the sense India is and there can be no temptation on the part of Indians to proceed to England to exploit her economic and material resources. Besides during the last century and a half, largely through the efforts of the State, Englishmen have so entrenched their economic position that it would be mad folly for Indians to try to oust them. Therefore, the question of discrimination with regard to commercial matters does not arise in England for all practical purposes. The situation in India is entirely different. For more than a century by methods, fair and foul—more often foul than fair—the British community have exploited our resources, established their own commercial concerns and, in many cases, killed our industries. In such a game the Government run by their men and controlled by



them have played an active part. The industrial possibilities of India are given sufficient protection. Indian business is bound to occupy a foremost place in the world's commerce.

The question is—are we going to permit the British people and along with them other members of the European community to exploit our men and our resources in the manner and to the extent they have been allowed by the Government in the past? It is the fundamental principle of Municipal Law that all citizens should be treated on a footing of equality in regard to political, civic and economic rights. There is no doubt about that. It is equally clear that we are not going to depart from that salutary principle. At present and as things are, the British citizens are as much nationals of the country as natural-born Indians and it is doubtful whether in law the Indian Parliament is competent at present to deprive British citizens of the rights and privileges accorded to Indians. This legal position has been created by the British Government in India in which Indians have no controlling voice and which have lost our confidence entirely. In the future constitution of the country we shall have to remove this anomalous position by means of statutory provisions. We have heard much of Empire citizenship, that is to say, a citizenship which is supposed to have conferred equal rights and privileges on the citizens of the constituent parts of the British Empire.

#### CENTRAL RESPONSIBILITY AN APPEAL.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the signs are clear that His Majesty's Government and the British delegation are not prepared to part with their power, their possession and their domination in India. They seem to be determined not to make the least surrender on the question of commercial safeguards. We are being told that they would not have accepted the principle of responsibility at the Centre had not the commercial clause to which I have referred been agreed upon at the Round Table Conference. If this is the attitude of mind which is working behind the scenes, then I am sure the next Round Table Conference will prove a farce as its predecessor. For on our side there can be no compromise with the principle of commercial sovereignty. On our side there can be no surrender of the supreme, paramount and vital interests of the nation. I have already told you that the truce can be converted into peace if only the British people are prepared to recognise in time the force of the logic of events and to be moved in their policy by considerations of justice, of fair-play, and above all, of expediency. I see no power on earth that can prevent the determined men and women of India from occupying a position in the comity of nations which is theirs. I consider no difficulties formidable and no obstacles insuperable in our journey towards freedom. I see before me the picture of a completely free and united India. Along with that picture I see also the picture of a grim and determined struggle in which we will have a trial of strength with British Imperialists. I appeal to you, the citizens of Kerala, and through you, the great Indian masses—to gird your loins. I appeal to all Congressmen, the leaders, and workers—the indefatigable instructors of the peasantry and labouring population, their consolars in affliction, their resource in calamity, their visitors in sickness, their ready companions at the bed of death—to be up and doing and mobilize their forces in order to fight for justice, equality and fraternity. I appeal to them to be prepared to fight against the flatterers at the noblemen's table and extortioners in the poor man's hovel, the slaves in politics but tyrants in demeanour and conduct who from their rich banquets would prescribe lessons in abstinence and from the primrose path of dalliance would point out the stiff and thorny way to Heaven. I appeal to you to be in all readiness for the coming fight and to keep the powder dry. The nation can have no peace or no rest till freedom is won and till the basic foundations of political slavery and economic and social injustices are removed once for all. Anything short of complete independence, you will have to reject as a libel on your people, treat as an affront to national honour and spurn as a derogation from the essential rights of a sovereign legislature. With this principle constantly in mind, let us march forward, nothing daunted and nothing deterred.

2nd DAY—4th. MAY 1931

#### Resolutions

The second day's proceedings of the conference commenced on this day and the following resolutions were passed :—

- (1) This conference while disapproving of and dissociating itself from the violent

act alleged to have been committed by Bhagat Singh and his comrades, appeals to the youths of India not to follow the methods of violence, associated with patriots in question and condones the action of the Government in carrying out the sentence of execution against the unanimous wishes of the entire Indian nation.

(2) This Conference decides that all the Congress organisations in the province should immediately undertake the organisation of industrial and agricultural labour and appoints a committee consisting of (1) Mr. U. Gopala Menon; (2) Mrs. Margaret Pavamani (3) Mr. Damodara Menon and (4) Mr. Mahomed Abdur Rahiman for the purpose.

(3) This Conference assures Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress that the whole people of the Kerala Province is whole-heartedly behind him in his negotiations with the British people and shall stand by him and will strongly support him in the struggle that may ensue in the event of failure of peace negotiations."

(4) This Conference appeals to all public men and publicists in particular to take special care not to make any statements in their speeches or writings that may have a tendency to create communal discord to the country and appeals to all such people to make amends as far as possible for any such statements they might have made and caused or given ground to the feeling of tension between communities.

(5) This Conference while endorsing the Karachi Congress resolutions on fundamental rights and economic changes is further of opinion: (1) that the fundamental rights as declared in the resolution shall be made applicable to the people of the Native States as well; (2) that the Swaraj constitution should be able to supplant officialdom by duly elected Village Panchayats in the daily work of administration; (3) and that the clause 14 of the above resolution shall be amended by fixing the minimum at Rs. 30.

(6) This Conference while welcoming the idea of an All-India Federation with the States and Provinces as its component parts is emphatically of opinion that no scheme of Federation without definite provision for immediate establishment of full responsible Governments in Indian States as well as in the British Indian Provinces will be acceptable to the people. This Conference is further of opinion that under the Federal scheme all subjects of all India interest should be brought under the Federal legislature consisting of the elected representatives of the people of the States and provinces and that a declaration of fundamental rights of the people common to both should be provided for in the future constitution."

(7) "Inasmuch as untouchability and caste prejudices mostly centre round the temple, and inasmuch as those will automatically vanish if and when the temples are thrown open to all castes, this Conference is of opinion that a campaign to secure temple-entry for all be started in Kerala. The conference appeals to all people to extend their full support to such a campaign."

The conference also passed resolutions (1) condemning the excise policy of the Government in allowing liquor-shops to be kept open until after midnight and sale of liquor at private residences and molesting picketers; (2) condemning the action of the police in causing obstruction and disturbance at the Congress propaganda meetings; (3) demanding separation of Kerala from Tamil Nad in regard to khadi work and formation of a separate branch of the A. I. S. A. for Kerala; (4) appreciating the services of volunteers and ladies who took part in the last satyagraha movement and hoping that they would come forward more freely should the satyagraha movement be revived; (5) congratulating Messrs. Mahomed Abdur Rahiman and Moidu Moulavi for taking a leading part for the success of the satyagraha movement in Kerala; (6) demanding the constitution of a separate province for Kerala; (7) to take steps to capture local boards, municipalities in the district; (8) condoling on the death of Motilal Nehru, Maulana Mahomed Ali, Mazrul Haq, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, P. Ramuni Menon, L. A. Subbarama Aiyar and satyagraha volunteers Messrs. P. K. Pannikar and Kunbhiraman Aiyodi; (9) urging the lease of all Moplah rebellion prisoners including Mr. M. P. Narayana Menon and (9) to take steps for propagation of Hindi and appointing a committee for the purpose.

## The Karnatak Provincial Conference

The Sixth Session of the Karnatak Provincial Conference opened its session at Hukeri in the Belgaum district on the 26th. May 1931, under the presidency of Seth Jammalal Bajaj. In the course of his address Seth Jammalal said :—

The Conference had met to devise the ways and means of giving effect to the resolutions of the Karachi Congress in the best possible manner, but before he addressed himself to the task he would take a brief survey of recent events. The present condition of the country was the result of several years of intense awakening that followed in the wake of the direct method based on truth and non-violence which replaced the orthodox method of petitions and memorials. The best year of suffering and sacrifice had proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the method of truth and non-violence was not the mere dream of a visionary, but a perfectly practicable and practical weapon. Critics and scoffers had no longer remained such, inasmuch as they had realised that the nation had resorted to Satyagraha only after all the other methods had been exhausted. The so-called moderate and sober elements of the community had also received sufficiently violent shocks in the shape of the appointment of the Simon Commission and Government's insistence on the 18d. ratio. They and even the Government realised that Gandhiji's direct method was perhaps a more tolerable evil than the forces which the party of violence threatened to let loose. The sober element in the community therefore threw the weight of their influence on the side of the Satyagrahis and the Government themselves had to restrict their own violence within limits. The events that followed the historical march of Mahatma Gandhi and his band of 82 to Dandi were too fresh in their memory to need recounting. No one could have predicted a year ago the world-shaking consequences of this apparently innocent excursion to the sea for a feeble old man of 60 and a handful of his "blind" followers, but a tremendous wave of awakening had swept through the length and breadth of the country and every man, woman and child in every province had given his or her share in the fight for freedom. The province of Karnatak had sent no less than 2,000 satyagrahis to jail and had the honour of having 500 stalwarts who stood unflinched under severe lathi blows. Thousands of maunds of contraband salt had been collected or manufactured and sold practically in every place in Karnatak. Three hundred thousand toddy palms had been destroyed with the result that thousands of women must to-day be thanking God that He had removed temptation from the path of their husbands and brothers and sons.

### IMPORTANCE OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

Whilst the province had thus covered itself with glory, there was plenty of work ahead which perhaps would tax its resources and ingenuity more than the fighting programme had done. The truce was a settled fact, and all that the people had to do was to implement the settlement, regardless of how the Government were acquitting themselves of their task. The country was passing through a great ordeal. The Satyagrahis' mettle was better tested in peace than in war. In spite of the greatest provocation he had to keep peace unless the commander ordered resumption of hostilities. The duty of the country was clear, viz., to go ahead with its constructive programme, which was sure to develop still more the people's capacity for suffering and sacrifice and which alone could fortify the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi, if he went to the Round Table Conference. It was the constructive work in Gujerat that enabled it to play a great part during the last struggle.

Seth Jammalalji then offered some suggestions for stimulating the constructive programme in Karnatak. The khadi programme was being pursued in one or many of the three ways : (1) through sacrificial spinning, (2) through individuals' endeavour to be self-contained in the matter of cloth by spinning for themselves and their families and (3) through spinning for wages. The last was the most in vogue and most of the khadi available in the market was woven out of yarn spun by our poor men and women for wages. But the first two only, if pursued vigorously, could make the third permanent and give khadi a permanent foothold. Karnatak had to cover considerable ground in that direction. Nor did the speaker expect Karnatak to raise the cry of swadeshi vs. khadi. Swadeshi was incapable by itself of bringing about boycott of foreign cloth.

Removal of untouchability was the second item. A definite effort must be made to throw all the public schools, temples, wells, etc. open to the use of the so-called untouchables.

#### THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

The third and perhaps the most important item was the communal problem in Karnatak, but the absence of it was not enough. Definite positive work for establishing heart-unity was essential. The speaker referred in this connection to the recent Cawnpore riots during which man had turned beast and both the communities had vied with each other in cruelty and bestiality. But there were features which relieved the gloom of that tragedy and every one should treasure them. While parts of Cawnpore were scenes of carnage, there were a few localities which remained untouched by the flames and where Hindu befriended the Mussalman and vice versa. There was also the great act of heroism, the great self-immolation of Pandit Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi whose name would be remembered until Hinduism endured. There was need for more Vidyarthis, need for more greater and better acts of brotherhood to extinguish the flames of communal hatred and discord. Majority communities had always to live in amity with minority communities even if it be at the cost of great sacrifice.

Another item was that of national education. The contribution of those who were connected with national education—teachers and the taught—during the last struggle was very great and no effort should be spared to put the institution on a permanent basis. It was also necessary to harness the great energy generated by the women's awakening by having women's institutions for training workers and volunteers. To that end a Karnataka National Service should be organised and efforts should be made to attract full time workers who would work with the zeal and faith of missionaries, workers pledged to truth and non-violence. There was also equal need of purging the Congress organisations of unruly elements that had crept in and of insistence on the strictest discipline. Numbers ought to be sacrificed if need be in order that the whole organisation might be broad-based on purity and honesty. The need was all the greater for picketing of foreign cloth and liquor which the settlement permitted and sanctioned within well-defined limits.

As a member of the commercial community, the speaker liked to address the commercial community in general and the foreign cloth dealers in particular. It was time that the commercial community rid itself of pursuits, which however useful for their selfish ends, were prejudicial to the interests of the country. The foreign cloth dealer ought to realise that his business had enslaved, impoverished and destroyed the moral fibre of the nation. Congressmen, on their part, should concentrate all their energies in persuading the customers to keep away from foreign cloth shops.

The speaker next came to the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights having already dealt with the meaning and implications of the resolution on the Provincial Settlement. The resolution on fundamental rights showed the truly democratic nature of the Swaraj on which the nation had set its heart. It was the poor man's Swaraj that was the nation's objective. The speaker exhorted the local bodies to take up those items of the resolution which directly concerned them. The speaker had the privilege of being near Mahatmaji whilst he was preparing the Presidential address and as it was Monday, Mahatmaji in response to the speaker's request to expound and elucidate the resolution on fundamental rights, had written out his views which he had incorporated in his speech in Mahatmaji's word.

"The resolution on fundamental rights is the most important resolution of the Congress. It showed what kind of Swaraj the Congress wanted to achieve. The Swaraj was the poor man's Swaraj or Rama-Rajya. Rama symbolised justice and equity. Rama symbolised truth and charity.

"The resolution insists on religious toleration, which means that no one would be prevented from performing his religious obligations and the State shall favour no religion.

"Justice and equity means the establishment of just and equitable relations between capital and labour, between landlord and the tenants. The landlord and the capitalist will cease to exploit the tenant and the labourers but will studiously protect their interest. Not that these things will be there as a matter of course. I only mean that they will follow as the natural consequence of truth and non-violence if Swaraj is achieved by those means. Rama-Rajya could not be the result of truth and non-violence followed as a temporary expedient or policy. Rama Rajya can only come

out of truth and non-violence pursued as a creed. Could a son ever fulfil his filial duties as a policy? Policy was essentially a temporary expedient which one might alter as circumstances altered, whatever the cost. It was easy enough to follow truth and non-violence so long as no sacrifice or suffering was involved, but he who adhered to them in all circumstances even at the cost of life followed them as a creed. Truth and non-violence must be a creed and not a policy with us, Congressmen.

"Let us therefore find out what parts of the resolution we can enforce even now. If we do not enforce the things that can be enforced to-day, Swaraj will be meaningless, for we cannot do after Swaraj things which we can do but will not do to-day.

"The resolution states that there shall be no untouchability under the Swaraj constitution. Have we cast out the canker of untouchability? The resolution says that under the Swaraj constitution, there shall be no facilities for the licensing of liquor and drug shop. Have we cast out the drug and drink evil from our midst? The resolution goes on to say that under the Swaraj constitution foreign cloth would be banned from India. But have we given up our infatuation for foreign cloth and become all khaddar-clad? Similarly, under Swaraj, according to this resolution, Hindus and Mussalmans and Christians will live together like two blood-brothers. Have we cleansed our hearts of distrust and suspicion of one another? Under Swaraj, which the resolution pictures, there shall be no hatred or ill-will between the rich and the poor. Have the rich identified themselves with the poor, and have the poor ceased to have ill-will towards the rich? Under the Swaraj constitution, we want the maximum emoluments to officials not to exceed Rs. 500. Have our millionaires adjusted their standard of living to this scale of payment?

"It is difficult to give a decisive reply to those questions to-day. We are to-day slowly groping our way towards our ideal of Ram Rajya or the Raj of Righteousness. This resolution is intended to keep this goal constantly before our eyes and to stimulate our endeavours to attain it."

The speaker commended the resolution to the audience for their careful and earnest study, and appealed to them to set about implementing it forthwith.

#### DEMAND FOR A KARNATAKA PROVINCE

Referring to the question of a separate consolidated province of Karnatak, the speaker reminded the audience that the Congress had adopted the proposal for the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis ten years ago and the Nehru Committee had ratified the principle underlying it. He therefore deprecated the idea of sending a delegation to London to press forth this proposal before the Round Table Conference. The matter could safely be left in the hands of Mahatmaji and the Congress and the energy and the resources thus saved turned to better account in advancing constructive work. The creation of a separate Karnatak province, he went on to remind them, would enhance their duty towards non-Kanarese speaking sections of their population who would always be there. It was up to them therefore to cultivate an attitude of broad tolerance towards them.

Addressing next those who did not believe in the principle of non-violence he invited them to take note of the wonderful phenomenal mass awakening that had taken place in the country as a result of Gandhiji's campaign of non-violence as a policy even if they could not adopt it as a principle. The cool courage and bravery displayed by even women and children was made possible only by the atmosphere of non-violence. On the contrary, demoralisation had resulted where violence had burst out. He therefore appeals to them to suspend their programme at least for some years and give their whole-hearted co-operation to the Congress in its non-violent effort. They should not at least hinder even if they could not help.

The speaker concluded his address by paying a glowing tribute to Karnatak, a province that the late Lokamanya loved so dearly and on which he reckoned so much, a province that had the proud privilege of bridging the gulf between the opposing factions in the Congress after the fateful Surat split, a province that had taken such a leading and prominent part during the non-co-operation campaign and given to Mahatmaji its whole-hearted support from its very inception, the only province that has had the honour of holding a Congress under the presidentship of Mahatmaji, a province that had in the past distinguished itself in so many ways was naturally expected to fulfil equally high hopes in the future in the field of constructive work, and should fighting have to be resumed, which God forbid, the Karnatak, he doubted not, would again form the vanguard in the fight for freedom.

## The Tamil Nadu Provincial Conference

The Tamil Nadu Provincial Conference held its 34th. session at Madura on the 5th. June 1931 under the presidentship of Mr. S. Satyamurti. The following are extracts from the presidential address :—

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact casts sacred and serious duties and obligations on the Government and on the people. It is our duty to implement the pact, in every possible manner ; and I should like to offer my respectful congratulations to the Nation, on the manner in which it is implementing the pact. I wish I could say the same thing of all the Local Governments. I agree with Mahatma Gandhi that the Government of India is, on the whole, trying its best to carry out the terms of the truce. But Local Governments are not equally loyal to the pact. The recent sabre-rattling performance of the Governor of the Punjab is an ugly sign that the bureaucracy in this country will not easily reconcile itself to the achievement by India of her freedom. The Government of Madras also may exhibit a generous attitude towards the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, by releasing all political prisoners in the province immediately, including the Moplah prisoners, and my esteemed friend Mr. M. P. Narayana Menon, and by recognising the right of the people to peacefully picket foreign cloth and liquor shops. I should like also to make the appeal to Government servants, especially in the police and civil services, which Mahatma Gandhi made to them immediately after the pact was signed, namely, to behave as if they are *the servants* and not *the masters* of the people.

By far, the most important part of the pact is that which relates to the future Government of India. The British Government, having realised that there can be no permanent or peaceful settlement of the Indian problem except by dealing with those who can deliver the goods on behalf of the Indian Nation, namely, the Indian National Congress, have invited them to take part in the further stages of the Round Table Conference, on the basis of Responsible Government, Federation, and safeguards *in the interest of India*.

The Karachi Congress has done well in approving of the provisional settlement and authorising a Congress delegation to take part in the future stages of the Round Table Conference on that basis. We have a good case. We need not, therefore, sulk. We will put Great Britain in the wrong, if she does not concede our just demands. World opinion, especially American opinion, is distinctly on our side to-day. We do not want to take any risk of alienating it, by seeming to sulk. That is why the Congress has agreed to go to the Round Table Conference on the agreed basis.

That the Nation, if it is to have anything like freedom, should have the control over her defence forces, external affairs, finance and fiscal and economic policy is an obvious proposition. It is a matter of profound regret that at the Round Table Conference no Indian Delegate was found even to claim this control. On the other hand, it seemed to be taken more or less as axiomatic by the Round Table Conference, that defence and foreign affairs should continue to be, more or less, in the hands of the foreign Government. In the report of the Federal Structure Committee, it was agreed by all the Indian delegates that the Governor-General shall be responsible for defence and external relations, that is to say, that the Governor-General will be himself responsible for the administration of these subjects, and that he should not be dependent on the Indian legislature either for supplies or for legislation in respect of these subjects. India cannot and will not agree to this, not only because it is inconsistent with her freedom, but also because no Swaraj Government can really carry on the present military policy of the Government and yet continue to function. Considering the awful poverty of the masses, British Militarism in India is a serious drain on the economic resources of the people. The strength of the army in India, before the world-war, was 77,500 regular British troops, and 159,000 Indian soldiers. Even after the world-war, it has not been materially reduced. The primary function of the British army is to keep India under subjection and to preserve and extend British imperialism. The defence of India from foreign aggression is also one of its functions. But Great Britain has systematically disarmed the people of India, and studiously refused to allow

the Indians the education and the opportunity to become commissioned officers. Under the present scheme of Indian army organisation, Indians are barred from serving in the artillery, and Indian officers—they are few in number—are deprived of all real power and opportunity for achieving distinction and proper military training of high character.

As for control over her external affairs, it is obvious that a free India cannot be compelled to treat necessarily the enemies or the friends of the British Empire as her enemies or friends. Indeed, this right has already been conceded to the self-governing Dominions. They cannot be compelled to go to war or to conclude any treaty against their will. India claims the same right. It is not, from the point of view of the academic theory alone, that this right is claimed. It is claimed, because it is practically important for a free India, that India should not be compelled to go to war against France, Russia, Turkey, America, Italy or Afghanistan, or any other nation, because British statesmen feel that they should go to war with them, for preserving British imperial interests. It may be that India will be greatly benefited by preserving friendly relations with any or all of the nations. Finally, as long as India remains a part of the British Empire, she will have to suffer and will not have freedom and opportunity to bend her strength and influence to the cause of world-peace in Asia. To remain within the British Empire is not desirable for the people of India, for the same reason as it is not desirable for Britain to be a part of the French Empire or America to be a part of the Japanese Empire, with the status of a self-governing colony.

#### FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

As for control over finance and fiscal and economic policy, the case for India is even clearer. The British Government claim that 'as regards finance, the transfer of financial responsibility must necessarily be subject to such condition, as will ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.' On the first part of this claim, the position of the Congress is that the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State should be examined by an impartial tribunal, with a view to assessing the liability which is to be undertaken by India. The test will, of course, be whether such obligation were incurred in the interests of India. India is willing to abide by the verdict of that impartial tribunal. There can be no difficulty in the way of Britain also accepting that verdict. This is no question of repudiation of debts. The only question is who shall pay—India or Great Britain.

On the second part of this claim, namely, the maintenance, unimpaired, of the financial stability and credit of India, this seems to be an extraordinary claim for a foreign Government to make, for, after all, nobody will suffer more than India if her financial stability and credit are not maintained unimpaired. If the claim, however, be merely this, namely that some conditions should be imposed on the right of India to raise external loans, so as not to affect adversely the value of the present loans, this is a matter for negotiation and settlement. India is certainly in favour of the early establishment of a Reserve Bank, on a sound basis. Once her liability to pay legitimate debts incurred in her interests is properly assessed, she will also be in favour of treating these debt charges as the consolidated Fund Charges are treated in the United Kingdom. But with regard to currency and exchange policy, India demands that she should have complete unfettered control because she knows, to her cost, that this policy has been mismanaged by Great Britain to the loss of India.

#### SAFE-GUARDS

On the question of safeguards the position of the Indian National Congress is that, if they are shown to be *demonstrably necessary* in the interests of India, the Congress delegation will be free to accept them. This is merely paraphrasing the clause in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which wanted safeguards in the interests of India. Again, in his latest speech Lord Irwin has clearly stated that India will accept safeguards only if they are proved to be *first and last in the interests of India*. We have no quarrel with that statement. Further, if these safeguards, while being first and last in the interests of India, are also incidentally in the interests of Great Britain, we will not quarrel. But that is the utmost limit to which we can go.

Latterly there has been a cry on the part of the Conservatives in Great Britain that Mahatma Gaudhi and the Congress delegation should be compelled to accept the safeguards, as agreed to in the first stage of the Round Table Conference, before

they are allowed to take part in the further stages of the conference. This is a typical example of the mentality which says 'heads I win, tails you lose.' The Conservative delegates to the R. T. C., particularly made it clear that they were not bound by any of the conclusions arrived at therein, and wanted to retain freedom to change their opinions. While therefore claiming this right for those who were actually parties to the decision, it is preposterous that this right should be sought to be denied to those who were not parties to those decisions, and who are for the first time going into this Conference. The claim is too absurd to be considered seriously. The Congress delegation will go to the conference, with an absolutely free hand in this matter, and determined to accept only those safeguards *which are demonstrably necessary in the interests of India*. I would only add that those safeguards must be as few as absolutely necessary, and should disappear automatically, at the end of a short agreed period.

#### QUESTION OF MINORITIES

On the question of minorities, the positions of British Government is, that the Governor-General, as opposed to the Indian Legislature, must be made responsible for the observance of their constitutional rights. I demur, and for obvious reasons. I am not now dealing with the representation of minorities in the Legislature of the country. So far as the constitutional rights of the minorities for the protection of their culture, language and script, freedom of conscience and the free practice and profession of their religion, subject to public order and morality, are concerned the Karachi Congress has agreed that such rights ought to be guaranteed to the minorities in the Svaraj Constitution. This is based on the analogy of the post-war treaties in which, on the recommendations of the Minorities Commission of the League of Nations, similar rights have been conceded to the minorities of the post-war European States. If these rights then form part of the written constitution of India, there need to be executive power to enforce the observance of these rights, as any breach of these obligations by the Government, or by any body else, will give the affected person, a lawful right to seek redress in the courts of law of the country. There is no need, therefore, for the Governor-General being vested with any such powers.

The problem, however, of the representation of minorities in the Legislatures of the country is a different one. The ideal state, of course, for any country, is that all citizens should learn to act in public affairs, ignoring communal, religious or other differences. If such a state be possible in India to-day, we shall have no trouble. But, unfortunately, there are communal distrust, and communal suspicions, partly due to the presence of the third party and partly due to ignorance and fear. The achievement of her freedom by India and time and education alone can remove this distrust and suspicion.

It is now our duty, therefore, to see that the foreign power is not allowed to exploit this distrust and suspicion, and that therefore we come to a settlement ourselves. Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, is profoundly right when he says that he cannot usefully attend the Round Table Conference, unless the Hindu-Muslim question is settled. I earnestly trust that the statesmanlike endeavours, started under the auspices of the enlightened and patriotic prince, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, will bear fruit soon, and that a happy settlement will be reached.

#### PROBLEM OF THE STATES

Next in importance to the problem of minorities, is the problem of the Indian States and their place in a Federal India. The British Government has stated that 'the Central Government should be a Federation of All-India, embracing both the Indian States and British India, in a bicameral Legislature.' They add: 'With a Legislature constituted on a Federal basis, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature.' If this declaration means that the principle of responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature will be recognised only if the Indian States come in, I strongly dissent. I take the view that, while the ultimate development of India will be into a Federation of British India and Indian States, the pace cannot be forced, unless the Indian States or the bulk of them come into a Federation almost immediately, with a full realisation of the duties and obligations of the members of the Federation. I do not see much chance of it now. Indeed, the Indian States claim the right to come in or not into the Federation to be vested in them, the right to retain their *quasi* sovereignty in matters not conceded by them to the Federal Government, and the



right to continue their separate relations with the British Crown as distinct from the Federal Government of India. Each one of these claims is politically unsound, and is wholly inconsistent with the harmonious or efficient working of the Federal Government of India. In view of all these difficulties, I would prefer that the Indian Federal Constitution should follow the model of the Canadian Constitution and include, to begin with, only the British Indian provinces, providing, however, for Indian States to come in latter, if they desire to do so, as full and loyal members of the Federation. The only possible alternative, to-day, if any Indian State desire to come into the Federation is that they should, as condition precedent, agree to statutorily guarantee to their subjects the fundamental rights of citizenship, to let them have recourse to the Federal Supreme Court, if those rights are invaded by the executive in those States, and to accept the principle that the representatives of those Indian States in the Federal Legislature shall be elected, in some form or other, by the people of the Indian States. I do not, however, desire to be misunderstood. Being a citizen of an Indian State myself, and deeply interested, as I am, in the progress of Indian States, I do want them to come into the Federation. I may respectfully assure the Indian Princes that they will find their interest and their prestige and honour, much safer in the hands of their countrymen who will run the Federal Government, than in the hands of the Political Department of the Government of India, or in those of any British Secretary of State for India.

#### SECOND DAY—6th. JUNE 1931

The Conference met again on the next day, the 6th. June and passed the following resolutions :—

#### TRIBUTE TO MOULANA MAHOMED ALI

The first resolution of condolence touching Moulana Mahomed Ali's death and recording his work particularly for Hindu-Muslim unity was moved from the chair and carried, all standing.

#### SATYAGRAHIS CONGRATULATED

Mr. O. Rajagopalachar next moved :—

"This Conference tenders its hearty congratulations to the people of Tamil Nad for the part her sons and daughters played in the last successful campaign for Swaraj and in particular records its grateful appreciation of the sufferings and sacrifices undertaken by all volunteers in the cause, in some cases amounting to loss of life. It hopes that whenever the occasion may again arise, a yet greater spirit of patriotism, sacrifice and endurance will be shown by all classes of people undeterred by brute force, repressive laws or exhibitions of frightfulness on the part of Government."

#### CONFIDENCE IN MAHATMA'S LEADERSHIP

Haji Mahomed Maulana next moved : "This Conference reiterates its full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership and trusts that the people of this province, without caste or communal difference, will stand united and follow his lead in order that the goal of Swaraj may be reached."

#### CONTROL OVER MILITARY EXPENDITURE

Mr. K. Santanam next moved :—

"This Conference resolves that inasmuch as without complete national control, over taxation and expenditure, in all department of the State and over fiscal, economic and exchange policy, there can be no true Swaraj, no constitution is acceptable unless this is definitely secured.

"Whereas a foreign army of occupation is inconsistent with national freedom and prejudicial to the development of manliness and national strength and whereas substantial reduction of the present military expenditure is indispensable in order to enable the State to reduce taxes that press heavily on the people and to introduce total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs and make other reforms for the welfare of the poverty-stricken masses of India, this Conference resolves that no constitution can be acceptable unless, under it, full national control is secured over defence forces and military expenditure and external affairs.

"This Conference further resolves that the public debt account of India should be subjected to a full and impartial scrutiny by a properly constituted tribunal, so

that, a just apportionment of obligations may be made between Great Britain and India.

"This Conference resolves, that it should be well understood that India should, like the other partners in the Commonwealth, be at liberty to secede at will."

Mr. Santanam explained the implications of the resolution and observed that without the conditions mentioned in the resolution, India's interests would not be safe. The present exchange policy of the Government had resulted in huge losses to India and they must first prevent this drain. There could not be true freedom when there was in India a foreign army of occupation. The resolution was self-explanatory and he hoped they would accept it.

#### AN AMENDMENT

Mr. Masilamani Pillai moved for the deletion of the words "like the other partners in the Commonwealth" and said that India should be at liberty to do what she wanted, irrespective of what other partners in the Commonwealth did. Let them not fetter themselves by the example of the others.

The amendment was duly seconded and a short discussion followed. Eventually the amendment was carried by a large majority and the amended resolution was carried unanimously.

#### TREATMENT OF MINORITIES

The following resolution was moved from the chair and carried unanimously:—

"This Conference accepts the principle of generous concession in regard to minorities."

Mr. C. P. Subbiah of Coimbatore next moved a resolution welcoming the Karachi resolution XV relating to the declaration of fundamental rights and according its whole-hearted approval of the principles embodied therein as to the implications of Swaraj.

#### RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. Narayanaswami Aiyar then moved a resolution touching the political prisoners. It ran thus:

"Whereas the detention of any political prisoner makes the promotion of goodwill between Great Britain and India difficult and militates against the satisfactory conclusion of peace negotiations, this Conference urges on the Government of Madras the necessity and wisdom of immediately releasing all such prisoners in this province, whether they were imprisoned in the last campaign or before and even though charged with offences involving acts of violence, including Moplah and under-trial prisoners.

"This conference desires to point out that it is well known that most of these charges were based on slender evidence or imputed only constructively and trials conducted in an atmosphere of political tension.

#### ANTI-DRINK CAMPAIGN

Mr. Lakshmi Ammal next moved a resolution relating to anti-drink work.

The resolution ran into several clauses and in effect congratulated all workers who tried to eradicate the liquor evil and the organisers of peaceful picketing, hoped that the Government would observe the true terms and not allow its subordinates to nullify them, appealed to local and other public bodies to help the picketing of liquor shops and to owners not to let their trees for tapping liquor and expressed appreciation of the generally helpful attitude of drinkers and liquor shop owners.

#### AN AMENDMENT LOST

An amendment was moved for the deletion of the complimentary reference to toddy shop owners on the ground that in many places they were guilty of harrasing picketers. There was a warm discussion.

The amendment was put to vote and lost, sixty-three voting for and ninety-six against. The resolution was carried by a majority.

#### HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

The following resolution was next moved by Mr. Usman Sahab:

"This Conference warns all communities in South India not to believe in rumours or suggestions leading to the communal hatred. This Conference appeals to the people of South India ever to maintain the traditional good feeling which has so

long prevailed in the inter-communal life in South Indian villages and towns. This Conference warns common people not to be misled by those who seek for their purposes to exploit communal suspicions and urges that for the common people there is nothing to quarrel about and a life of mutual friendship is most easy and most profitable for all. As the Hindu-Muslim unity, emphasised for years by the Congress, is very necessary for India living happy under Swaraj, this Conference earnestly appeals to all district and local Congress Committees to do intensive propaganda for the promotion of goodwill between the communities."

#### RELIEF TO AGRICULTURISTS

Several non-controversial resolutions, touching the sufferings of agriculturists, due to economic depression and urging the stoppage of resettlement operations were adopted. The following is the full text of the resolutions :—

"The conference records its sympathy for intense economic distress caused by phenomenal fall in agricultural prices without corresponding reduction in revenue demands or heavy debt obligations of millions of peasants and the conference urges that it is the duty of the State at once to reduce its expenditure on civil and military establishment and give relief to ryots by reducing the revenue demand at least in proportion to the fall in agricultural prices and also give relief to the indebted peasants by suitable legislation in regard to payment, interest and settlement debts during this period of depression.

"This conference is emphatically of opinion that resettlement operations, now going on in Salem and other districts should be stopped". Mr. C. Rajagopalachari then moved the resolution recording unqualified condemnation of the treatment accorded in Hindu society to the so-called untouchable class and calling upon the Congressmen to disregard custom in personal lives and do all in their power to spread the Congress message of removal of untouchability.

"After expressing satisfaction at the efforts, so far made, the conference urged all classes, specially land-holders, matadhipathis, leaders of orthodoxy and dharmakartas and others influential in rural areas, to help in the speedy consummation of the object and at least open up immediately streets, places of worship, schools and sources of drinking water to the untouchables.

A resolution was moved from the chair, calling on all cloth merchants to respond to the call of the Congress regarding conservation of national wealth by boycotting foreign textiles, dealing only in indigenous yarn and cloth and congratulated the picketer on the effective work done in this direction.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT OF SWADESHI ARTICLES

Mr. K. Bhashyam next moved a long resolution of six clauses urging people to use only cloth woven on handlooms with Indian made yarn in order to save South Indian handloom industry which was severely suffering now and appealing to dealers not to stock any but indigenous yarn.

Mr. Lakshminpathi moved the next resolution "appealing for the use and propagation of khadi and drew the attention of the audience to the great advance khadi had made in fineness, cheapness and availability.

The next resolution was an exhortation to Tamilians to learn Hindi and raise the necessary funds for spreading Hindi and placed on record the zealous work of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Sabha.

The next resolution moved ran thus : "The conference deplores the growing corruption in elections and warns the people of the province that unless this tendency is checked, future Swaraj constitution cannot bring them happiness or good government."

#### MANAGEMENT OF MILLS

Mr. C. Rajagopalachar next moved the following resolution :

"Whereas the manufacture and supply of good yarn to many lakhs of handloom weavers, spread throughout Tamil Nad, is a matter of national concern, the conference is of opinion that mills like the Madura mills of Messrs. Harvey should be taken over and managed by the State and no longer left for exploitation in private interest. This conference is of opinion that the concerns like the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, whose production was largely consumed by the Government, may be also taken over by the State. The conference is of opinion that, when the State is investing many crores on the railway extension and

buildings, the cost of taking over big textile concerns to conduct them in purely national interest would be well within the scope of Government.

It was moved from the chair and carried unanimously with acclamation that no change need be made in India's present National Flag.

Three other resolutions : were carried in quick succession without much discussion; one urged the Local Government to release those still in jails, convicted in connection with the recent South Indian Railway strike; another resolved that capital punishment be abolished and the third decided to appoint a committee of twelve ladies to organise, in different centres, *Desa Sevika Sangas* for carrying on foreign cloth and liquor shops, picketing work and the T. N. C. do give the necessary financial help.

The last resolution was that all classification of 'political prisoners be abolished and that the convicted political workers should not accept such distinctive treatment.

## The Berar Provincial Conference

The following is a condensed summary of *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's* address as president of the Berar Provincial Conference held at Khamgaon on the 5th. June 1931 :—

"The work before us may be summed up in our duty to implement the settlement and to make India pure and worthy of the Swaraj that we hope within a short time to achieve, and in my brief address to you this evening I propose to confine myself chiefly to these two items.

"You will agree with me that it is too late now to discuss the merit of the Truce. The settlement is a settled fact to-day. We are aware of the difficulties that lie in our path, but we are determined to use all our proverbial Eastern patience. It has become a fashion with some of our opponents to praise Gandhi not for the love of him, but just to bring down his co-workers the more effectively. Recently, efforts have been made to represent me and my colleagues in Bardoli, as desiring deliberately to break the Truce terms. The same cry was raised at Borsad till Gandhiji made it his headquarters, saw things for himself and took the public partially into confidence. It then appeared things had almost reached the breaking point. The truth about Bardoli will, I hope, soon be before the public and that not through me but through him whose anxiety to carry out the Truce terms may not be questioned even by his opponents.

"We believe we are doing all that is possible under the circumstances to implement the Truce. It is but natural that we do so. Whatever the Anglo-Indian Officer, merchant or newspaper may say, the truth is that nobody in this country is more interested in peace than the child of the soil. Every struggle means misery to thousands of our innocent countrymen and countrywomen. That guided by him who feels the misery of others as his own we should lightly seek to renew the struggle, only the interested can believe. We, therefore, are determined to see the Truce through. If, unfortunately, even then there is to be a renewal of the struggle, we are determined to show to the world that our side was as moderate as it possibly could be—consistently within its self-respect and its duty to our country—this, if for nothing else, at least for the cultivation of world opinion which, situated as we to-day are, we cannot afford to neglect.

"About the R. T. C. the Congress position is as it was at Karachi—Gandhiji is our sole representative. He also decides the proper time and the proper method by which we are to co-operate. He has from the beginning declared that his going to England is contingent upon two conditions—the settlement of the Hindu-Moslem question being one of them. Latterly, he has declared himself ready to start at short notice if only he were satisfied that the Truce terms would be faithfully observed. As the initiator of the last movement, and as the main party concerned with the making of the Truce, he knows his great responsibility. He also is conscious of the suffering his people would have to undergo if the truce terms are not faithfully carried out by the Government. That in spite of insistence from friends here and

in England he yet is unable to induce himself to go, may have some meaning. To stye, therefore, his reluctance to lean at this critical juncture, as going back upon the agreement, is to betray a woeful ignorance of the true conditions of the country. That such accusations come from one of our countrymen is tragic. When even his motives are being questioned, what hope can there be for us ?

"I learn with gratification that you suspended all forms of aggressive action, whether in the picketing of foreign cloth shops or liquor shops. In so far as the two are peaceful they are completely protected by the 'Tuce' terms, they were conceived before the 'war' and are permanent as social and economic measures. They are items of our programme of self-reliance and self-purification and they cannot be abandoned or suspended under any circumstances. But we have to eachew all forms of activities which partook of the nature of retaliation. Under this, I repeat the boycott of foreign cloth does not come.

"Increasing unemployment in Lancashire has embittered certain sections of the British public and a regular campaign has been set on foot for getting the boycott lifted. I am not here thinking of the mischievous propaganda of men like Mr. Villiers who have unblushingly threatened to use force and with brutal frankness spoken of dividing us and setting the Mussalmans against the Hindus. I prophesy that Mr. Villiers will be deeply disappointed. But I am thinking here of that section of the British public who have nothing to do with the policy of "Divide and Rule," but who are deeply agitated over the question of increasing unemployment that stares them in the face. I earnestly ask them to think of the millions upon millions of unemployed in India and suggest a solution better than that contained in our khadi programme. The problem before England may for the moment seem difficult but without a complete boycott of foreign cloth the problem before India is insuperable.

"Wherever one goes the stock argument of the cloth dealer is that he would like to dispose off his stock on hand and that he would import no fresh stocks. If it is really so, let him avail himself of the offer made by the Committee for the Disposal of Foreign Cloth which is now registered and will soon be functioning.

"This brings me to the most important resolution adopted by the Karachi Congress, viz., the resolution containing the declaration of rights. It is a unique resolution in more senses than one. It presents not only the fundamental rights, but the fundamental duties of an Indian citizen under Swaraj. But let us be clear that a mere recitation of these rights and duties will not bring Swaraj. Such a statement represents only a definite mental attitude ; but the necessary cleansing and purifying will have to be done.

"Among other things, we have mentioned in this declaration religious toleration. Let us not forget that Cawnpore was being enacted when we were passing this resolution at Karachi. How shall we deserve Swaraj with our hands red with the blood of our brethren, and with our hearts thirsting for more.

"We complain of the enormous drink revenue and fret and fume at the number of unlicensed drinkshops retailing these fiery liquids at all hours of the day and the night. But, if we, as Hindus and Mussalmans thought of the obligation imposed on us by our respective faiths no one would dare to place temptation in our way.

"The zemindar can materially help in the solution of the problem of rent and revenue by a reasonable reduction in his demand carried out at the expense of his privy purse and his daily expenses.

"Again the Goddess of Swaraj will hesitate to cross the threshold of our temple when she finds that a vast number of our brethren, whom we chose to label "Untouchable" cannot go within miles of it. But my first and my last thing is to remind you of our pledge of truth and non-violence."

## Delhi Provincial Political Conference

The 5th Delhi Provincial Political Conference was held at Shamli, Muzaffarnagar district, on the 6th June 1931 under the presidentship of Syt. Pandit Sundar Lal. Prominent amongst those who attended the conference were Dr. Satyapal, Ch. Raghu-

bir Narain Singh, Mr. Sahani, Mr. Desh Bandhu, director, *Tej*, Mr. Faridul Haq Ansari, Prof. Inder, Pandit Peary Lal Sharma and Lala Shankar Lal Sharma and Lala Shankar Lal.

Messages of sympathy were received from Syt. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, and Babu Rajendra Prasad.

*Master Vishnu Chandra*, Chairman of the Reception Committee dwelt upon the repression at Shamli and other places in the province during the civil disobedience campaign. He advised the Congressmen to organise villages and to devote their energies in the constructive programme including boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. He warmly welcomed the delegates and guests.

*Pandit Sundar Lal*, president of the conference then delivered an extempore address for about two hours. He dwelt upon the Cawnpore riots and laid stress upon Hindu-Muslim unity. He opined that participation in the Round Table Conference would hardly lead to Swaraj. He advised the workers, that inspite of his misgivings about the truce, to strictly abide by the terms of the Irwin-Gandhi pact and to avoid the three pit-falls, viz., Hindu-Muslim dissensions, class war and violence. He advised the tenants to join the Congress and not to start separate organisations.

The conference again met on the 7th. June. A condolence resolution was passed regarding the deaths of Pandit Motilalji, Maulana Mohamed Ali and the Maharaja of Mahmudabad and sympathy was expressed with the members of the bereaved families.

Great stress was laid upon the fact that no Congressman with a communal bias should be allowed to hold any office in the Congress and that Congressmen should refuse to join any communal organisation.

Another resolution was passed urging upon the Government the necessity of making more remissions in revenue and rents in the Muzaffarnagar and Meerut districts and to make substantial reduction in irrigation dues.

The conference concluded on the 8th. June. Dr. Satyapal, in a moving speech, appealed for the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.

In winding up the proceedings of the conference, the president said that Swaraj alone would solve all their problems.

## The Andhra Provincial Conference

In the course of the *presidential address* delivered by *Mr. T. Prakasam* at the session of the Andhra Provincial Conference which opened at Guntur on the 27th. June 1931, the president said :—

### HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

Considerable trouble was raised both before and at the time of the first Round Table Conference on the Hindu Muslim question. Starting from the first Multan riot in 1922 I had visited many scenes of Hindu-Muslim riots and formed my own conclusion. I do not wish to take you through the various chapters of all the great tragedy that has been enacted on this account. The characters that were on the stage at the time of each riot were so different from those that are now attempting to settle the differences and work out a constitution. I have always felt that it is not possible to remove the root causes of the trouble unless they are first correctly ascertained. The apparent cause on each occasion when there is a riot is given out to be a religious or communal dispute, but ultimately it turns out that the whole mischief has been centering round the distribution of a few privileges or a few seats. I always believe and I still adhere to the view that the communal strife is not between two communities. It has always been provoked and engineered by a few interested persons for selfish purposes. Those who travelled from India to London as invitees of the first Round Table Conference made a grand opening by beginning in one voice of full Dominion status. The nationalist element was absent from that conference. The so-called unanimity of the first few days vanished by the time the conference came to a close. The British representatives discovered how dangerous it was to depend on such people and draft a constitution. They were wise in

postponing and appealing to the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi responded with his usual generosity and the truce has been the result. We are now considering the Hindu-Muslim question. To start with, friends, it is a painful dispute. It is due partly to ignorance and partly to want of faith. So far as I am concerned the true note was struck by Wazir Ali Imam when he presided over the Nationalist Muslim Conference in Upper India. He advocated joint electorates unconditionally. It is such confidence and good feeling that would largely help in the building up of a nation. But his view did not prevail, and the Congress Muslims who were in a majority insisted upon reservation of seats. So long as there is reservation of seats there is communalism in it, and the difference between those who advocate separate electorates and those who advocate joint electorates with reservation is not much. Since the first Round Table Conference the Nationalist Muslims have clearly succeeded in capturing their own community and converting them largely to the view of joint electorates with reservation. Serious attempts are being made by the Maharaja of Bhopal and other Muslim leaders to bring about a settlement. Let us hope they will succeed in bringing about a settlement between the two races of India and will not under any circumstances allow the country to drift. The Andhra leaders that were present at the last meeting of the Working Committee deserve congratulations for having resolved on Mahatma Gandhi's proceeding to London, whether this dispute between the two wings of the Muslims is settled or not. Personally, I have been holding the same view for long. What difference does it make whether a few seats are allowed to one community or to another and what difference does it make if there are joint electorates with reservation or separate electorates? In South India a big storm was raised some years ago over what were called Brahmin and Non-Brahmin differences. Reservation of seats was demanded by the majority community and that was granted. Before the tenth year expired the staunchest of the advocates who wanted reservation were the foremost to abandon all reservation and advocate joint electorates.

#### ROOT OUT COMMUNALISM

Communalism can never lead to nationalism. A demarcation drawn between one and another of the communities would necessarily lead on to the most serious result and complications. The slogan of Brahmin and Non-Brahmin differences has disappeared long ago, but its poison has spread throughout the whole structure of society comprising the different communities or sub-communities. I am glad that Mr. K. Ramachandra Reddy who is the President of the Madras Legislative Council has now referred to the evils of communalism in his presidential speech at the 10th. Reddy conference held at Anantapur recently. He censured the communal warfare in respect of elections to local boards and in the prevalence of communal separation as between Reddys, Palaks, Kammas and Kalamas and pleaded for mutual friendship and toleration. I have every hope that every Hindu and every Muslim member of every other community would realise that this poison of communalism must be rooted out before we could develop nationalism and act as one nation. In Canada whose constitution the British have proposed to adopt as a proper model for us, the differences between the French and English were of a serious nature. The French Canadian Catholics were the hereditary foes of the Bastonians of New England. In all the 13 colonies, both from the pulpit and from the Congress, the greatest alarm was expressed about the toleration of Papacy which was characterised as "an idolatrous hypocritical creed." The Protestantism of the new-comers was equally repulsive to the Catholic French Canadians. The United Empire Loyalists could not tolerate the irresponsible control of a Papist Council and petition after petition made its way to the King claiming relief. In the House of Commons vehement arguments were advanced against Roman Catholics being admitted to a share of the Government. Merchants in London who were having trade relations in Canada also petitioned against it. Englishmen wanted that lands should be set aside for the support of the Protestant clergy and objected to the division of the Colony into two parts, by the one to be wholly French and the other English. Under such circumstances Canada progressed. Canada got her Swaraj Constitution. It is surprising that a section of the English people, forgetting history, should raise the bogey of Hindu-Muslim trouble or the problem of the Princes of the Native States and their subjects simply to use them as a pretext for gaining selfish ends. In my opinion whatever may be the nature of the electorate, separate or joint, for our Mussalman friends, the Constitution must be protected with reasonable and just provision.

## THE PRINCES AND THEIR SUBJECTS

The next question is about the Princes and their subjects in Indian States. The conduct of the Maharaja of Patiala who has propounded a scheme of Constitution is extraordinary. He was associated with the Maharaja of Bikaner at the first Round Table Conference. One cannot but wonder why there has been a sudden change of mind on the part of the Maharaja of Patiala. His own subjects know him. The charges which his own people have been making against him are also too well-known to the world. Who has inspired the Maharaja of Patiala just now to back out and propound his extraordinary scheme? Will he be able to answer what reasons prompted him to change his own mind? It was he who believed that in the matter of his internal administration, he would be saved under the British Crown rather than under a Swaraj Constitution. I have no doubt that Englishmen would be able to see through the whole plan. The Maharaja of Patiala, I hope, will not have many people to support him in his new proposition. It is pleasing to note that the Maharaja of Bikaner and other great Princes are adhering to Federation and are determined to pull them through. As regards the subjects of the States, I have every hope that those rulers who advocate Federation and who come into it will be the foremost to concede liberty to their own people in the same manner in which Indians under the Swaraj Constitution would be enjoying it. In the Karachi Congress Mahatma Gandhi made an appeal that no controversy over the problem of the States should be raised either in the Subjects Committee or in the open session. None can plead the cause of the States' subjects and secure their rights better than Mahatma Gandhi. Believing him, every one in the Congress including representatives of the subjects of the Indian States agreed not to raise any question about the Princes. This is an act of statesmanship on the part of Mahatma Gandhi. The country as a whole including the people of the States have implicit faith in him.

## RESERVE BANK AND CURRENCY

Another important question for our consideration relates to the safeguards framed by the British people. The first of these concerns the question of a Reserve Bank and currency. Without a Reserve Bank and control of currency there can be no Swaraj or self-government. If Great Britain had any wisdom or statesmanship she would have agreed more than 50 years ago to introduce a gold standard and a Reserve Bank in India and prevented economic drain and extravagance. Both England and India would then have been prosperous. There would not have been so much discontent, and the public debt of India would not have gone up as it has done to over 1,000 crores. It is the currency policy of Great Britain that has been responsible for the economic ruin of India. If people in India had been educated on this single question in the past, if they had known how many crores of rupees had been wasted by the Government each time it increased the exchange ratio, there would have been agrarian revolution in the country, as there was in Russia, long before Mahatma Gandhi started his non-violent non-co-operation movement. Possibly out of chaos and anarchy another Soviet Republic would have been established in the land long ago as in Russia. It is the currency policy of the Government that is largely responsible for the steady increase of agricultural indebtedness which to-day is over 1,000 crores in all India including the Native States. The last effort made in the Legislative Assembly in 1927 by the elected members to resist the increase of the ratio from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. and also to establish a Reserve Bank and gold currency was opposed by the Government strenuously and we lost it by two or three votes on account of the betrayal of some of our own countrymen. Since the increase of the ratio, a loss of hundreds of crores of rupees has been incurred by the country. To maintain this unnatural ratio and prevent it from falling back to its natural position of 1s. 4d., 30 to 40 crores of rupees have been wasted by the Government each year during the last 5 years. By the enhancement of the ratio, the Government expected to create a favourable market in India for the import of British cloth and other British goods, while at the same time the English purchaser of Indian exports would be paying only Rs. 13-5-6 instead of Rs. 15 for the pound to the Indian seller. Indian agriculturist and producer has been losing enormously on this account. The Government would not heed the agitation that has been going on all these years against the present unnatural ratio. They persist in their disastrous conduct. They persisted until India, out of sheer desperation, accepted the challenge, passed the Lahore resolution of Independence in 1921, and followed it up by the first non-violent battle of a War of Independence the like of which the world has never witnessed. What suffering and what sacrifices have our men, women, merchants, agriculturists had all gone through! The world wit-



nessed with astonishment the strength of the nation and as a result we have had the truce.

#### TERRIBLE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

We are now passing through terrible economic depression. It is not correct to say that the world depression has much to do with our trouble. Nor is it correct to say that it is largely due to the Civil Disobedience movement. Our economic depression is mostly due to the currency policy of the Government. The world's economic depression also is largely due to the mischief which two or three nations that have hoarded the world's gold have been up to. Those who thought that by denying India her right to establish a Reserve Bank and gold currency, believed that they would not be exposed to the dangers of losses to which India had been exposed on account of the mismanagement of her currency policy. But, when individuals or nations indulge in speculation and exploitation of weaker nations, they must also be prepared to take the consequence of their own conduct. As against laws which man can make, there are occasions on which the laws of nature are bound to prevail. Nobody will deny that there is now world depression also. The fall in prices has been so quick and so vast and so endless that in almost every country the producers have been brought to the verge of ruin. But India has been affected by this world depression only partially. In spite of the world depression, if even to-day the Government should retrace its steps and immediately reduce the ratio to 1s. 4d. the position of agriculturists will be automatically improved. Sir Montagu Webb in a recent interview admitted that in India the inability of the agriculturists to sell their produce profitably prevents them from buying manufactured goods or even paying the land-tax. As a result the agriculturists in India to-day are driven to the necessity of selling the little gold in the form of jewels that they may have on the persons of the female members of the family for payment of the land-tax. This gold is collected by certain merchants in South India and sent to Bombay for exportation to foreign countries. The agriculturist is pressed by the Bank and by his creditors. There is no Government or private agency that can give relief to him to enable him to survive this period of economic crisis. Even before the present economic crisis the Indian agriculturist was hopelessly indebted and if he survived, it was only because of the credit he could command. Now with the pressure of the Government on one side for the payment of tax and the pressure of the creditors on the other side for return of loans what is the agriculturists' position? It is time the Government passed a while and took serious note of the situation. There is talk everywhere of no-tax campaign not for any political purpose but out of economic desperation. Has the Government been in any way profited by the pursuance of a wrong policy and the continuance of the same in spite of advice and protest, Both the Provincial and the Central Governments are to-day on the verge of insolvency. Has the Government of India been able to meet its sterling liabilities? No private trade has been thoroughly dislocated. Every day prices of commodities threaten a further tendency to fall. Is it a wonder if we are to-day in economic and political chaos? Sir Montagu Webb urged the Government in an interview a week ago to effect immediately the reduction of the ratio to 1s. 4d. Will the Government agree? In circumstances such as these, Lord Reading, either out of ignorance or wilfully, has proposed some safeguards with regard to the Reserve Bank and the Government's currency policy. No one with any knowledge of law or fact on the question of Reserve Bank and currency in India could have with any reason suggested the retention of power in the hands of the British. Is it in the interest of India that this power should be retained in the hands of the British? Surely not. If in 1927 the two Indians who supported the Government and gave them a majority, had not done so, the Reserve Bank and gold currency would have been established in this country 5 years ago. If that had been done, could Lord Reading have made bold to put this question in the shape of a safeguard? The financial and commercial experts of India have already protested against everyone of the safeguards demanded by the British and none in the world can suggest that these safeguards would be in the interest of India. I have no doubt that Mahatma Gandhi will not yield in this matter.

President Hoover is reported to have made an offer to extend the time for the payment of international debts due to his country. It is reported to have been officially announced that this concession will be extended to India in regard to India's debts to Great Britain. Applying the same reason and logic, the Indian Government in its turn must take immediate steps to prevent the ruin of the agriculturists an

commercial classes in India by making necessary provision for postponement of the collection of land tax and also payment of the loans payable by them to the banks or to their other creditors. Otherwise the Government can easily imagine the consequences. When the whole country is drifting into economic ruin it is incomprehensible why so much time should be taken in the matter of the substantial retrenchment of the salaries of the highly paid officials. The Government of Madras was very wise in having acceded to the appointment of a non-official commission for an enquiry into the economic condition of the Kistna-Godavari districts and suspended the enforcement of the resettlement rates. Of all Governments in India it was only the Government of Madras during the last few years that postponed the enforcement of the resettlement rates and thus avoided a no-tax campaign in Andhra Desa and South India. Almost in every district in Andhra Desa agitation has been going on about the condition of the agriculturist and it is time that the Government of Madras should take immediate steps to give relief to them without any delay.

Although we have not established an Indian Republic as a result of the last big battle this year, we have proved that we have strength and determination to establish our own Republic without the aid of other nations and without the use of arms and ammunition, army or navy, bomb or shell. Our greatest contribution to the political science of the world is the non-violent method of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. India has been in a state of revolution since 1919. Ever since Gandhiji stepped into the Congress non-violence has been its creed. But the outside world and even a section of our own people would not believe in non-violence as a weapon of war sufficiently strong to over-throw such a strong and military system as the Indian Government. Ten years ago, in the beginning of our campaign of non-co-operation, we were very nearly successful but we could not hold on because of international dissensions and want of sufficient discipline. Communal differences were fomented by interested agencies and both Hindus and Muslims fell easy victims. They fought for ten years, measured their strength and at last discovered that one could not destroy the other. With the secession of Mahatma Gandhi from the Congress and the formation of the Swaraj Party and the springing up of Hindu-Muslim differences, both the Government and the outside world thought that India had gone beyond redemption and that she was least fitted for self-government. None knew how the so-called ignorant masses, the women and youth imbibed the spirit of non-violence and were preparing themselves to lead when the occasion demanded. None knew that the surging masses of India have been thirsting for and labouring more and more for economic and social freedom than in securing a few offices or jobs under the Government or a few seats in the Swaraj constitution. Even the members of the Working Committee did not know the potentiality of their own country or the readiness of their own people to jump into the field and fight to the last when Gandhiji called upon them to follow him. Many of the members of the Working Committee and many others did not know that the leader of the country would force the people into action so soon after the passing of the Independence resolution at Lahore. That was why almost every one of the members of the Working Committee asked for time before starting action. One of them told Gandhiji that, if he started action in March 1930, he would be like Napoleon before Waterloo but to him there was an inner call and he observed it. That is how Mahatma Gandhi happened to declare that he would go to Dandi with his devoted Ashramites to break the salt laws and that he would not return to the Ashram until the freedom of the country was achieved. This was the clarion call which the masses followed showing they had understood Gandhiji's message for freedom. You will pardon these personal reference in this connection.

Then there is the question of trade convention. At first sight it looks extraordinary that the British should ask for a trade convention with India to protect their own trade here when the whole battle for the freedom of India has arisen out of the trade relations of Great Britain with India ever since the country was occupied by the British. Many of my countrymen may well wonder as to whether it is possible at all that there can be any trade convention with British traders, especially at this stage when India has to develop her own trade and industry and adopt all possible protective measures to the exclusion of even Great Britain. Before entering on the truce, Mahatma Gandhi insisted upon a change in the expression adopted by Lord Reading in his demand for a trade convention. Lord Reading's proposal was that there should be a trade convention in the interest of Great Britain but Mahatma Gandhi said that it would not be agreeable to him and to his country, unless any proposed trade convention was in the interest of India. Lord Irwin as a reasonable

man accepted the amendment and adopted it. The whole question now is, as to whether the trade convention proposed by Lord Reading is in the interests of India. Mahatma Gandhi is the sole judge to decide the matter. One thing I can say is that there is no inconsistency between a trade convention as modified by Mahatma Gandhi and the demand of India even for Complete Independence. There are such trade conventions to-day between other free countries, for example, between Soviet Russia and Great Britain. I shall not take the house into details in this connection. It is possible to evolve a formula for a trade convention if only Great Britain would not be in the way of the full freedom of India.

Lastly, we have to consider the question of the army and foreign relations. The British nation has been holding India in the interests of their trade. When once India secures and establishes her right to govern herself and carry on her own trade in her best interests and when the British people can carry on their trade only under a convention, there should not be much need for them to keep an expensive army in this country. Let us hope that Mahatma Gandhi would be able to settle the question of the army and the foreign relations also in the best interest of the country. There are friends in London who called the Congress and Gandhiji, betrayers of the interest of the people in as much as Gandhiji entered into a truce with the British for the purpose of negotiation. As I have pointed out above, nothing inconsistent with the National Demand has been accepted or agreed to by Mahatma Gandhi. The British are shrewd business people. They know what India is to-day and what India will be to-morrow if negotiation fails. They have also seen since the date of the truce how this weapon of non-violence could be applied with success for the establishment of a Republic in Spain, King Alfonso abdicating the throne in a most peaceful manner. The British should know that under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the people of India of all castes are determined to do whatever they are commanded to do in the struggle for national freedom.

Almost the constitution of every country in the world with very few exceptions has provided for reservation and maintenance of the fundamental rights of the people. The provision is necessary because every ruler is liable to become tyrant and selfish in the exercise of the powers vested in him. It is certainly necessary that there should be a provision for fundamental rights in our Swaraj Constitution. It makes no difference whether the king or ruler is white or brown in complexion. It is necessary that the rights of the labourer and the common worker and also of those who are highly placed in social position or wealth should be given equal protection. In 1919, Mr. Monien said: "Capitalism is an evil in relation to Socialism. Capitalism is a blessing in relation to Medievalism, in relation to petty production". In so far as we are not strong enough to effect a direct transition from petty production to Socialism, Capitalism is to a certain extent inevitable. Eight years later in 1927 Adolp Joffy, Director-in-Chief of the Concessions Committee of the Soviet Government, stated the decision of foreign capital as follows: "We admit foreign capital because now we are strong enough and can regulate its goal in our Socialist economy. We can not and will not surrender to it the command of industry, but we will allow the vast capital a place in our industry. In certain branches of industry foreign capital to the extent of 10, 20 and even 40 percent, and in exceptional cases, even more is allowed." Such is the economic doctrine of Russia even under the Soviet Government. I do not therefore believe that any attempt will be made now in our Constitution to level down Capitalism altogether and introduce the nationalisation of land and other property. No revolutionary changes which might destroy the social fabric of the Indian people should, in my opinion, be brought at this stage. It will not be in the interest of the smooth working of any Constitution. It will not be within the province of a few constitution to say what laws should be enacted and what taxes should be levied. A Swaraj constitution must be a free constitution which gives the right to the representatives of the people to enact such laws as will be conducive to the health and prosperity of the people as a whole. By this I do not think that the rights and privileges of the monied classes should in any way be jeopardised. On the other hand every effort should be made to protect them in all possible ways. Let us strive to bring such a constitution into being by offering, if necessary, every sacrifice in our power.

# THE STUDENTS' CONFERENCES

## All India Students' Convention.

Every year along with the session of the Indian National Congress a conference of students was being held to bring together the students of the country into a common organisation. But the attempt had failed. Hence the Sind students were not in a mood to convene the conference. But after some consultation, Messrs Tirith G. Sabhani, H. P. Mirchandani, A. J. Mamtara, H. G. Butani, B. T. Shahani, H. R. Wadhvani, V. I. Jagliani and some other friends undertook to convene the conference on the condition that a real attempt will be made at the conference to form an All India Students' Federation. As the decision was taken only three weeks earlier than the session of the conference, not much response was expected. But the conference was fairly representative. Almost every province was represented. Mr. A. J. Mamtara was the chairman, and Mr. Tirith G. Sabhani was the general secretary.

The conference was held in the Khalikdina hall, Karachi on the 26th. March 1931 under the presidentship of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. About seven hundred delegates and members of the reception committee were present. The all India leaders like Messrs. J. M. Sen Gupta, S. C. Bose, Srimati Sarojini Naidu, Sm. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Syt. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Dr. Syed Mahmud and others were present. All of them delivered stirring speeches.

The following is the gist of the speeches of the general secretary, chairman and the president.

*Mr. Tirith G. Sabhani*, the general secretary, in his inaugural address deplored that in the last struggle students had not contributed their full quota. Of course there were individual students who became the whole time workers, but the student community as a whole was so to say apathetic. Proceeding further, the general secretary brought home to the minds of the students that they were the torch-bearers of to-morrow and the winning of the freedom for their country should be their chief concern. Further Mr. Sabhani laid stress on the formation of an All India Students' Federation and exhorted the students to form strong students' organisations in every province and when the next war comes, to come out in thousands to sacrifice their all in the struggle for the liberty of their sweet Motherland.

*Mr. A. J. Mamtara*, chairman, in his welcome address referred to the historical importance of Karachi and Sind and said that it would become "The Croyden of the east" soon. In giving a bird's-eye view of the students' movement in Sind he said: "We have in Sind every year a students' conference since 1917. We have students' samagams (associations) in almost every district town. The membership of the samagam is open to only those who accept the creed of swadeshi and the samagams have done fairly good work in spreading the gospel of swadeshism. We have a permanent swadeshi exhibition, a students' information bureau and a literary magazine in sindhi "Phulwari" by name. It is high time that we started an All India Students' Federation with branches spread all over India, and I hope this convention of All India Students will conclude its session with the realisation of this dream of many a student in India."

The chairman summarised the results of the last struggle in the following words :

"The genius of Mahatma Gandhi has wrought a miracle. The attitude of passive resignation to one's lot, the meek submission to tyranny, both social and political, the solemn pageants of suffering and sacrifice that the world witnessed enacted in India, when men and women, boys and girls, with pride in their port and fire of patriotism in their eye, courted batons and bullets and went smiling to jails and the meek peasants of Gujerat startled the world with their historic migration from their hearths and homes to the barren wilderness of homelessness, bear eloquent testimony to the new spirit that Gandhiji has infused, the new quickening of life that Gandhiji has caused, and the indomitable energy and fortitude that Gandhiji has brought into being. India to-day is not what she was twelve months back. She is

a transformed India,—an India bitterly conscious of its political subjection and economic exploitation and determined to be politically free and mistress in her home.

The chairman considered the present educational system as a hopelessly anti-dituvian and out of date as designed for manufacturing clerks and subordinate officers to help the British to govern this country. He suggested that vast network of organisations, with the sole aim of carrying the torch of knowledge through education to the very doors of the masses, should be forthwith started.

Concluding he said: 'Have we joined the army of these inebriated young visionaries? Or do we stand aside ridiculing and deriding every comrade of ours who steps in the formidable column of the forward marching forces of the youths of the world crying

"beware; beware;

His flashing eyes, his floating hair."

Amidst prolonged applause *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, the president rose to deliver his address. As he was ill he said he would speak very few words. In a brief Hindi speech he scolded the organisers for conducting the proceedings in English. He asked the students whether Karachi was in India or outside India.

In the course of the address, *Pandit Jawaharlal* said he was greatly perturbed by the recent happenings in the country. The execution of *Bhagat Singh* and his comrades was a reminder of their inability to protect the brave and patriotic young men. He had also heard in the afternoon of the tragic happenings at *Cawnpore*, culminating in a large number of deaths. It was reported that his very dear friend *Pandit Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi*, President of the Provincial Congress Committee, had been killed in the course of the rioting. Like the true brave Congressman he was, he must have rushed to the point of danger, and must have tried to pacify the people who were killing each other. If he had met his death in that manner, it was as a true Indian should meet it. "The tragedy of *Cawnpore* is the object lesson that violence used by us, though with the best of motives, is apt to recoil on us and lead to internecine conflict. The only people who profit by it are our opponents. We cannot settle any vital problem in the country to-day, much less the communal problem, by violence, nor could we settle it by temporary pacts or arrangements. Only by attacking the root of the disease could we eradicate it. Young men, especially, have to bear the brunt of the work for the solution of these problems. Young men must envisage a new order of things and eradicate the evils which make progress impossible. Young men must remember that "freedom" and "independence" were mere words till a new order is fashioned which ends inequalities, exploitation and religious bigotry."

*Pandit Jawaharlal* continued: "There is a great deal of discussion about truce to-day, but I should like the youth to remember that no living country can accept any settlement which is anything less than complete independence. Any settlement which barter away a part of freedom, must necessarily fail, and the struggle will have to be continued. Therefore let young men be quite clear about the ideal of complete freedom and social equality. The time for shouting of slogans has passed away, and young men must act, for action alone counts.

#### Resolutions

Following are some of the important resolutions that were passed:—

1—While expressing its confidence in *Mahatma Gandhi* and the Congress Working Committee for their inspiring conduct of civil disobedience movement, this conference expresses its disappointment at the *Gandhi Irwin* settlement and urges upon the Indian National Congress not to lower the flag of complete independence.

2—This conference is of opinion that no form of Government will be acceptable to the youths of the country unless it marks the end of all exploitation of the masses of the people and the reconstruction of the society on the basis of equality of man and man and woman and woman and nationalisation of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

3—This conference emphatically declares that all the antiquated social and religious customs like child marriage, enforced widow-hood, purdah system, untouchability, inequality of the sexes and such other reactionary customs which sap the vitality of the nation should be abolished; and calls upon the youths to rebel against them and give practical effect to these in their daily life.

4—This conference resolves that an All India Students' Federation, be formed and immediate steps taken to establissh students' organisations in almost all the

provinces. For this purpose a provisional working committee with the following members was appointed.

1. Syt. Y. J. Meherally (Chairman) from Bombay ; 2. Syt. Tirith G. Sabhani (General Secretary) from Sind ; 3. Syt. Menon (General Secretary) from Madras, 4. Miss Zutshi from Lahore ; 5. Syt. Rohit Mehta, Gujerat ; 6. Syt. Abinash Bhattacharya from Bengal ; 7. Syt. R. N. Mukherji from U. P., 8. Syt. Arunangsu De from Bengal ; 9. Syt. Dastur from Bombay.

## The U. P. Students' Conference

*Mr. C. R. Reddi* in his address to the U. P. Students' Conference, which opened at Allahabad on the 17th. January 1931, observed :

Friends,—It is the custom of Hindus to begin every function with the worship of Ganesha, who can remove all obstacles except those preventing his own marriage. Now the Ganeshas of these conferences who overcome the obstacles and organise them, are the Executive Committee. Let me then begin by saluting the Committee who have organised this conference and incidentally did me the honour to invite me to preside. Under ordinary circumstances I should have thankfully accepted the invitation but my poor health and the cold of Northern India have frightened me away from this long journey.

The misfortune is mine. I should have liked to be with you and refreshed my spirit in the clear water of youth and replenished my soul, wearied and cheerless, in the virile atmosphere of the United Provinces. Also it would have been my duty and privilege to have paid my homage at Ananda Bhavan, which next to Sabarmati is the most holy shrine of Indian Nationalism. I wonder why any address from any quarter is necessary to you who have the immortal Nehrus in your midst. They were my hosts last year and where are they to-day ? Their example is inspiration enough to every Indian who is not already dead to the nobler impulses of life and dictates of duty.

I feel also that a journey to North India cannot be an unmixed pleasure to me. Most of my political friends, women as well as men, are behind prison bars. No doubt they are happy, happy in the thought of being true to their conscience and country. But we, how can we be happy or contented at the contemplation of the great misery surrounding us, especially of wives, mothers and sisters heroically suffering imprisonment at what tragic cost of personal feeling and domestic sorrow imagination reels at picturing. India is bravely working out her Karma and may the end be near and auspicious.

But it is some consolation to me that my professorial friends are intact. There is the realm of thought—the starry heavens above and the moral law within, and no action without. They prepare the youth for the battle of life by precept, which the others do so only by example.

This address from Chittoor to Allahabad is a long-distance shot. I am not a very good marksman and if it goes wide of the target, you will please pardon my inability. Moreover an address to students is no easy task. For students are a very critical lot—critical of others. So I must reciprocate the virtue and give them a bit of my mind. And yet not being a dogmatist I can only present issues to be judged and acted upon by you and not lay down doctrines.

Avoid the habit of saying that all others are in the wrong, unless you are prepared to be in the right here and now. To decry others for their shortcomings is a good thing, to set the right example is a trifle better if less convenient. Idle criticism corrodes the soul that makes it. Action is the only salvation of life.

It is usual to preach discipline to students. Others need it no less. The purpose of discipline is to increase our efficiency as individuals and society and not to produce stultification. A discipline which infringes this object is only terrorism in another form. When Gokhale and Lajpat Rai visited England in 1905 on behalf of the Congress to plead the cause of the country, I, who was then an under-graduate in Cambridge, was requested by them and Sir William Wedderburn to help them on the platform which I did. As I was a Government of India

scholar, objection was taken by Sir Curzon Wyllie, a very good friend of mine, to my participation in politics. I argued that a scholarship was not a salary, that it was given to help me to develop my own personality, and that a scholar was not a salaried civil servant. The matter was not pursued any further but I believe the scholarship rules were changed thereafter.

Make no mistake about it. Book education is not the panacea for all the ills that our flesh is heir to. You can have ideas without character and not infrequently you can have character without clearly defined ideas. There are some who can define courage without being courageous and there are also people who are innately courageous without being able to write a learned dissertation on courage. Similarly with patriotism. Every patriot is not a political philosopher and every philosopher is not a patriot—necessarily I mean.

#### SPIRIT GREATER THAN INTELLECT

Spirit is of infinitely greater consequence than intellect. I can't define it, not being sufficiently intellectual. We can see it in its operation. The English were a most spirited and determined race of patriots long before the Compulsory Elementary Education Act of 1870. It is a life force springing from unfathomable depths and spreading more by example and imitation than precept and dry doctrine. Are the Bardoli peasants more spirited than you? I don't know. You must draw the comparison, or is it the contrast, yourselves.

Is there then any ground, other than thoughtless, fruitless vanity, for graduates and Varsity men to consider themselves as such superior to their neighbours? Intellectual vanity is less excusable than the vanity of physical beauty. The latter is a perceptible good; the former, more often than not, an insidious evil. Consider the response made to the vital forces now operating in the country by the different categories of people. If gradations of superiority and inferiority are to be based on this, what would be the position of most of us? I would shudder to look at myself in the mirror after your critical hands have done my grading or rather degrading.

The question whether students should take part in politics is a burning question, burning like foreign cloth and every term of this question has to be investigated.

The theory of the S. S. L. C. is that it is a preparation for life as well as the Varsity. Therefore all post-S. S. L. C. men could without doing violence to our educational presumption take part in politics, which is a part of life. Nobody objects to the students going out into life taking such part. The problem is thus narrowed down to the case of students in the Varsities. Ought students while remaining students to take part in politics? That is the question.

Is not "Not-taking part in politics" a species of politics? Solon in his wisdom decreed punishment for people who did not take one side or the other in a crisis, for he held that remaining neutral was a dereliction of citizen duty. It is a weighty observation of George Elliot that only two subjects can engage the whole personality of man, viz., Theology which deals with the relation of the individual soul to the unseen powers above, and Politics which deals with the relations of man to man and to society in general. They are both an atmosphere, all-enveloping which we cannot avoid without spiritual or moral suffocation. Education is undoubtedly concerned with the development of the individual; but is there such a thing as an individual apart from society? Man reaches himself soonest through society and indeed can be reached only thus. Aristotle defined man as political animal. Are not students men? Both Plato and Aristotle wrote their monumental treatises on Education as chapters of their politics, giving it its due place of subordination. If it is said that students should confine themselves to studies, should not the same principle of exclusive concentration be applied to lawyers, merchants and other varieties? Then should husbandmen do nothing but keep on husbanding? Who then are left to do the work of the country? Is it suggested that a race of professional politicians should be created? They are coming into existence even without anybody's suggestion and God save us and the country from them.

#### CITIZENSHIP—A COMMON DUTY

Citizenship is the common duty of all because it involves the common destiny of all. Every large question discharges itself sooner or later into politics. Industry, commerce, taxation, etc., are in no small measure the stuff of politics. Educational systems, the careers open to our graduates, general and technical, medical degrees and registration, autonomy of Universities—are these in no way affected or conditioned by politics? Lord Burnham says that ours is clerkship education. Has politics nothing to do with the type thus installed?

Then they say that students could take part in politics but it must not be an active part. It should only be a contemplative part. Be you philosophers for your long years and then you can be men if possible. You may study politics to your heart's content or rather head's repletion. You may think politics; so long as you don't act, nobody will object to thinking as you please. I must say this amount of toleration has always persisted in this otherwise horrible world and we must be thankful that patriotism has not been declared an illegal emotion.

But let me ask. Education, it is conceded, must develop character. Is it possible to have character without conduct? Is conduct to be postponed till after education is completed? And when is education brought to a dead stop? I should think at death only if we are a live people. Is our thought in no way conditioned by our conduct, the trials and experiences we undergo? How are wisdom and correct judgment possible without action and re-action between self and environment? Abstract yourself from life for four years—refuse to respond to the sights and calls around you for four years. What would be your capacity for right spirit and conduct after such a regime of self-suppression? If the better impulses and ideas are not allowed to flow into action of some sort, won't you become a sink of hypocrisy? Even a balanced mind can't ensure from this system of training.

What then should be the form of activity? Nobody rules out study and thought; and in this field addresses by experienced administrators on their particular departments and by politicians of different schools of thought, Moderates, Extremists, Loyalists, Nationalists, Communalists, etc. will be of special value. They are a part of the realistic study of politics which will act as a corrective of vague theories and impossible doctrines. I must say that the average Indian student lacks grasp of realities, experience and balanced judgment. We must therefore be put into touch with men at affairs and affairs as well.

On the practical side the Universities themselves should organise social and rural reconstruction work. Social work is a recognised course in some of the Universities in England. Oxford and Cambridge maintain missions in the East End of London. Bristol has a two year social Testamur course—theoretical and practical. Monastic abstraction books tend to produce extreme mentalities—deadening hypocrisy or an explosive temperament.

Rural work, I understand, has been organised in one or two universities in India. You have a long vacation of three months. If you could be organised in batches of 3 or 4 and sent out to the villages nearest to your native homes to hold evening classes for a month or fortnight at each centre on cultural subjects like General History of Modern Nations, Social Problems, Civics, Indian History and Administration etc. and welfare subjects like Hygiene, you will have done a good deal to awaken the masses to some knowledge of the world as it is to-day and also gained valuable experience of the real conditions in our own country—our problems and the extent to which remedies on a voluntary basis are possible. You will have trained yourselves in habits of organised work. In the big cities, you can by turns run workmen's clubs—such as have been recently opened in Bombay and build up contracts with factories and labour organisations. Temperance work calls for vigorous propaganda. I have been advocating this kind of work since 1925. But while many applaud, few have taken up. Reading and arm chair thinking are so much easier than conduct. Just think or rather imagine 4000 college students attacking roughly 1,000 villagers or centres accessible to 2 or 3 villages for a month each year and for four years—what an army of enlightenment you would become. And how illumined you would be yourselves.

#### EXAMPLE OF CHINESE STUDENTS

The illustrious Professor Alfred Marshall—one of the truest English friends of India—once remarked to me that he was puzzled and pained by the mentality exhibited by Indian students in Cambridge. Whereas the Chinese and Japanese boys were habitually eager to go and work for the uplift of their countries, Indian students were only after official careers and often went to him for recommendations. He said it in pity and no malice. The China of to-day with its distinct prospect of nationhood, is to a large extent the work of Chinese students, who went out enthusiastically into the villages and carried on propaganda.

The nation is the centre round which the life of the advanced races resolves. Is it so sufficiently amongst us?

The activities I have hinted at above enjoy two merits. Firstly, they don't interfere with your studies. If anything, this change of occupation during vacations will act as a tonic on you. Secondly, you don't incur the risk of disfavour with Govern-



ment or the university authorities. In fact universities should organise this work, otherwise it can't be done efficiently or on a large enough scale.

Students should take part in elections. It is to be hoped that they will introduce an element of idealism into our contests. In America the university students are a big factor in deciding the fate of candidates. As Secretary of the Cambridge University Liberal Club, I organised over a hundred meetings in the General Elections of 1905.

I presume that few will question the right and propriety of students taking active part in the civil life and politics in the above and similar ways. But sometimes a more heroic call is made on students not consistent with their personal safety or pursuit of studies. They are asked to quit colleges and undertake picketing of liquor shops, enforce boycott of British goods and in other ways play their part of energetic missionaries in the national upheaval. During the non-co-operation movement of 1921 quite a number of students suspended their studies and at the present time too colleges have been in some places picketed with success.

This policy is vigorously denounced by Government, the University authorities and a number of Indian leaders, who regard it as sacrilege to ask students to give up their studies.

I shall try to present the pros and cons of this interesting controversy, because in some respects it affords a clear index of the divergent minds in the country and their code of values.

#### ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES AND THE GREAT WAR

It is admitted that during the Great War Universities in England and Europe was emptied of their students in order to get recruits for the fighting forces. The sanctity of books was subordinated to the life of the nation. The Universities of the West did not sit idle through the civil wars either. They would not be kept off the field of battle. Has this been regarded as a sin and slur on their fair name? Did it retard the intellectual progress of Europe or did it act as a spur for discovery and invention and even the progress of future and fine arts? The question then is: 'Is the crisis through which India is now passing such a big crisis as to justify students forsaking their classes and plunging into the movement? It is for each one amongst you to answer with hand on heart. If you think it is not a big enough crisis, take the world into your confidence and say in what particulars it should be improved in order to deserve your patronage.

Will it argue a bad or weak moral character if you do non-co-operate? Is there anything immoral in the methods or aims of the national movement? Who is the nobler of the two—the student who is blind and deaf to the sights and cries around him or he who, impulsively if you like, rushes to show sympathy with his suffering brothers? Which is the better principle of action, blood is thicker than water or examinations are thicker than blood?

Consider whether the growth into strong sincere manhood will be promoted by years of cold callous calculating indifference to the call of the country—the most penetrating so far heard in India? But, it is asked, could we disobey our teachers? What! are Gandhi and Motilal Nehru not teachers, teachers of life which is a bit better than books? Are they less interested in the welfare and progress of young India than professors and lecturers, less wise, less patriotic? Is Association with them moral depravity qualifying you for a long sojourn in Borstal settlements, while obedience to Chancellors is sanity and saintliness?

But it may be objected we honestly differ from this movement and its mandates and consider them wrong. Certainly this alters the case. If you honestly think it is all wrong resist it to the best of your ability and opportunity. Don't act except under irresistible conviction.

If, on the other hand, you hold it to be a noble endeavour and admire the men and women bravely bearing the burden of the fight and undergoing suffering unflinchingly, then it were cowardice to remain without demonstrating your sympathy and support by some action however mild or moderate but unmistakable.

I would add two cautions. You are not self-supporting. Your idealism rests on parental finance. You must therefore act with the consent of your parents, unless you are convinced that it is your duty to cut adrift if need be. Many a young English lad has taken to the sea in a spirit of adventure. If young men here similarly take to a life of adventure it is a sign of racial vitality which nobody need mourn.

## THE MAHATMA'S TEACHINGS

Secondly, if any organisation calls you out, it should find you work and in some cases maintenance during your employment in national work. Will not such a life make real men of you, alert, strong, self-reliant and able to look danger in the face without wincing? Talk of character building—will not that build your character better than the class room and notes taking? Who has built the character of our women and made them the sublime heroines that so many of them are to-day? Mahatma Gandhi or the Universities? And within what time too? The Mahatma has achieved more in one year than all the Universities in India put together in all their lifetime from their foundation to this hour. The glorious Desh Sevikas did not calculate. So they have secured immortality for themselves and may secure salvation for the motherland. You calculate—don't you? And where are you? The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, a demon of Moderatism, declared not long ago in England that he was very proud of the part played by the women of our country. Which women, and what part? And who was their inspiration and guide?

Let us estimate the material loss accruing from suspending studies. What is the loss in terms of livelihood? You know that unemployment will be one of the pleasures of your post-graduate life. In Madras some 200 B.A.'s apply for a single vacancy of Rs. 50 or 60. The hope of one meagre bone collects a congregation of 200 piteous souls wagging their tails—if souls have tails. So what is the livelihood value of your education which you have to forego? I mean in the case of ordinary graduates.

Now what is the cultural loss to be apprehended? Our University education has a high cultural value though it is inferior in this respect to European Universities. But can it be said that fellowship in a noble struggle and the experience it brings have no bearing on richness of life and mind? A large number of young men in England go straight from school to the Military and Naval Academics—men of high serial rank and influential connections. Any one who knows a British officer knows that he is in every sense of the term a gentleman and man of culture. Many of the best British administrators in India have hailed from military ranks. In sympathy, generosity, knowledge of human nature, wide outlook and straight sincere dealing, soldiers are not behind-hand civilians. Loss of book-love may be compensated for by the love supplied by the book of life.

And as regards character, few people would rank the educational factor above the larger factor of social, political and business life.

I take it that here as elsewhere there will be special cases. Should a brilliant researcher opening up new fields of knowledge, or adding, be it on modest measure, to our store of knowledge, exchange the laboratory or library for picketing a liquor shop? Would it result in the best possible distribution of our national energies? You may be a Raman in the making and Raman (and shall I add, while here, Saha?) is a builder of India though not in the sense in which the Gandhis, Nehrus, Ansaries and Azads are. He increases the amount of international respect felt for India. Just as self-respect is a function of the respect felt by others for you, similarly national self-respect is in the same measure a result of international respect. Moral factors are of the essence of nationalism and he who contributes them, whether poet, philosopher or scientist, is in every truth a nation-builder, the maker of our racial personality. Highly specialised talent would do well to remain and work in its own sphere.

So if you are all Ramans and Sahas in various stages of development, please don't give up your studies. I beseech you but stick to your desks for my sake and the sake of the country. In fact you should not have attended this Conference.

I hope that in discussing this subject—a difficult and delicate one—I have succeeded in analysing it into its significant factors, reducing it to its proper proportions and placing it in its due perspective in the scheme of life for which youth must prepare itself.

## THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The most robust amongst us can't escape fits of pessimism as we survey the situation and this hinders effort. Is the national movement a deep-seated, permanent and growing reality or is it only a momentary flash and temporary hysteria? Can we persevere? Or will we succumb to exhaustion? If it is going to succeed, won't it succeed without help? If it is going to fail, won't it fail even if we help? Then

why not look on unconcernedly and attend to our private business or snap up the places that Congressmen vacate? It is a question of faith and self-confidence. The bestial element in us operates with greater persistency than the divine. Do we therefore want to become naked brutes? The lightning flash lasts but a moment, while the castor oil lamp blinks away for hours. Which do we prefer? Truth is less widespread than falsehood. Is falsehood the reality and truth a mirage? If success is guaranteed, you will say where is the need for effort? After all, have not things been better to-day than a few years ago and may they not be improved further? Some years ago nothing was stirring in India except the mosquito. To-day the masses even are astir. 1930 has revealed the glory that India is at her best. It is for us to capture the lightning and convert it into steady abiding illumination.

The other obstacle to moral conduct is what Dr. Gore, the eminent English Divine, called the sight of solid, sordid world comfortably thriving on our sacrifice. Gandhi, Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad and Nehrus go to jail; the others toiled not to go to the Round Table Conference. The soldiers risk their lives, the stay-at-homes become Ministers and Executive Councillors. The lion sheds its blood in opening a way in the jungle, the jackal follows at a safe distance and laps up that blood with evident satisfaction and prides itself on its prudence. The horses pull the chariot, the fly on the wheel congratulates itself on the dust raised and imagines that it controls the direction. These discrepancies are inevitable in the uneven career of progress. And if there are no soldiers willing to die and sacrifice themselves so that the others and future generations may prosper, the race will become decadent and no one will be saved. The sight of the unworthy prospering is but an added element in the sacrifice undertaken and must not be allowed to damp our moral ardour.

Presiding at the All-India Students' Conference in Belgaum during the Congress sessions, I said India was not yet a nation. Though we are nearer to nationhood now than five years ago, still we have not reached the culmination of our ambition. There are the communal squabbles not free from the reproach even of separatism as witnessed by Sir Mahomed Iqbal's speech. The united front presented to the Simon Commission broke up at the sight of the Round Table and those who declared that only Congress can deliver the goods delivered themselves as the only goods at their disposal. The attraction of jobs has not visibly abated. Honour, the positive incentive for noble action, and shame, the negative feeling that makes us refrain from the ignoble are not operating to the extent requisite. Grant all this and worse, and yet what is to be done? Shall we give up in despair? Or shall we in meekness of spirit and candour acknowledge the facts and work with greater vigour though with diminishing hope to repair the damages and consolidate our people? Suppose we dismiss nationalism as impossible. How shall we save our character from lapsing into gross callous and selfishness and cynicism? What are the possible regulative ideals of conduct? Religion, humanity, Abstract Ethics and Nationalism—which of these is a force active, effective and in widest commonality spread? Look at the world to-day and answer. We want a full blooded, worm blooded category for regulating our lives. So Nationalism, as I conceive it, is not merely a secular concern. It is a moral factor. If it is not a fact with us, it must be a hypothesis and we must act as though it was a fact. Robespierre declared that if God did not exist, he must be invented. If Nationalism does not exist, it must be invented; otherwise one of the most effective agents of morality will be gone and we will rapidly slide down the slope of racial degeneration.

I have no practical programme to advance for you. You are such good thinkers and critics that you must be able to give one for India even if you don't adopt it for yourselves. Inter-communal consolidations should be promoted. The secular interests of India are the same for all communities and so are the moral. A nation is not the arithmetical sum of its component parts. It is an organic whole endowed with a general will. In a bicameral federal legislature the lower house should represent the general will of the country. The upper house should be so composed as not to give a majority to any one community over the combined strength of the rest and the same principle might be applied to the provinces. Swadeshi should be the universal economic creed of India. And Hindus must set their own tattered house in order by eliminating caste and untouchability. Under a democratic constitution many of these objectives will be promoted if we work in the spirit of service and not of selfish plunder and jobbery. A democratic constitution is a tremendous responsibility and not a comfortable possession and calls for a steady continuous subordination of selfish and sectional interests for the good of the whole.

## DOMINION STATUS AND INDEPENDENCE

One word on political faith—unpopular though it may sound—and I have done. I am a believer in the British Empire, which is a Commonwealth of Nations except in relation to India. If India could attain the position of a sister Commonwealth that would be far better than independence. Grant that the Empire as now functioning has been an evil to us. Can it not become a good? Has it not become a good in respect of Canada and other dominions? There is a pregnant saying in the *Mahabharat* which strikes the keynote. "Look not too closely into the origin of Gods rivers and heroes." The origins are perhaps small and mean. But it is their present and future that determine the estimation in which they are to be held. Vast historical unities that bring together different races, creeds and cultures and promote fecund intercourse, should not be broken up. If we are strong for independence, we are *a fortiori* strong enough for Dominion Status which combines the advantages of separation and combination. From the point of view of universal humanity, our cry for Independence is another form of communalism. With India as a Dominion, the Empire will become an epoch-making stage in the federation of the world. If Sir Mahomed Iqbal's neighbouring Islamic nations desire to leaven this mass with their great culture, let them come into this federation and enlarge its scope, variety and richness by their sublime contributions. We honour and respect the glorious Islamic culture, none more so than myself, who have earned, however undeservedly, the reputation of having been the champion of Mysore Moslems and Malabar Moplas. But we must not leave the greater for the smaller or break up the known for the uncertain advantages of the unknown. Similarly in regard to the idea of a Pan-Asiatic Federation. Expansion of the existing British Federation, that I hope will be brought into existence, is a more feasible prospect than destruction and reconstruction in untried directions. Nor need Dominion Status call forth less energy on our part than Independence. To be a moderate in ideal is not the same thing as being moderate in conscience, courage, or capacity for sacrifice. I am glad that the great Mahatma of India and the world has toned down Independence. Form is often more perplexing and vexatious than substance. We might reasonably ignore the form.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish this conference every success and hope it will result in some workable programme of action adopted and pursued with your united energy and enthusiasm.

## All Bengal Students' Conference

In an atmosphere big with grave issues of supreme national importance the third session of the All-Bengal Students' Conference was held in Calcutta, on the 6th. March 1931, under the presidency of Sm. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya. The Conference hall was literary packed to suffocation.

In the course of his inaugural address Mr. C. R. Reddy, touching on current topics, said: There are signs of peace. Whether they will develop into permanent peace or not, I cannot say. But one thing is certain. The old Round Table Constitution cannot satisfy the legitimate needs of our country. Unless the new Round Table Conference is going to give us a square deal, we cannot rest content. Let us not imagine that the call for suffering and sacrifice has already been stopped. All the great sacrifices we have made already may have become the introduction to a still greater epic that is yet to come."

"Our Government," he said, "are giving us two kinds of honours: the New Year's Honours and the New Era's Honours. The New Year's Honours consist of Rai Bahadur, Dewan Bahadur and other grades of Bahadurships to which we want to put an end to as soon as possible and the New Era's Honours consist of lathi blows, jails and other modes of repression."

Mr. Reddy stated that the students of Bengal had already proved themselves to be missionaries in the cause of the Motherland. He pointed out that three thousand members of the All-Bengal Students' Association had gone to jail.

He congratulated the All-Bengal Students' Association on the splendid organisa-

tion they have installed in Bengal and expressed great hope for the future of India if the students in other provinces organised themselves on the same lines and developed the same capacity for sacrifice and suffering. "Vigilance" he said, "should be our motto. Try to organise the rural education scheme. Try to give the benefit of knowledge, derived from schools and University, to the rural folk."

In the course of her *presidential address*, Mrs. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya said :—

I should like to begin by referring to that subject which is encircled by the flaming sign of red, namely, politics. I hope that the controversy which has raged round it is a thing of the past. It was Curzon who said that politics is merely contemporary history and education itself demands that students should take an intelligent interest in it. But in India where politics is a matter of life and death it is utter stupidity to ask students to merely maintain a detached academic interest in this burning topic. To ask students to fold their hands, shut their eyes and close their ears while vast devastation around them goes on is like preaching moderation to the rescuers when a house is on fire. What is this knowledge which you seek in cold isolation when humanity around is crying out for Justice? Whom should it benefit if the atmosphere were to impose upon you dumbness, blindness and deafness?

"You can but at the end of your career quote the great artist Leonerdo Devincie :—"While I thought I was learning to live I was but learning how to die?" Politics in the wide sense is the totality of all guiding principles, methods, systems which determine collective activities in all dominions of life. You might say that it is rather superfluous to refer to this topic at this stage when the tangled web seems to be unwinding itself and the sky is full of the colour of hope and India is confident that the end is in sight. But I must frankly confess I am not so sure that the achievement of what I would call freedom is in sight.

Freedom is a condition where there is practical equality of opportunity resulting in two issues. Every man will have a fair chance to make himself all that in him lies, to reach the highest point to which his capacities can carry him, to get for himself and his wife all that he has earned by the sweat of his labour. The State will get the highest service from each man. Then alone can we say with any truth we have attained the substance of Independence that we have been striving for. And for this purpose the students will have to devote their full time and attention. It is at this University of humanity that you will have to offer your life and get your decree of freedom. There is no greater knowledge than that of self respect. Slavery is ignorance and you are but deceiving yourselves if you think you are building up your future and that of the country by being content to shut yourself up in these tomb-like colleges where instruments of exploitation of the weak are hammered out and the laboratories produce but the horrors of war.

No man ever remains free who acquiesces in what he knows to be a wrong. Those are always most true citizens who insist upon bringing back our rulers to a realisation of the conditions on which their rule is held. It is your duty to be therefore the voice of the millions who are voiceless and of them that are weak or oppressed, of those disinherited of the beauty of life and for whom there is no deliverance, to whom the world will still remain a prison inspite of the much eulogised substance of independence. Unless there is a definite and radical reconstitution of society as it stands at present, freedom will be only a dream.

A mere transference of power from one group to another will leave the average toiler just where he was.

Patch-work reforms are like having a hydra. For freedom to be a practical reality we must have before us a practical ideal. All seekers after freedom have ever given a new ideal to the world. Christ and Buddha overleaped all that the seers and the wisemen had laid down. No young man who is out for great achievement can ever be satisfied, no matter in what department of life, unless he has created an entirely new ideal. I should like to quote a profound line from one of the songs of your sweet Singer Rabindra Nath : "True end is not in the reaching of the limit but in a completion which is limitless." Thus the task which is before our students to-day is the creation of a new ideology with a firm rationalistic basis. It means the destruction of many worn out traditions that have sunk into our life. It means the carrying on of a campaign against all social and economic oppression. Certain ideas have been handed on to us on which we have to turn a very critical eye and search beneath the surface and see how far they fit in with our new scheme.

Take the great idea of the boycott foreign of goods. It is a powerful instrument no

doubt to wield against an imperial power and we should certainly make it as effective as possible. But, at the same time, one cannot help noting with sad regret and pain that while we have been jubilant over the idea of striking a blow at Britain's industrial prosperity and increasing our own, we have entirely left out of account the main factors which have been instrumental in achieving this brilliant victory, namely, the industrial workers. While the industrialists have been making huge profits, the condition of the workers is just where it was. I cannot speak for all the noted industrial centres but that is how it has been in Bombay and I should not be surprised if it applied to other places as well. This is one of the many dangers that lurk in every corner and trap us in their coil.

Turning to the peasantry, we are confronted with similar difficulties. Our attention is so absorbed in condemning a taxation that we feel it very oppressive but little do we bother about the merciless robbing of the peasants by the landlords whose only claim to their wealth is their idleness.

We talk glibly of 60 millions who cannot get one square meal a day and how the average income is but 2 annas. Even the peasant proprietors are in a miserable state. On an average, he has only 2 acres of land whereas in England the distribution is 20 acres per head and in South Africa 83 acres. And when we realise that there are 7 lacs of villages, the struggle of these people for their daily bread seems to be enormous. According to some figures, nearly 70 millions of people out of the total that are trying to eke out a living on the land in their possession, are in excess which means that this extra population ought to be absorbed elsewhere. For this purpose even at a highly industrialised condition it is doubtful whether India can solve the problem of offering a decent living to every one of them unless there is a redistribution on a more humane and equitable basis. When the new State of Czechoslovakia was formed, it had to face a similar difficulty and boldly handled the problem by resorting to redistribution though perhaps not on so radical a basis as it should have. Still this considerably eased the situation. You might think these questions do not confront us just now, that they are a long way off and once we have got rid of foreign rule, we shall be able to adjust things according to our own way. This is a pure illusion. It is to-day that we are confronting the absolute necessity of turning our attention to such adjustments. The consciousness of their own rights is slowly gripping the peasants and the workers and when we appealed to them a year ago to fight against a foreign foe, we promised them their own rights and liberty in the new era. Their sacrifice has been by far the greatest, the most magnificent, and certainly extremely effective.

Freedom can only be measured by the amount of benefit they will derive from the new State which we now hope to form in the near future. We have so far been able to carry the rich commercial bodies and the landlords with us but even if we do not succeed in doing so in future, we shall have to move forward on our own lines in order to translate this new freedom into practical terms. I had visited some of the new countries that were formed after the disruption of the old Austria-Hungary Empire, and from the little study I made of their economic and cultural condition, I felt that the result had been far from satisfactory. No doubt, the conditions have improved considerably as a result of their getting rid of foreign rule but one cannot say that they have attained real freedom. Power is the sole monopoly of the few and exploitation of the many by these few still exists.

In a country like France which once gave the world a lead by its struggle for freedom, in such a country the very mention of the word liberty seems such a mockery to-day when one sees the miserable condition of the workers and the peasants. Much of what seems freedom is often only a variety of bondage. Let us not repeat these hypocrisis in India. Let us not make vain promises to people as the allies did during the war, promises which were not meant to be put into action. I want particularly to impress this upon you, students, because you are in a position to study this problem in its many aspects, and see how these principles can be applied in practice. This is the true constructive work that has before us. It consists in first organising into a strong, powerful central body the workers and the peasants so that the power of the new Government may radiate from their co-operation. This organising work is what I feel lies before you and has to be immediately taken up. This shall be your University where you will gain immortal knowledge and earn the eternal gratitude of the generations to come. By reconstituting life on these human possibilities which have all the essentials of union and fullest co-operation among all classes of people, we can solve far more easily our communal and caste differences than any other method.

We can fight against these cankers with ruthlessness if we have a definite organised rebellion that we can carry on against all social oppression. There is often a tendency to side-track the issue and go off into minor channels where these social difficulties are concerned. Take, for instance, the depressed classes who are now agitating for temple-entry in certain places. This question is merely one of the many aspects of the whole social system which is based on tyranny and exploitation and it is against this system itself that we have to fight. These differences and distinctions between man and man which have religious backing up behind it, have led, as we know, to so much demoralisation. Temples have become corrupt and dirty and are now in the hands of those who in the name of religion terrify people and kill their reasoning faculty.

A large amount of wealth is sunk in these temples with no benefit to any one, while people starve at these very temple-doors. It is impossible to enumerate all the horrors which our social system upholds and that is why I say that it is necessary to fight against the system itself, destroy all religious exploitation and the tyranny of priest-craft, for it is the system that is at the root of all our communal troubles and it is this which has created religious fanaticism and tyranny leading ultimately to communal squabble and hence national disunion.

In the field of culture the signs of decay are prominent too, the cultural conquest of India has been one of the saddest features of our present day. Beauty is the soul of freedom for beauty is but the expansion of consciousness. The very root of our existence has gone dry—how can then the leaves be fed or how can the flowers come forth and yield fruits.

Cheap commercial commodities have usurped the old artistic object of every-day use. Even the children in the villages are to-day feeding their imagination on the Dunlop Tyre advertisements and match labels with which they cover their walls, and it is not to be wondered at when we realise how poor we have grown in the creative field and how little we have done to fight against the onslaught of hybrids which is the natural result when two cultures clash when they meet not as comrades but as the conquered and the conquerer. The desire for beauty and colour is inherent to every one and it must seek its fulfilment in some form however crude and drab it may be.

The artistic starvation of millions of people is too pathetic for word and it is tragic when we realise on what poor stuff the growing minds are feeding themselves. There is no doubt that our educational system is greatly responsible for this tragedy.

In conclusion, I wish to answer one argument that is always put forward against students actively, joining any movement as full-time workers and this is the fact that they are economically dependent to their parents and if they do forget this help they are ultimately uncared for and at the mercy of chance. I admit that this has been the case in the past but let us remember that it has been so for the simple reason that movements in the past have had only a very narrow ideal and ended by leaving power and opportunities of life still in the hands of a few. But when a mass movement is organised for capturing power for the masses, it can lead only to a condition where not only the average student but the average man in the street will have come into his own. I do not hold this out as a dreamy promise of a rosy and golden hue. But if each student would work it out for himself in terms of elementary economics, he would discover that I am making a very sane and matter of fact statement. It is a small and temporary sacrifice that is asked of you. Students have vision and see far ahead and therefore they cannot fail to realise whether it is not beneficial to all humanity in the long run if you undergo some sacrifice for a small period of time that millions of people might live to see joy in life instead of dragging on an existence that is nothing but an agony from day to day. Suffering and sacrifice are two magic coins that freedom demands from every one of us and, therefore, I will ask each student to remember the significance by quoting the following two lines that my husband sang to me the other day when I saw him in prison—"I am the flame that comes to heart out of long centuries of pain.

#### Resolutions

The Conference met again on the next day, the 7th. March, and sounded a discordant note on the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement.

The Conference resolved that after a thorough perusal of the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, the Conference had come to the definite conclusion that the terms

in no way came up to the expectation of the youths of Bengal and no settlement was acceptable to them unless all political prisoners irrespective of policy or creed were immediately released.

The Conference viewed with disapproval that the terms did not contain a specific reference to the release of 500 detenus under the Bengal and Burma Ordinances and others convicted in different conspiracy trials and those whose fates were hanging in the balance to be decided by the cases pending throughout India, and lastly the returning of the exiles.

Another resolution demanded the commutation of death sentences of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev of the Punjab and Dinesh Gupta, Kalipada Chakravarti and Ramhari Biswas of Bengal, in order to bring about a calm atmosphere in the country.

Next day, the *8th. March*, the Conference decided to request students all over Bengal to lend full support to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress in their efforts to attain Purna Swaraj for the country and to ask them to secure the release of all detenus and political prisoners and commutation of the sentences of those who had been awarded the extreme penalty of law in the Punjab and Bengal.

## The Kerala Students' Conference

The Kerala Students' Conference was held at Badagara on the *3rd May 1931* under the presidency of *Mr. K. F. Nariman*. The following are extracts from the presidential speech.

Let me now turn from the pleasant and light talk of compliments to more serious and responsible topics of business for which we have assembled to-day. Shortly before my departure from Bombay, the South Indian residents of my city honoured me with a send-off function; many Keralites at present in Bombay drew my attention to various local problems and provincial questions and appealed to me to get them tackled during my short stay here; some referred to the oppressive land-tenure system and the consequent misery and distress of the peasantry, others to the re-organisation of village work, some asked me to deal with the question of Moplas and others appealed to try and get rid of some existing evil social customs. In my reply I had to make clear to them not to entertain any such high expectations of me as otherwise you might be disappointed and even regret your choice. I am neither a magician nor a Mahatma to achieve such wonderful achievements in a short flying visit of less than a week. As Mrs. Naidu from the chair very correctly put it in that meeting, local problems and local questions must be left to the local leaders and local organisations to be dealt with and tackled; outside leader should not trespass upon and encroach on this, both duty and privilege of local workers. These conditions are common in one form or another to all provinces and we have decided not to have any patch-work reforms here and there, but to sweep off the whole rotten and satanic system that is the root cause and at the bottom of all our evils: hence though not presuming to interfere, I will humbly venture to advise not to waste any more time or labour on these comparatively small issues, but to concentrate all our energies and capacity on the one ultimate goal of Purna Swaraj. With that one great achievement, all these petty evils and miseries will disappear like a mighty wave sweeping away in the deep sea with one flow all the refuge and dirt. But I am afraid I am once again drifting from the original main issue. To-day, presiding over this assembly of youths, my duty is to humbly place before you the mission of the youth, not only in the districts and provinces but in the whole country; that mission is not confined to petty local issues or to redress local grievances here and there. That mission of youth is higher, nobler, more glorious, more divine and universal; it covers all the spheres of life, it includes social, political, communal, cultural and in short all problems, effecting human life and human action, human happiness and in one word it is the redemption of humanity all round. It has to break through all barriers, override all old conventions, condemn both local orthodoxy and foreign bureaucracy and strip the society of all the enervating and degenerating customs and habits. I know the task seems to be Herculean and almost



impossible to achieve but do not despair and be not down-hearted. Howsoever difficult the task, howsoever thorny the path, with faith in yourself, with courage in both hands, with organisation and concerted action, all obstacles that may at first appear insurmountable, can be overcome and the thorny path will be strewn with roses. The word impossible is only to be found in the dictionary of fools. It certainly does not exist in the dictionary of youths. In order to make this apparently Herculean task easier and bring it within the limited scope of human capacity, let us proceed step by step and tackle one problem after another.

Let me deal first with the problem which appears to be most pressing and needing our immediate attention. So far as the country is concerned, that one pressing, all absorbing and most important problem is the attainment of complete political emancipation of the country. A satisfactory solution of that question will *ipso facto* smoothen our path and clear our way for the eradication and removal of many other evils. Therefore, whilst not completely neglecting other issues, my appeal to the youth of the Province and the youth of the country is to concentrate all your energy, spend all your power and strength, in short sacrifice all other issues for the present and devote yourself wholly and solely to the one fundamental, vital all-absorbing issue, viz., the attainment of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence for the ancient and glorious land; of what avail your degrees and your gilded robes and of what value your medals and scholarships so long as the chain of slavery and of foreign bondage disgraces your whole existence, stunts your intellect, dwarfs both your body and your soul, makes you impotent dummies in your own country, neither respected at home nor honoured abroad; rather be an illiterate and ignorant freeman than an intellectual cultured degreed slave; the higher the education the greater the disgrace and stigma of slavery. Swami Vivekananda once in disgust advised all the students to throw off all their books, robes, sanads, all paraphernalia of University life, into the nearest sea and turn back with greater leisure and better inclination to work for the emancipation of the country.

#### NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

My young friends, I am not exaggerating, I am not flattering. I am not paying empty compliments when I say that youth is both the national asset and hope of the country. The elders might ponder and deliberate, might frame schemes and pass resolutions, might draw up elaborate and militant programmes, and issue appeals, all that merely remain on the paper and burden the records of Congress offices, unless the youths of the country come forward and respond to that call and appeal and execute the words into action, convert paper schemes into active help and working programme. Without your active help and co-operation the whole structure would fall and no movement can succeed. Study the modern or ancient political history of any country. Ireland, Russia, China, Turkey, or any other country, big or small, in West or East, the war of independence has been fought and won with the army of enthusiastic, patriotic, self-sacrificing youths and I have not the least doubt in my mind that similar victory will be won for the country also by the same young and rising generation of our Motherland. My hope and prophecy is based on personal experience and personal contact. I can say with pride and confidence that the youth of the country is in no way inferior but in many respects superior to the youth of any other country in the world. So they possess the same burning patriotism, the same self-sacrificing spirit, the same moral courage and dash and, above all, the same will and determination to attain freedom. What is wanting is only a proper organisation and lead and immediate steps to remove the retrograde effects of a pernicious system of education. We have often heard and read severe condemnation from various sources of this educational system that is deliberately devised to serve the foreign domination and not intended to serve the usual good purpose of helping national growth and developments of a normal mind and intellect into healthy, national, patriotic and useful citizenship. I will only quote a few recent instances to illustrate how systematic attempts are being made by our present day rulers, to turn out "Loyalists," clerks, and dummies and prevent the healthy growth of true nationalism and patriotism in our rising generation. A few years back when I was a member of the farcical body called Legislative Council in Bombay, I asked one or two pertinent questions to the Indian Minister of Education. I enquired of the Hon. Minister whether he did not think it more desirable to introduce in the schools' and colleges' curriculum the lives of great Indian patriots and heroes, whether it would not be more useful for students to know more about the

great men and women of their own land, rather than be stuffed with such silly stories about kings and queens of England centuries ago. What useful purpose does it serve for our students to know how many wives had King Henry VIII or what dresses were worn by Queen Elizabeth and how many were her lovers and how gallant was Sir Walter Raleigh etc. The poor Indian Minister was in a very embarrassing position and for a long time hesitated, knowing not what reply to make. Ultimately the European Home Member came to his rescue and prompted a reply which the Indian gramophone faithfully reproduced. The reply was, as expected, that the lives, speeches and writings of Indian National leaders and heroes is a dangerous study for Indian students and therefore it must be eschewed. It is safer and better for them to know about the false pomp and bogus glory of Great Britain and hence that study must continue. If our students, after studying the life of Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, become so many more miniature Tilaks and Gandhis, where would be the safety for our rulers? If one Gandhi could shake the foundation of the British Empire, production of many more even on a miniature scale, would only result in making our so-called trustees quit the land bag and baggage or even without any luggage because baggage belongs to us. That is the underlying motive governing the whole system of education in the country. The well-known British principle as usual comes into operation. Safety and security for self first, benefits and advantages to others forwards. Similarly, another disgraceful episode happened in a Bombay College recently which further illustrates as to what length this selfish policy of safety-first carries them. In the Technical College of Bombay, an institution maintained by Indian Funds, attended by Indian students but as usual controlled and managed by bosses from abroad, part of the training consists of embossing on a cloth some figure or picture. Every year students are required to emboss a picture of some tag-rag Johnny, may be the Principal of the College, his Memsab or the Collector or even an Engine driver, provided he belongs to the heaven-born race of the West. One patriotic student conceived the idea of embossing the picture of Mahatma Gandhi. The Principal was enraged at such a monstrous idea. The dangerous picture of the apostle of peace and good-will was banned. It created a stir in the student population, an intensive agitation was started, strikes were declared and after nearly two years of vigorous propaganda the ban was removed. It is needless to comment on a disgraceful episode in an Indian Educational Institution in the so-called *Urba Prima* in India. It is the same story everywhere. Had you not experienced similar absurdities in the South? Were not national and patriotic songs banned in schools and colleges and their national anthem recited? If you sing "Rule Britannia" the whole staff and the Educational Minister and the Governor will join the chorus and cry 'Anchor' but if you make an effort to sing a patriotic song even so innocent and sweet as 'Vande Mataram' the authorities will prick their ears, will smell revolution, inflict penalties and even go to the length of ruscating the offender. Sing the song as they desire but with slight alteration: 'Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves but Indians shall never be Britain's slaves'.

#### CULTURED SLAVES

Is there any wonder then, that we find in our midst so many cultured slaves with slavish mentality, diffident and distrustful, believing in the inevitability and indispensability of British Rule, intellectual cowards and moral sycophants, that is or at least used to be the dark picture of our University product. I have often inquired of many young students with a supposed brilliant University career, as to what was their mission in life after the termination of their studies. Formally most of them gave replies that caused depression and distress to my mind. Their ambition was to get a Government job with a fat salary and false pomp, if possible a Minister or Executive Councillor, to be able to possess dainty cars, a palatial bungalow, some high sounding title to give a position in society and last but not the least a beautiful and fashionable lady to share his pomp and glory and beget a progeny of high class slaves like himself? What a sad picture of life! I see no difference between their lives and the lives of well-bred, high class, trained race-horses. They too are well-looked after. They too serve and above all learn, sometimes more than the salaries of Executive Councillors and Ministers. Don't they bring high dividends on the turf? Then what is the differentiating point between artistic animals like well-bred race horses and artistic men, who only earn fat salaries to live like gluttons, an extravagant and luxurious life and have no other mission to fulfil. I hope there is not one in this large gathering whose thought is so low and whose mission is so selfish. Let

your watch-word be "Service" and service to suffering humanity, sacrifice to redeem your country, suffer to your utmost capacity to break the chain of bondage. In order to qualify and enable you to be fit for that higher and nobler mission of life, it is necessary first to awaken in you a national pride and national consciousness. My young friends, just imagine for a moment what your forefathers were and what your country was, centuries before the advent of Britishers. You need not study the lying Indian and English Histories to know our ancient greatness and glory; for the elders of the country, the modern city of Karachi had sent a message for the youth of the country. I bring a inspiring and a more pathetic message from the ancient ruins, mausoleum and monument of Mohan-Ji-Daro. Perhaps, you have heard that name. A few years ago, some excavations in Sindh, about 200 miles from Karachi, has unearthed and laid bare before the world, the most ancient civilisation, culture, wealth, learning, philosophy and religion of ancient India. Not two or four centuries old but even hostile critics put it to at least 5,000 years old and some students even take it back to 7,000 years. What wonderful ruins; the articles discovered are preserved in an exhibition, though the more valuable and architectural articles are removed to England. I challenge any modern architect, any modern scientist, any modern expert, to produce anything, half so beautiful, so scientific, so cultural and so rich as these articles made 7,000 years ago, before the age of machinery and modern appliances. That is but one instance. There are hundreds of such monuments scattered about in various parts of the country. Some discovered, some underground; the caves of Ajanta, the ruins of Somnath, the Queen of Buildings known as Taj, ancient temples, palaces, forts, mosques. Is there any other country in the world, which possesses such convincing and incontrovertible proof of its ancient glory, wealth, learning, philosophy, religion and general greatness? Hundreds of travellers and tourists come from thousands of miles and are lost in amazement and wonder. My young friends, that sight and scene has always made me sad and pathetic. I have seen patriots shedding tears before these ancient monuments. All that civilization, learning, wealth, and greatness existed when our so-called rulers' country and their race was in a semi-barbarous and half-naked state. Great Britain was not even born 7,000 years ago and for years after that, they were living more like monkeys than men. It was the ancient civilization of yours that first taught our Western brethren human methods and human ways of life. And what a sad tragedy to-day that ours is the only country in the world still under bondage and still struggling to attain its freedom. To-day, all figures and statistics prove that India is the poorest and the most backward of modern countries, its ancient industries ruined, its ancient population wiped out, its ancient glory, wealth no more, going down and down every year so that unless this disastrous downward course is prevented in time, perhaps the country may be effaced from the map of the world.

#### INDIA'S POVERTY

Turn to the real study of Indian economy and particularly after the British rule, and you will discover the real causes for the tragic change of this pathetic transformation from one extreme to another. Read Romeshchandra Dutt, study the facts and figures of Dadabhoy Naoroji and even recent works of eminent economists on the question, and be convinced that this great fall from the top to nearly the bottom is due to one principal cause, the continued, never-ending, ever-increasing financial drain under the foreign rule. That is the proper study for you, a study which you will not find in your schools and colleges, but which you will have to supplement from outside.

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# THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCES

## All India Women's Conference

*Dr. Mrs. Muthulakshmi Reddi*, in the course of her Presidential Address at the 5th All-India Women's Conference, which began its session at Lahore on the 12th. January 1931, observed :—

We are holding the year's Conference under very depressing circumstances hoping that we might still be able to render some useful service to our people.

We are met here to review our past and present and find ways and means for removing the huge illiteracy from this ancient land and for making the right type of education available to every school-going boy and girl.

Has our past anything to give us? Without boasting ourselves of the past, (which is of no use to us at present) it may be safely stated that India's past is stimulating and inspiring to all men and women who desire to study her history and be benefitted by it.

"Education" writes Dr. F. W. Thomas, one of the most distinguished living indologists, "is no exotic in India. There is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or exercised so lasting and powerful an influence.

The Hindu and the Mahomedan religious books have laid down clearly that a knowledge of letters is as essential to women as to men. The Holy Prophet has said that it is the duty of every Mussalman, whether woman or man, to seek knowledge and to seek it from cradle to grave. That is why the pages of Islamic literature are adorned with the names of many learned women such as the Empress Nurjahan, the Princess Zebunnisa, the famous daughter of Aurangazeb, and the heroic Deccan Queen Chaudbibi who were noted for their learning, courage and independent thinking and action.

You are, I am sure, familiar with the names of the many vedic women writers, philosophers as well as warriors and rulers. Therefore you may desire to know something of the ancient Dravidian women.

From the records now available to us, we come to know that they had enjoyed absolute equality with their men. In the famous city of Madura, once the prosperous capital of the King Pandya, the Goddess Meenakshi who is worshipped to-day, is said to have been a woman warrior sent by her father to fight his enemies. She, after subduing her father's enemies, herself chose her husband, the bravest and the wisest she ever came across. The beautiful verses of the learned "Avvai", a woman scholar, are used even to-day in our primary schools. In style, in simplicity, in sweetness of rhythm, in moral truths, nothing can equal them. We talk often of suitable text-books for children of the primary schools. I would suggest that her works may be translated into other languages and broadcasted. She came of a poor and unknown family. Though she had received a high degree of education, she never cared to marry. Her poetic genius, her purity, her high learning and her wisdom made scholars, kings and emperors pay homage to her. The life of "Avvai" shows that at that period of the South Indian history, education was made available even to the poorest in the land.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, after a long period of internecine quarrels and disturbances, the state of women's education north of the Vindhya Mountains at any rate, was most deplorable as is seen from the writings of Raja Ram Mohan the veteran Indian reformer.

The Government, when they began their educational policy in India, restricted their efforts to the male population. "No funds were allotted for the girls' education."

### WORK OF MISSIONARY ORGANISATIONS

The initiative in modern education for women was taken by missionary society, helped by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Indian Reformer and Mr. Hare. It was, however, in 1849 that a member of the Bengal Government, the Hon. Mr. Bethune, founded a school for Hindu girls in Calcutta and induced Lord Dalhousie to lay

the duty on the Bengal Council for providing funds for girls' as well as boys' education.

I feel I would be failing in my duty if I do not offer a word of tribute to the several missionary educational organisations who have been the pioneers in every province in the cause of female education. The women population of this country have been placed under a deep debt of gratitude to the several missionary agencies for their valuable contribution to the educational uplift of the Indian women. I honestly think that they have done more for the women's education in this country than the Government itself. Of course, at present, India can boast of several other religious bodies such as Brahma Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission, Arya Samaj, Sanatana Dharma, Theosophist, Parsi, Islamic, doing work in the field of women's education, but in the past, the Christian Missionaries were the only agencies in that field as is seen from the history of their institutions spread over throughout the length and breadth of India—even including Barma, under the selfless and devoted management of Christian workers both men and women. Had it not been for these noble band of Christian women teachers, who are the product of the missionary training schools, even this much advancement in the education of the Indian women would not have been possible; even this day in every province we find the missionary women teachers working hard in a spirit of love and faith, in out of the way villages, where the Hindu and Muslim women dare not penetrate. Even now they form the strength of the teaching profession. More than the educational and the cultural contribution made by these missionary agencies to the Indian nation, the noble and self-sacrificing examples of the men and women who, infused with a spirit of love and service for suffering humanity and true to the teachings of their prophet, face obstacles and live very often a single, lonely life, cannot but have a very beneficial effect upon the men and women of this country."

Still women's education is backward as is seen from the following figures :—

Female population in millions in British India 1921 Census.—120 millions.

Percentage of female population under instruction in 1926.—1.5 per cent.

There is ample evidence to show that there is a keen demand both on the part of the parents and the public for the education of their girls. Even in the so-called purdah province, the few existing schools have been overcrowded and admissions for new pupils have been refused.

The paucity of women teachers in the backward provinces have been traced by the Hartog Committee, to the absence of training schools and colleges in suitable areas.

The Hartog Committee composed of eminent educationists presided over by Sir Philip Hartog, an officer of vast Indian experience and rare sympathy for the Indian women's cause, on which body I had the honour to work, has studied women's education in its several aspects, and have made many wise recommendations and very useful suggestions for our advancement. I would ask every one of you who is interested in the education of our women to study the report and carry out those recommendations. The Hartog Committee writes :—The time has come to redress the balance, and we believe that the difficulties in the way of women's education are beginning to lose their force and the opportunity has arrived for a great new advance."

Therefore the women delegates who represent the several provinces here and the standing Committees of the constituent conferences should agitate for the formulation of a definite policy and scheme to develop and improve women's education in their respective provinces and for the allotment of more money towards the same end. Now Madras and the Punjab are the only provinces that possess a woman Deputy Directress, an officer who is charged with the duty of starting new schools in schoolless centres, for opening training centres for women teachers wherever there is need, to modify syllabuses for the girls' schools and to advise the Director on matters relating to girls' education.

The Madras scheme consists of a ten year programme of expansion, and includes the opening of a hundred middle schools for girls, eighty rural trading classes for Mahomedan women and the provision of stipends."

Not only is there the need for more rural training schools but also there is an urgent need for the provision of more rural middle vernacular schools, in order to improve the quality and number of the candidates for training. This is an important feature of the Madras Scheme.

A closer examination will reveal the fact that the slow growth and development of women's education during this quinquennium even in those provinces where

conditions have been favourable, has been mainly due to the lack of funds to finance the new and revised schemes. Expenditure on women institutions in percentage of the expenditure on the men's institutions is 14.4 in 1927 in British India.

Therefore, women should find representation on the legislative council, local bodies, the senate, the syndicate and the educational boards and councils that control all stages of education, if we want to carry out our schemes for the re-organisation and development of women's education.

Women's inspectorate has been found to be very inadequate throughout British India. The average number of institutions per inspectress is as follows :—

Madras 111; Bombay 416; Bengal 1,055; United Provinces 153; Punjab 99; Burma 195; Bihar and Orissa 313; Central Provinces 67; Assam 450.

Not only have they to travel enormous distances at great inconvenience to themselves, but also their travelling allowances and pay are less in certain provinces than that of the men officers of the same grade.

#### SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

Secondary Schools for girls are very limited and very often they are confined to the municipalities, while the facilities for higher education afforded to the girls in small towns and rural areas are extremely limited. For example, in the Punjab the few high schools in towns are overcrowded and the buildings are very unsuitable in the majority of the girls' schools.

I am glad to note from a recent report issued by your able Director of Public Instruction, Sir George Anderson that these conditions are receiving the attention of his department and the Director with his usual energy and enthusiasm is doing his utmost to promote the girls' higher education in this province.

The wastage, immense in boys' schools, is still greater in girls' schools, the reasons being the earlier withdrawal of girls from schools due to the custom of purdah and early marriage, the absence of women teachers and the inefficiency of the girls' schools.

Abolition of Purdah, the enforcement of the Sarda Act and the improvement of the existing schools must be given the first place in our programme of work this year.

#### COMPULSION FOR GIRLS

Wherever it has been introduced it has been a success and has resulted in increased enrolment of girls in schools and therefore the sooner it is introduced in suitable areas the better it would be.

I think it is a wrong system to begin English teaching in our primary schools for girls and also in the rural schools for boys and girls. Knowing that the girls are withdrawn from schools even before they complete the primary stage of education and before they attain literacy even in their own mother tongue, it is sheer waste of their school period, waste of their energy and public money to begin English so early. Therefore all our primary schools should concentrate on the teaching of the vernacular. Further, educationists have stated more than once their experience that the students grasp the subject better if it is taught through their own vernacular. Again, if the principle of maximum knowledge within the minimum space of time is to be observed the vernacular should be the only language in our primary and middle schools for girls.

In the case of girls going up for higher studies and for professional careers, English may be introduced in middle school standard. Now a days, a text-book committee should be appointed to bring forth the needed books in vernacular and when there is a demand and a sale ensured, enterprising individuals will not be wanting to produce the desired text-books.

This is the fifth year of the existence of our conference. At the commencement of its fifth year, it has been able to put forward a scheme of education for girls which would renovate and revivify the whole educational system in India and produce the right type of teachers to spread the gospel of true education throughout India. The scheme, in my opinion, is the very child of our conference and therefore it behoves every one of us to mother it, to foster it and to grow it till it blossoms, and fructifies. This Central College when established will ever bear witness to Her Excellency Lady Irwin's deep and abiding interest during her stay in India not only in the cause of the Indian women's education but also in their general welfare.

## RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

All true education should rest upon a spiritual and religious basis. The history of education tells us that it was in association with monasteries, mutts, temples, where lived the monks and the priests and the first religious preachers that the early schools had been started. In India, education, till of late, meant the teaching of books on religion and philosophy.

Religion being the interpretation of the Infinite—the universe—the forces of nature that surround man in terms of human phraseology, can never be suppressed.

If you want to grow that element of divinity in man, if you want to elevate him from the plane of mere animal existence, if you want to make him good and useful to society, you have to respect that legitimate longing of the human soul in its search after "Truth" which is God itself. Very often the motive for doing good and useful service to society arises from the desire to stand well with the Almighty or from the fear of the unknown or the hereafter, or for the attainment of bliss after death. Therefore I plead that the lives of saints, spiritual teachers and religious personalities should be included in the daily lessons of the pupils without any of the myths, legends, rituals and ceremonies, which have been ever the fruitful causes of quarrels, religious fights and bloodshed among the people of diverse creeds on earth, so that the fundamental unity of all the great religions may be brought home to our girls and boys.

## THE HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD

Regular and systematic medical inspection and treatment of school children do not yet find a place in our school curriculum of both boys and girls. Its value in the prevention of diseases and arrest of serious and disabling ailments later on in one's life has not yet been realised to the fullest extent both by the school authorities and the public and so also its educative purpose to the pupil and to the community. Through medical inspection, we know that medical and sanitary sciences will be made applicable to the every-day life of the pupils, the findings of the medical inspection, the study of the school and home environment and the advice given to both the parents and teachers will surely go a great way to teach the community the right method of living and will thus lay the foundation of healthy man-hood and woman-hood in the country. Nay, more than that, the practical application of scientific ideas in such an early impressionable age will surely help in the eradication of many of our pernicious social habits and practices as Purdah, early-marriage and sanctified vice. In our own presidency medical inspection has been made compulsory in all the secondary schools, villages, but not yet in all the elementary schools owing to financial stringency.

While physical culture has been introduced as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum of boys' schools, the fact that the needs of girls' schools have been totally ignored in some of the provinces, cannot be passed without comment. Ample playgrounds and garden compounds in the girls' schools and hostels are quite essential and a matter of absolute necessity in a country like India where the women mostly lead a secluded life. Even in Southern India where women do not observe Purdah they are not allowed to move about as freely as boys and there is not that free, healthy and innocent intercourse between men and women, so much so that even our graduates being shy of public opinion, share the lot of the majority of our illiterate women so far as out-door life activities are concerned.

Now in England the Physical and Mental Welfare of the school-child has been provided for by various education acts between 1907 and 1921.

In 1907, the School Medical Inspection Act was introduced and the Provision of Meals Act in 1908 empowering local educational authorities to provide meals for children unable to profit by education for lack of food.

The poverty of the parents and the consequent poor physique of the school children will have to be taken into our serious consideration in planning a scheme of universal compulsory education.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

Women's activities of late have spread into all spheres of life and many adult educational centres and industrial classes of poor widows and destitute women have been opened to every city, e.g., in our own presidency the activities of the several women associations, such as the women's Indian Association, the Sri Sarada Ladies' Union and Home, the Madras Seva Sadan and the Indian Ladies' Samaj, for the promotion of adult education have helped very much the educational, social and politi-

cal advancement of our women and have installed a new spirit into the minds of the younger generation. We should only continue on a larger scale those very useful activities and every one of us in the midst of our home and professional duties should find time to help in such good work either with our suggestions or with our money and we both Hindus and Muslims should direct our charity to promote these nation-building activities.

#### CUSTOM OF PURDAH

In the purdah provinces, education of girls cost more to the state and to the parents than in non-purdah provinces and much unnecessary expenditure is incurred in providing conveyances to girls and in erecting high walls to school buildings. Further the girls are withdrawn from schools at a very early age.

In every province inspite of the demand of the people for more knowledge and more education as in Bombay and Madras the hindrance in the spread of mass education has been chiefly one of finding money to finance the revised and new schemes. In the olden days, when the famous Dacca muslin was made in India, all the thread was woven by women who employed their leisure hours in that business.

#### ENCOURAGE SWADESHI

The Empress Noor-Jehan greatly encouraged the manufactures of the country and under her patronage the Dacca muslins acquired great celebrity. We should develop our home-Industries, encourage khaddar and swadeshi if we want to have more money in our hands.

In addition to private benefactions through donations and endowments, the many religious and charitable endowments, whose original object was to promote education, will have to be tapped to finance education on a liberal scale. Further the state itself, as in other civilised countries, should find money to finance at least the primary education of all school-going pupils as education is the foundation of all national progress.

#### MATERNAL MORTALITY

India as a whole records a very high maternal mortality and yet in no province have any organised attempts been made to reduce both.

In the rural towns and villages not even 3 per cent of women could avail themselves of trained help during child-birth. At a most critical and painful period of their lives, they are entrusted into the hands of unskilled, unscientific and unclean barber midwives and not only do they suffer acutely for days together and die suffering without any hope of recovery but what is sadder still, a good percentage of them become permanently injured and invalidated for life.

In certain areas 50 per cent of our babies die before they reach their first birthday. A large mortality in a population means a larger morbidity and consequent ill-health and inefficiency of a large section of the population. When we are conscious that all these sufferings, deaths and permanent ill-health are largely preventable the situation is all the more tragic.

In our own province, there are many medical graduates who are unemployed while the work in the district maternity hospitals and wards are carried on by the lady Sub-Assistant Surgeons under the authority of a Civil Surgeon and Assistant Surgeon. These medical women in those lonely areas in the districts have very often untrained and out of date mid-wives to help them when attending on emergency mid-wifery cases. Their lot is made harder still when the superior medical officers happens to be of an unsympathetic and critical turn of mind.

In every province, there should be instituted a department of health under a senior woman medical officer similar to the Deputy Director of Public Instruction whose duty will be to start new hospitals for women in places where none exist now, to appoint the necessary women medical staff, to establish centres of training for nurses and mid-wives and to arrange research and post graduate courses for women medical graduates etc. She would also advise the Surgeon-General on the policy of organising adequate medical relief to women and children. Under her should work a number of women medical graduates who should be graded as the men-officers in the department.

In the Public Health Department in every province there should be appointed an assistant woman directress who would be in entire charge of the maternity and child-welfare work. Now in Madras the appointment of an Assistant Directress on the Public Health Staff has been made this year, her duty being to tour round



the presidency, to reorganise the existing maternity and child-welfare centres, to induce the local bodies to start new ones and to direct the work at the centres on proper lines. She is expected also to organise a health school for the training of the health visitors and to carry on propaganda among men and women so as to arouse their interest in maternity and child-welfare problems.

Maternity and child-welfare work is carried on to a certain extent by voluntary agencies, by certain municipalities and by the Red Cross associations, but up till now neither the Central Government nor the local Government have taken any initiative in this matter.

There is yet no legislation in India to save the child's life and most of the provinces have no separate hospitals for children where diseases peculiar to infants and children could be treated.

The Midwives Acts of 1902, 1918 and 1926, provide for improvement in the quality of professional attendance at child-birth by restricting the operation to certified midwives.

In England the ministry of Health and the local authorities have assumed the responsibility of providing adequate, ready and skilled midwifery help to all women irrespective of their station in life.

In India neither the Local Government nor the Central Government have taken the first step to organise and to develop maternity and child-welfare work through a separate department under a specially trained staff of women officers; nor is there any provincial women medical service originated to supply adequate medical relief to women and children in a country where the majority of women would not consult men and a good number of them would never even see them.

Therefore this Conference of Women should devote as much attention to the organisation and development of efficient and adequate medical aid for our women and children as for the promotion of education of our girls.

I need not point out that a healthy intellect is possible only in a healthy body and that a healthy progeny will arise only from a generation of healthy mothers.

The enforcement of the Sarda Act, the abolition of polygamy, Mysore and Baroda Legislation to revise the inheritance rights of women and the present unequal and unjust Hindu marriage laws, the suppression of traffic in women and children, the question of women labour and child labour, removal of untouchability and prohibition will be presently discussed at the conference and therefore there is no need for me to dwell on them at length.

#### CALL FOR UNITY

India is pulsating with a new life and a great awakening has come upon its men and women. Our duty, the women's duty, at this crisis, is not to curb the growing nationalism, nor to check the flowing tide, but to direct it and guide it through useful channels. At the same time, we should revolt against all forms of violence, injustices and unnecessary and uncalled for interference with the basic human rights. We should teach our children to be selfless, and self-reliant, to be courageous and manly and we should train them to serve wisely and sacrifice nobly.

Let us not forget that in the nation-building process women have ever been playing a great and glorious part as citizens, wives and mothers. We are born to create and not to destroy, to love, not to hate; therefore let us create life, love and beauty and promote peace and harmony among people and nations. This conference itself has demonstrated in full the union of all communities, creeds and races in India on a common platform of service to the nation. Let the feeling of friendliness and comradeship, that is a marked feature of this conference be developed into love—that perfect, pure and simple love—the mother's love—that would be enduring and that would embrace within its fold all humanity.

#### Resolutions

The following resolutions were passed by the Conference:—

(1) The employment of woman doctors to ensure ante and post natal care and attention during child-birth for the mother and medical care of children, the establishment of maternity homes and of an adequate supply of trained help, and the establishment of creches and nursery schools in all factories.

(2) The early passing of a Maternity Benefits Act for the whole of India.

(3) Part-time education being made compulsory for all half-timers up to the age of 15 years, and where conditions make it desirable, mill-owners co-operating with

the local authorities in the provision of such education among the industrial population.

#### THE SARDA ACT

The Conference urged the Viceroy and the Central Legislature and the local Governments to keep the Sarda Act intact and strictly enforce the provisions of the Act, and called upon social societies and social reform associations in the country to educate public opinion and persuade individuals to obey the law and to report cases of violation of the Act.

In view of the widespread awakening and outlook of women, the Conference considered it imperative to form centres for practical training of social workers in both rural and urban areas and centres for social work.

In view of the high maternal and infant mortality all over India, the Conference called upon the Central and Provincial Governments to appoint medical women as administrative officers both in the medical and public health departments in order to organise adequate medical aid for women and children and to develop maternity and child welfare work.

The Conference urged that separate children's courts be established for trying juvenile offenders and that in these courts at least one Magistrate should be a woman.

The Conference reiterated its firm conviction that women should be adequately represented on the central and provincial legislatures, district municipal and other local bodies and on commissions and committees affecting women and children.

## The All-Asia Women's Conference

Delegates from ten countries were present when the All-Asia Women's Conference was opened at Lahore on the 18th. January 1931 by the Rani of Mandi, on behalf of the Maharani of Kapurthala, who was unavoidably absent.

The Rani of Mandi said: "This is the first gathering of its kind in Asia. We meet to promote cultural unity among the women of Asia to place at the service of humanity those qualities which are peculiar to our Oriental civilisation, to stamp out those evils which have crept into our civilisation, to pick out and adapt those qualities of civilisation and culture which have elevated the West to the high pinnacle of social and material prosperity, to benefit ourselves by exchange of experience in our respective countries and lastly to advance the cause of world peace. It is our desire not merely to regenerate ourselves, but through us, regenerate and promote human progress and happiness at large."

Concluding, the Rani of Mandi said: "Let us discard the customs and traditions which have been strangling our domestic lives and wield an inspiring and noble influence in our household in our country and in the world at large."

The Secretary then read messages from prominent women and women's organisations throughout the world.

Among the foreign delegates were Mrs. Mohl (Jerusalem), Madame Nasik Abed (Syria), Madama Nour Hamada (Damascus), Mrs. Ani (Basra), Madama Mastoor E. Afshar (Teheran), Mrs. Hasan Ara (Afghanistan), Bibi Moulik and Begum Amiruddin (Persia), and Mrs. San and Miss Soon (Java).

The most interesting part of the proceedings, which was punctuated with cheers at short intervals, was when the delegates wished the Conference success in their own languages and in broken English. The Japanese delegate was vociferously cheered when she said that knowing English was unnatural in their country. There being no woman delegate from China, General Lin Yen Hen spoke for that country. Visitors from New Zealand and America were also present.

Sir Jogendra Sinha, Minister of Agriculture, welcomed the Conference on behalf of the Punjab. He said this Conference showed signs that a new dawn is breaking in the East with a promise of renewed life and glory.

### Resolutions

The Conference continued for eight days and concluded on the 25th. January 1931. It passed eleven resolutions concerning education, religion, drink, drugs, health, culture, equality of status of men and women, children's rights, right of self-expression, world peace, stoppage of traffic in women and children and labour.

The first resolution urged free compulsory primary education for every boy and girl in Asia. The second resolution said that in order to promote a spirit of religious tolerance, love and harmony amongst the communities, the lives and teachings of great religious leaders should be taught in schools and the comparative study of great religions of the world included in the curriculum of colleges. The third resolution recommended prohibition, limitation of production of alcohol, opium and other drugs and propaganda against alcohol amongst students. The fourth resolution asked the countries in Asia except Japan to spend money on health schemes and institute researches into the causation of diseases peculiar to the East and development of the indigenous system in the light of modern science. The fifth resolution emphasised the necessity for retaining the high spiritual consciousness and desired the women of Asia to maintain the high standard uninfluenced by the materialistic trend of modern times.

The sixth resolution urged the abolition of polygamy, equal rights to women over guardianship of children and property, equal rights of divorce, adult franchise and nationality for married women. The seventh resolution urged the enactment of suitable children's acts and abolition of child marriage. The eighth resolution said: "in order that every individual and every nation may have unfettered right of self-expression for enrichment of human synthesis, this conference considers it imperative that each country shall have full responsible government."

The ninth resolution gave whole-hearted support to the League of Nations and urged women to do their utmost for the League both individually and collectively. The tenth resolution urged the abolition of brothels and raising the age of consent to eighteen years. The last resolution demanded legislation for the regulation of women's hours of work, wages and provision for illness, accident and old age pensions, maternity benefit, housing, medical aid etc.

## The All-Bengal Women's Congress

Presiding over the first session of the All-Bengal Women's Congress in Calcutta on the 1st. May 1931, Mrs. Sarala Devi Chowdhurani said that the call for a separate Congress for women was an expression of the new self-consciousness. Tracing briefly the history of women's emergence from the hypnotic trance in which they had been lulled by men for centuries, the president said: We are gathering the fruits of the labours of the women of the west who broke through the spell, and wrought a distinct change in their status after struggling for a century. Their victory over a long train of abuses, false sentiments towards women and usurpations made it comparatively a walk-over for us Indian women to seats in the municipalities, senates and legislatures at each stage of the fresh constitution granted to India. She assured the audience that the mutual affinity of man and woman was so great that once woman crossed the barrier of mere home utility and showed her usefulness in different departments of national life there would hardly be any sex antagonism for her.

Turning to women's work in the national struggle the president said that the Congress assigned to women the position of law-breakers only and not law-makers in the process of the creation of the new constitution for India. While dealing with the principles of Europe-made socialism that had been burst upon the public, Pandit Jawaharlal missed a grand opportunity of handling the women's problem from a proper angle and giving a lead to the Congress of the world. The president then laid stress on the economic independence of women and formulated the fundamental rights of women which should be included in the next constitution for India, the rights including adult suffrage, equal partnership in husband's income, equal rights inheritance, also equal guardianship, equal right to public employment, etc.

## Resolutions

The second day's proceedings of the Congress commenced with the discussion of resolutions and concluded after the adoption of resolutions demanding the release of detenus, commutation of death sentences of the Punjab and Bengal prisoners, equal franchise and formation of a band of Desha Sevikas for working in mofussil. Some heat was imported into the discussion when the resolution wanting complete eradication of the evil of communalism through social intercourse among the communities and the removal of untouchability was placed before the meeting. The clause urging inter-caste, inter-race and inter-religious marriage was voted out though mostly the younger and urban section of the delegates supported the clause. The mofussilites and the older section admitting the principle opposed it. On the motion of a Moslem delegate the Congress next congratulated the women taking part in the Satyagraha campaign and supported the Delhi truce and joint electorates. Resolutions demanding the application of birth control and equal treatment regarding insurance were disallowed in the subjects committee.

## Kerala Provincial Women's Conference

The following are extracts from the Presidential Address of Mrs. Padmavathi Asher delivered at the Kerala Provincial Women's Conference at Badagara, held on the 3rd. May 1931 :—

I do not know how to thank you for exalting me to this position of honour. I know there are many other ladies of distinction but your choice has fallen on me. I shall try to discharge my duties to the best of my lights. I cannot pretend to any high education or culture but my heart has been overwhelmed and has been drawn into the thick of the present day movement, because it is led by that great saintly soul, Mahatma Gandhi. He is our inspirer and true guide to-day. Women had always their own share of responsibility in our land but to-day they are more active and if I, to-day, have accepted your invitation to preside over your deliberation, it is purely in a spirit of service to the Motherland. A personal reason also, I may add, is that I have come here to learn from you all in this Province of enlightened womanhood.

Western civilisation and Western culture have made such inroads into our ancient land that it has become necessary to remind Indian audiences about their swadharma; that is the irony of the situation. We have all so much forgotten ourselves that we have been all enslaved to foreign customs and manners in our dress, food and in all our daily activities. We have now to depend in our every day life on so many articles of foreign make. It is now high time that we should all wake up and realise the harm done to us. Our leaders have pitched upon the immediate remedy for all those evils. Cloth is the one item which we consume most and it is imported from foreign lands. Should we make our own cloth and wear it, the immediate result will be the saving of sixty crores and more, to be distributed among the poor spinners of our land. Therefore it is that Mahatma Gandhi has prescribed it as the one remedy which will do away with this great evil. In Kerala the ladies are generally highly cultured and intelligent. They have got special facilities for spinning. They can grow their own yarn and weavers can be found in thousands scattered throughout the land. Further, your simple and plain dress make it all the more easy for you to take to khaddar. Our sisters in our provinces, require lengthy sarees, in variegated colours. You may have no such task and therefore khaddar will be the most suitable and respectable dress of Kerala.

In this connection, it is necessary that we should, while producing khaddar, also persuade all our fellow citizens to give up foreign cloth and take to the use of khaddar. I am aware of the remarkable work done by the women of Malabar in picketing foreign cloth shops but more work lies ahead and it will rest on your shoulders not only to carry on propaganda for Swadeshi but also the peaceful persuasion to give up foreign cloth.

## THE DRINK EVIL

Mahatmaji has also enjoined that the work of reclaiming our fellow brethren from the drink evil should also be taken up and peaceful picketing of liquor shops undertaken by the women of the land. Here also there is much work for those of you will come forward for such kind of work.

Unlike women of north you enjoy complete freedom of movement and your position in your homes is unique. You have great responsibilities in the uplift of your land.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

At women's gathering one of the subjects that is always given a prominent place, nowadays, is the question of women's rights. The right to vote, right to hold appointments, the right to property, equally with men, are all brought forward and there are suggestions that the future constitution should contain clauses, guaranteeing the fundamental rights of women equally with men. I do not know if we should spend all our energies in agitating for such special or equal rights. The one thing Indian women have been taught is that they should do their duties well and privileges will come of their own accord. The men of India have never proved themselves less chivalrous than those of other lands and in these days, when both the men and women of India have to fight a third party to secure the freedom of the land, the women need only perform truly and sincerely their duties to the motherland. Surely in the future Swaraj government and constitution the women's rights will be respected and upheld. The very fact that so many women have been encouraged to take up such an active part in the political struggle of the country and their work has been most handsomely appreciated and acknowledged on all hands is an indication that women's rights will not be forgotten. Therefore it devolves on all of us who could spare the time to take actively to one or other of the special programmes of the constructive work laid down by the Congress.

In view of the fact that the Congress has decided to make Mahatma Gandhi its soul representative and plenipotentiary, to deal with the powerful and well organised British Government, it behoves us to give all support to Gandhiji. The first requisite is that we should all do everything in our power to implement the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. In our future work we cannot be overcareful in sticking to the very letter of the instructions given to us from time to time by the Congress in carrying out our future work, persuading people not to buy foreign cloth or persuading people not to drink can all be most effectively done by peaceful picketing as laid down in the Congress instructions, the same work could be made more effective by undertaking to persuade people to spin and weave khaddar. Further enrolment of Congress members on a large scale would really indicate the real strength behind Mahatma Gandhi.

## CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

In this connection I have also to draw your attention to the twenty points raised in the Congress resolutions about the future constitution of the administration of our motherland. Some of them may be considered as quite academical and even controversies might be raised but what runs through the whole resolution is the spirit and effort to reach the mass consciousness by declaring several fundamental rights and by proclaiming the safeguards for guarding the rights of all our poorer brethren of our land, workers and peasants.

Sisters, the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation has been the basic principle of our society from time immemorial. The rights of old have been immortalised because of their renunciation of all worldly objects and working for the spiritual uplift of the humanity at large. When I am therefore addressing my sisters of Kerala, need I appeal to the ancient spirit of renunciation, sacrifice and suffering and ask them to exhibit the same in the country's cause? Have we not been enslaved too long already and should we not therefore come forward throwing away our slackness and take our proper place in the service of our country?

## All India Non-Brahmin Congress

In opening the Conference of the Working Committee of the All-India Non-Brahmin Congress and leaders at Poona on the 30th. April 1931, Sir A. P. Patro spoke as follows :

We rejoice at the present political situation in the country brought about by the Irwin-Gandhi arrangement and the part played by Lord Irwin, as Viceroy of India, though we are not yet out of the woods and many obstacles are in the way of peaceful progress of the country towards the realisation of the destiny. Lord Irwin's devotion to the cause of India and his understanding of the spirit of Indian nationalism were supremely great. He impressed India with his sincerity and honesty of purpose. We are confident that he will continue to help India till the ideal of Federation is fully achieved.

Earl Willingdon is a tried and trusted friend of India. He is a man of large vision. He has the courage of his conviction and the welfare of the masses was one of the conspicuous features of his administration. It is hoped that he would guide India safely during the most critical period of her history.

### CONGRESS AND R. T. C.

One of the great outstanding political events of the day is the confirmation of the arrangement arrived at Delhi by the Congress meeting held at Karachi to take part in the deliberations of the R. T. C. to render constructive aid in building up and completing the edifice of an All-India Federation. The main object of the Round Table Conference was no doubt to secure the largest possible agreement of Indian constitutional problems. It is needless to say that the conference is not intended to prepare or to work out a constitution in all its detail. The latter part is to be entrusted to expert hands. Many misapprehensions will disappear if this aspect is borne in mind. The great task of Federation can not be the work of one individual or of one party. Many hands are required to gather materials to suit the design and shape them to be placed in secure position in the edifice. The fundamental principle of federation is accepted on all hands as the surest path leading to responsible self-government in India. Whatever be the political phrases or nomenclature, either Swaraj or Purna Swaraj, the goal of full responsible self-government is now clear to all political workers.

The genius of the British Statesmen outline this course as being the best for the unification of Indian India with British India. In 1928 the Report of the All-Parties Conference observed : "That an Indian Federation, compatible as it will be with the maximum degree of authority on local units whether provinces or States, can be the only solid foundation for Responsible Government or Dominion Status. The Report recommended (a) all treaties made between the East India Company and the Indian States and all subsequent treaties, so far as they are in force at the commencement of this Act, shall be binding on the Commonwealth. (b) The Commonwealth shall exercise the same rights in relation to, and discharge the same obligations towards, the Indian States as the Government of India exercised and discharged previous to the passing of this Act. The obligations imposed on the new Government of India by these recommendations were not fully dealt with. It is hardly necessary to point out that the scheme outlined in the report attempts to substitute the authority of the new Commonwealth Government in the place of the existing Governor-General in Council replacing the Paramountcy, a position open to very considerable difference of opinion. Discussing the form of ultimate Federation, the Simon Report observed that "in its complete form, a Federal Legislature, a Federal Executive and a Federal Finance are all involved. The Federal Legislature would have to contain representatives both of the States and the Provinces and would exercise legislative power over matters of common concern together with powers of imposing and spending federal taxes. The Federal Executive would be charged with the duty of administering federal subjects. The units of Federation would be (a) a series of provinces each with its legislature and its ministry responsible to the legislature with a Governor at the head of the province and (b) a series of Indian States autonomously governed, each with its ruling prince in relation with the British Crown, each with its own

internal arrangements. And over the whole would be the representative of the British Crown as Viceroy in relation to British India. The Report further observed : "Our object in writing so much has been to help to get away from the region of pure generality and aspiration and to direct attention to some possible aim of future development when, after consultation with the States themselves, the time has come to discuss them." A cautious advance was proposed in the Council of Greater India and when the Princes understood Federation as the ultimate solution for Indian constitutional problems "which has no terror for the Princes and Governments of the States," the final steps have now to be built up. The Princes made it quite clear that they will federate only with a responsible India. This attitude therefore helped the acceptance of federation as the solid foundation for the expression of Indian nationalism at the R. T. C. British India is indebted to the patriotic spirit of the Princes for the new light thrown on the constitutional problems. It is needless for me to explain the various tests through which the subject has passed before receiving the largest amount of agreement. The component elements of the Federation are : (1) The federating provinces of British India, and (2) such Indian States or groups of States as may enter the Federation. It is not expected that every State would enter into the Federation immediately but as indicated in the Simon Report the door must be kept open for other States or groups of States that agree to enter the Federation. A new State is visualised different from the existing State, a new State deriving its powers from the States and conceding to the Crown the powers of Central Government of India to which the autonomous provinces concede for the purpose of Federation. The Conference accepted that federal legislation should consist of two chambers with representatives of the British India and of the States but the proportion of representation and the method of representation yet remain to be determined. The princes claim that they should have the right and liberty to decide the best mode of choice of their representatives. It is understood that the Federal Legislature will deal with all Federal subjects and its enactments will be binding on all the units of Federation. The list of Federal subjects so far agreed is tentative and elastic, other subjects could be brought in as necessity arose. A distinction was however pressed between policy and legislation on the one side and administration on the other, while the control of policy and legislation should be Federal, the administration should be with the States to carry on consistently with the federal policy. This has the advantages of avoiding sources of friction. It is however necessary to define the limitation of the functions of Federal and State Governments in these spheres and it is therefore suggested desirable that a single legislature may deal with Federal subjects. It should be borne in mind that every member of the Conference reserved to himself the right of modifying his opinion before the final picture was complete. The matter of Paramountcy was placed beyond the purview of the Federal Government. On one point the Conference was unanimous, namely, that it was essential to the development of the Federal idea that the new constitution should have within itself facilities for its own growth and development into a greater India. There has been a clear understanding that the new constitution must recognise, subject however to certain exceptions for a time, that the responsibility for the Federal Government will rest upon Indians themselves. The responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature is fundamental. The Governor-General representing the Crown shall have executive power and authority. The Governor-General is held during the transitional period responsible for defence and external relations including the Indian States not coming within the purview of the Federation and the Governor-General should have certain specified powers to act in cases of emergency. Those reserved subjects are not subject to the control of the Legislature. The Ministers in charge of these subjects cannot be considered to possess joint and collective responsibility with the other responsible Ministers. The Governor-General should have general power to secure legislation and finance necessary for the discharge of his responsibility for the reserved subjects. As a matter of convention the Governor-General will consult the Ministers before having recourse to the special procedure and these powers will not be used in derogation of the responsibility of Ministers nor can they be exercised in ordinary administration. No Viceroy of any political foresight will be able to neglect the consultation due to Ministers. Experience will establish convention.

The most important point relates to Finance for which special provisions are needed at present. It is recognised on all hands that Indian financial credit and financial stability are most essential in the highest interests of the country. If there are tendencies which would impair any one of these essentials there should be some agency for intervention and save the situation ; one of the

means proposed is to vest special power in the Governor-General and another for securing the currency, exchange and to stabilise international relations by the formation of a Reserve Bank which will have the control in these matters and the redemption of the national debt. Until the formation of a Reserve Bank, the Governor-General will have special powers. The Finance Minister will be responsible to the Legislature subject to some of the limitations indicated. At this stage of our economic relations with other countries provisions for safeguarding national credit is highly desirable. The Conference did not recommend unqualified discrimination in matters of trade and commerce, though the principle of equality of treatment for British trade in India was much discussed. While we prevent India being exploited by foreigners, we cannot adopt Protectionist policy whole-sale. Its necessity in the case of "key industries" was raised but no decision was arrived at. We cannot suffer capitalists to exploit the helpless agriculturists and workers. We must guard against the danger. In the sphere of finance the Legislature shall have control over all questions of taxation, fiscal policy including tariffs and expenditure on subjects other than those reserved for the Governor-General's control. As soon as the Reserve Bank is established the Legislature would be in the position to control the exchange policy and the fiscal policy. In the matter of loans India will have the same power as any other self-governing Dominion but the aim is to work gradually towards complete financial autonomy consistent with the safety of India's economic and financial structure. A great deal of attention is devoted to "Safeguards" and one common misunderstanding has been that these take away substantially the powers conferred by the new scheme and the transfer of political power into Indian hands will not be real. Whether the special powers reserved at present are in the interests of India alone or in the interests of Great Britain and India, experience will disclose the need for any radical modification. It is too soon to speculate on the position. The nature of safeguards are such that they are subject to modification. It may be noted, whether we reach the status of a Dominion or a Partnership with Great Britain, the essential fact is the improvement of the lot in life of the people. These theories are attractive but do they affect the reality of the political relations? Whatever be the theory one finds possible to his political conception the end and the aim is to march towards attaining full responsible self-government for India about which an absolute unanimity prevails. This should be the real test for Swaraj or Purna Swaraj. Are we placed in a position unfettered by extraneous impediments to realise the national ideal?

#### THE FEDERAL LEGISLATURE

Regarding the structure and composition of Federal Legislature there is much speculation as to the composition of the Chambers and the method of representation. The general principle of a Senate or working body elected by the provincial legislatures was adopted and the States intend to work out a method suitable for their conditions. Agreement has not been reached as to the respective strength of the chambers of distribution of seats as between the States. These matters remain to be judged either on the basis of area and population or with a weightage. In regard to the method of election to the lower Chamber, no understanding has been reached. Direct election is a popular system as it has been in practice for the last twelve years, but the criticism cannot be ignored that the constituencies are so unwieldy and so extensive involving thousands of square miles and vast population, that there could be any possibility of true representation and that consequently does not admit of frequent contact with the feelings and sentiments of the elector and the representative. Experience has shown unmistakably that the system destroys the representative principle. Two or three large districts (in Southern India) are said to 'return' a candidate. Very often the voter does not know the person or his policy in whose favour he casts his vote. Hence an alternative to this unreal system of election has to be devised. The question of franchise and broadening the base of electorates are not easy to generalise. Franchise cannot be too radically altered at once. It will break down by the weight of numbers. Franchise also must differ in provinces. It cannot be uniform. Universal adult suffrage did not meet with general support. It is to grow with the political education of the people. Representation of special interests does not appear to be easy as in the case of the Depressed Classes. Its working is very much complicated. Provision for adequate representation will be provided for.

#### THE EXECUTIVE

Another highly important matter, which engaged the careful attention of the Conference, is the means of securing stability for the Executive. The relations be-



tween the two chambers will be defined later but how are we to insure the continuity of the Ministry to be able to carry on a constructive policy in several directions? If their tenure of office is threatened with attacks from all sides, their attention will be diverted to meet these party manoeuvres instead of devoting their energy to the cause of popular and public interests. To meet that end, it is suggested that in no case shall a ministry resign unless a direct vote of no-confidence has been declared to have been passed by two-thirds of the two houses sitting together. In the United States of America the Executive is almost irremovable. An analogous method is advocated for India. Our suggestions are most welcome. Doubts have been raised whether, in the case of a motion for no-confidence involving a non-federal subject, it is desirable that the representatives of the States should take part as they do not take part in all subjects relating to British India. If the Ministry is to contain a representative of the States, it would necessarily imply that the interests of the States should be safeguarded. It is argued however that by the method of joint sitting on such a matter, the Ministry is ever so safe that they need not be particular about British Indian representatives.

The question of the army is of supreme importance. The recommendations of the Defence Committee are still open for discussion. They must be put into practical operation immediately. I refrain from going into details. Some of the important points affecting the problem of Federation have been indicated. Other problems relating to Defence, federal finance, representation, inter-relation between the Chambers, control of federal executive over the Provincial Governments have yet to be formulated. The minorities problem and communal unity require urgent attention. It is urged that the 'safeguards or special conditions suggested in the scheme cripple the sense of responsibility in the Central Government and that provision must be made for the control of the Legislature over defence, foreign relations and finance without which responsibility is a shell without substance. In other words, India must at once attain complete independence. No one will question the ideal. The special conditions are intended in the interests of India and Great Britain during the period of transition. Even if 'partnership' of India is adopted, the conditions must be mutual. They cannot be exclusive or one-sided. It is a great experiment that is being tried in India, unprecedented in history. Analogies for other Dominions do not help us much to construct a new federal India. We should evolve a constitution suited to the particular conditions of India, suited to the genius of the people. The past history, present political conditions, opportunities of political training and social structure cannot be overlooked in preparing a scheme which must grow naturally by the inherent force. We shall not artificially build up nor be moved by sentimental considerations, however estimable they may be. Practical and political experience suggests wise and far-sighted action. There is thus no difference of ideal between our school of thought and that of the Congress for the attainment of Swaraj or full responsible self-government for India. Our methods differ especially after the Declaration of Fundamental Rights by the Congress. That set up a wall against political union of parties in the country. We do not subscribe to the programme of the Congress enunciated recently at Karachi. Political parties in the country will hereafter be based on these fundamental aims and objects. It is obvious the programme is unpractical in many respects. Take, for instance, income-tax on agricultural income, Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, etc. If they are only pious declarations intended to the political window-dressing to attract a particular section of people with no reality in their operation, they are unworthy of the Congress. If they form part of the political creed of the Congress, they are dangerous innovations which would mislead the people and foment discontent and revolt. The question is asked: where the Congress is advocating socialistic policy in the country? It will not be impossible any longer to constitute political parties on communal basis only. Communalism had its own part to play in awakening political consciousness in the individual communities which form the component parts of the nation.

Groups and parties in the country must have also a national outlook and a broad-based creed with the introduction of new reforms. In a country where caste is the predominant factor in the social life of all grades of people and racial and cultural differences exist with religious sanction or antagonism, it will naturally take time to obliterate the sectarian outlook. Communal justice must prevail in all departments of State. There shall be no monopoly. As long as there is no communal unity, Indian nationalism will not be the governing force in the political life of the country. We must face realities and provide such special measures as would bring about union, create, mutual trust, create goodwill and create common understanding

among all classes and communities. This is one of the greatest problems with which we are confronted. The completion of the edifice of Indian Federation becomes difficult before we solve this problem. Let us all work towards the realisation of unity. Indian nationalism is not of the Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or Christian ; it is of the whole nation and all should combine to give full expression to it. This is the touchstone of our patriotism which will either lead peace and contentment or to distrust and despair.

It is gratifying to note that after repeated futile attempts made by others Gandhiji has now happily addressed himself to this great problem of minorities. With the co-operation of all elements he may establish lasting peace and mutual trust among the communities and raise a monument for the eternal glory of Indian unity that the differences of centuries have been removed by one who will be acknowledged by posterity to be a messenger of peace and good-will. Recent events have unfortunately disturbed the equilibrium of communities. Racial antagonism has once again come to the forefront of politics and it must soon be put down. We as a party are willing to contribute our services and experience for the solution of the great problem and we co-operate with the Congress and other political organisations in the country to work for the political and social freedom of India as an equal partner with the other members of the British Commonwealth. Thus we will formulate our programme as a constitutionalist party. Details suited to each province for social and political amelioration of the masses will be worked out in the respective spheres which will be communicated to the central committee for information. Let us commence work again in all districts with enthusiasm and devotion unfettered by personal jealousies and misunderstandings. As a party we are bound to be heard and to succeed in our aims.

#### Resolutions

The following resolutions were passed by the Congress :—

(1) That the Non-Brahmin Congress supports generally the recommendations of the Round Table Conference that the future constitution of India should be on an all India Federal basis, that until the full details are worked out this Conference is unable to express its final opinion and authorises its representatives to co-operate with the Congress and all other political parties at the Conference to obtain the greatest possible freedom for India's people.

(2) That the special provisions, reservations and safeguards proposed by the Round Table Conference during the transitional period should be such as not to derogate in any way from full responsible government—Purna Swaraj—in the centre, nor should they be such as to vest power in the hands of capitalists and intelligentsia to the detriment of the real people of the country. The scheme must recognise that the country can be governed only by the active and willing assent of the people.

(3). This Conference declares that in any scheme of reforms, fair and adequate representation of all classes and communities in the public services should be guaranteed.

(4). This Conference while declaring that communal representation is not the ideal political principle, believes, as a temporary measure, that individual units of the nation should be protected till they attain the stage of self-help.

(5). This Conference appeals to all classes and communities for unity and good-will with a view to arrive at a permanent solution of communal differences. This committee is prepared to assist the efforts of all other political parties for effecting such union. The committee notes with satisfaction that Mahatma Gandhi has already taken up the problem of bringing about the communal harmony with considerable prospect of success.

(6). This Conference expresses its disappointment at the inadequate representation of Non-Brahmins of Bombay Presidency and the total absence of representation of non-Brahmins from the Central Provinces and Berar at the Round Table Conference and suggests to His Excellency the Viceroy to nominate four more representatives for the two provinces.

(7). While supporting the Irwin-Gandhi agreement arrived at in Delhi, this conference urges on the Government of India to take immediate steps to convene the second Round Table Conference at an early date.

(8). This Conference regrets that the sub-committee formed in accordance with the recommendations of the Defence Committee of the Round Table Conference to work out a scheme for Indian Sandhurst, does not include representatives of the martial races of Maharashtra and Southern India, but includes two Brahmins who belong to a community which has contributed no military services in the past.

# THE CENTRAL SIKH LEAGUE

The session of the Central Sikh League commenced at Amritsar on the 8th. April 1931. *Sardar Santa Singh*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, read out his address in Urdu, in which he extended a hearty welcome to the delegates, Mahatma Gandhi, and other Congress leaders, who were present. He expressed regret at the death of *Sardar Man Singh Sargooana* and *Pandit Motilal Nehru* and deplored the executions of *Bhagat Singh* and other conspiracy case prisoners.

Referring to the position of the Sikhs, he said the Sikhs had always held the view that communalism should not be included in any constitution since communalism was at the root of all fights. He regretted that even the Congress had recognised communalism in the *Nehru Report*. He said the Government of India's despatch had laid the foundation of establishing a communal Raj in the Punjab. He also regretted that whenever there was talk of a communal compromise, the Sikhs were excluded. Neither the *Lucknow Pact* nor the *Nehru Report* had conceded their rights. The Sikhs could not consent to become the slaves of any majority. He referred to the sacrifices made by the Sikhs in the various political movements from 1907. If, as on previous occasions, the rights of the Sikh community were still overlooked, peace in the country would become impossible. Reiterating the position of the Sikhs, he said the Sikhs wanted the abolition of communal representation and even of reservation of seats. If the Mahomedans adhered to communal representation, the Sikhs would not be satisfied with less than 30 per cent. because in various other provinces the Muslim minorities had as much representation as thrice their proportion to the population.

He then asked the Congress to secure the release of all political prisoners, including the Regulation, conspiracy and other prisoners.

## PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

*Master Tara Singh*, the President, then delivered his address, in which he paid a tribute to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, whose nationalism would be the foundation of a great war, but his success would bring the kingdom of heaven upon earth. He did not believe Mahatma Gandhi to be infallible, for otherwise he would have advised the Sikhs to leave their lot in his hands. He looked upon the Sikhs as an important part of the Indian nation. For this reason, the Central Sikh League had always closely followed the policy of the Indian National Congress. He referred to the success of the Sikh League in running the various elections and said that since the Sikh representatives at the Round Table Conference were not the nominees of the Sikh League the decision of the conference could not be binding on Sikhs.

After referring to the ratification by the Congress of the Gandhi-Irwin pact as the beginning of good-will, he hoped that all prisoners, including the Babbar Akalis, the martial law prisoners, and the Maharaja of Nabha would be released. He did not believe that the Government would be so foolish as to expose itself in a clumsy way by not releasing these prisoners. There was a large number of prisoners still in jail. Punitive police had not yet been removed and many emigrants who had been imprisoned on their return from the Union States of America were still in jail. He also referred to *Bhai Jwala Singh*, a rich emigrant from Canada, who was under detention from 1915.

Referring to the safeguarding of Sikh rights, he said that the Sikhs were, in the first instance, opposed to communal representation. If, however, it was decided to preserve it, the Sikhs wanted their due share. He said that communal representation was officially recognised by the Congress at the time of the *Lucknow Pact*. Since then it had spread to the services and in various other directions. They could no longer bow to injustice, whether it was of the British Government or anybody else and to fight against injustice they were ready to make any sacrifice. The motto of the Akali was 'Without Fear, Without enmity.' They were prepared for any reasonable solution of the communal problem. Their aim was freedom for every community. They had always been fighting against communal Raj by Muslim or Hindu or Sikh communal Raj. The times had gone by when communal supremacy

could be established. He declared that the Sikhs stood for Swaraj, which meant liberty for all and not communal Raj. The Hindus might think it a good bargain to gain an advantage elsewhere, but the Sikhs would exert their influence to purify India of the virus of communalism. He said that none had ever heard of a majority demanding a permanent statutory majority. He said that they had weakened their nationalism by yielding to the threats of communalists.

#### SIKHS' DEMANDS

He then reiterated the following 17 demands of the Sikhs :—

(1) The Sikhs, being anxious for a national Government, are opposed to any communal majority or reservation of seats for a majority community.

(2) On account of their unrivalled position in the Punjab, on account of their sacrifices and their stake in the country, they demand 30 per cent representation in the Punjab Legislature and administration.

(3) In the Punjab Cabinet and the public services commission the Sikhs should have one-third share.

(4) If no arrangement is made the boundaries of the Punjab may be altered by transferring predominantly Mahomedan areas to the Frontier so as to produce communal balance. In the newly constituted Punjab there should be joint electorates with no reservation of seats.

(5) If there is no arrangement on this too, the Punjab may be administered by the new central Government till an arrangement on the communal question is reached.

(6) Punjabi should be the official language in the Punjab, with option to the Sikhs to use the Gurmukhi script.

(7) The Sikhs should be given 5 per cent representation in the central legislature.

(8) and (9) There should be one Sikh in the central Cabinet with adequate representation in the Army Council.

(10) Owing to their special connection with the Army, the same proportion should be maintained as before the war.

(11) There should be effective Sikh representatives in the All-India services.

(12) to (14) All residuary powers should rest in the central Government, which should have specified powers to protect minorities. The Sikhs should have the same weightage in other provinces as is accorded to other minorities.

The provincial and central Governments should maintain religious neutrality and maintain the existing endowments without creating new ones. The State should provide for the teaching of the Gurmukhi script. Any safeguards guaranteed to the Sikhs should not be rescinded or modified without their express consent.

Continuing he said these demands were put forward on the assumption that communal representation shall continue. After explaining the details, he said that the Sikhs wanted protection because they had a bitter experience of the past ten years. The Gurdwara Act was passed in the teeth of the Sikh and Hindu opposition. He requested all minorities to frame common demands and warned the Mahomedans against devising formulæ to suit their communal avarice. The Sikhs wanted to occupy a position second to no community. He criticised the Government of India's despatch, saying that it had made the communal problem insoluble. The despatch gave special privileges to Muslims because they were poor, to Europeans because they were rich, and the Sikhs must go to the wall. He appealed to the Muslims to be patriotic and asked the Sikhs to get ready to make sacrifices in the fight against communal Raj. He said the Congress was following the bureaucracy in this matter whereas it should refuse to be cowed down and should take its stand on justice and fairplay. He did not believe that mere staying at home would do any good. He did not agree with the argument of Mahatma Gandhi that he would not go to the Round Table Conference if the communal question were not settled. He hoped that patriots will help in the solution of the problem. In the end he said that Indian States could not remain aloof and asked them to show wisdom in serving the motherland.

#### RESOLUTIONS

The League, at its session on the next day, *the 9th. April*, passed a number of resolutions expressing regret at the deaths of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Mahomed Ali and Sardar Karam Singh, historian; appreciating the sacrifices of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru (while the name of Sajjan Singh, murderer of Mrs. Curtis, was also included by an overwhelming majority, although many speakers opposed it);

condemning the action of the Government in firing on the Sisganj-Gurdwara; welcoming the Gandhi-Irwin pact; assuring the Congress of the Sikh League's full co-operation; authorising the president to convene a conference of the minorities in order to work out a scheme for their safeguard and urging the withdrawal of punitive police posts from the Punjab villages and the release of all political prisoners, conspiracy prisoners, the Maharaja of Nabha and other detenus.

The last resolution endorsed the demand of the nation for the establishment of complete independence and the abolition of all communal representation with all its implications and, in case this was not done, urging the seventeen demands of the Sikhs, as stated in the presidential address. The following is the text:—

(1) The Sikhs are anxious to secure a national government and are therefore opposed to any communal majority by statute or any reservation of seats by law for the majority community.

(2) The Sikhs occupy an unrivalled position in the Punjab as is reflected by their sacrifices in the defence of India and in the national movements and their stake in the province and, therefore, demand 30 per cent representation in the Punjab legislature and administration.

(3) In the Punjab Cabinet and the Public Services Commission the Sikh community should have one third share.

(4) If no arrangement is reached on the above basis the boundaries of the Punjab may be so altered by transferring the predominantly Mohamadan areas to the Frontier Province as to produce a communal balance. In the newly constituted Punjab there should be joint electorate with no reservation of seats.

(5) If neither of the above alternatives is acceptable the Punjab may be administered by the newly constituted responsible Central Government till a mutual agreement of the communal question is arrived at.

(6) Punjabi should be the official language of the province. It should be optional with the Sikhs and others to use Gurmukhi script if they so desire.

(7) The Sikhs should be given 5 per cent. of the total number of seats reserved for British India in each of the Upper and Lower Houses.

(8) There should always be at least one Sikh in the Central Cabinet.

(9) In case any Army Council is constituted the Sikhs should be adequately represented on it.

(10) The Sikhs have always had a special connection with the army and, therefore, the same proportion of the Sikhs should be maintained in the army as before the war.

(11) The Sikhs should have effective representation in the all-India services and should be represented on the central Public Services Commission.

(12) All residuary powers should rest in the Central Government.

(13) The Central Government should have special and specified powers to protect the minorities.

(14) The Sikhs should have the same weightage in other provinces as is accorded to other minorities.

(15) The provincial and central governments should declare religious neutrality and, while maintaining the existing religious endowments, should not create new ones.

(16) The State should provide for the teaching of Gurmukhi script where a certain fixed number of scholars is forthcoming.

(17) Any safeguards guaranteed in the constitution for the Sikhs should not be rescinded or modified without their express consent.

But it must be remembered that the demands have been put in on the assumption that communal representation shall continue in various forms but if some new solution on national lines be proposed with which any of the demands may be inconsistent the Sikhs will not press it.

## The Naujawan Bharat Sabha Conference

Before a crowded pandal and cries of "Long Live Revolution" the session of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha commenced at Karachi on the 27th. March 1931 with Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose in the chair. Prominent among those present were Mr. Krishnakant Malaviya, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Kamala Nehru and Mr. Sambamurti.

### THE WELCOME ADDRESS.

Swami Govindanand, Chairman, Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, said that the execution of Bhagat Singh and others made it impossible for young men to agree to any sort of compromise with the British Government. Their ideal was the establishment of a Government for the masses. He wanted India to give an Indian garb to Russian Socialism and said that complete Socialistic Independence could alone be the goal of youth, for which they must always be prepared to lay down their lives. "The soul of India was opposed to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which could not live long," he declared. Swami Govindanand appealed to the youth to organise the peasants and workers, adding that armed politicians and capitalists were enjoying the fruits of the sacrifices made by Bhagat Singh and party.

### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, rising amidst applause said that they were concerned more with the consideration of the social and economic structure and body politic which would bring the maximum of happiness and would help to foster manhood and develop character and would translate into reality the highest ideal of collective humanity. They were also interested in investigating methods that would bring about the earliest attainment of this goal. Mr. Bose said he was led to the conclusion that the principles that should form the basis of their collective life were justice, equality, freedom, discipline and love. Therefore, in order to ensure equality, we must get rid of bondage of every kind, social, economic and political, and we must become fully and wholly free.

Proceeding, Mr. Bose said: "To summarise what I have said, I want a Socialistic Republic in India. The message I have to give is one of complete all-round undiluted freedom, and until those radical or revolutionary elements are stirred up, we cannot stir up, we cannot get freedom, and we cannot stir up the revolutionary elements among us, except by inspiring them with the new message which comes from the heart and goes straight to the heart.

The fundamental weakness in the Congress policy and programme is that there is a great deal of vagueness and mental reservation in the minds of the leaders. Their programme is based not on radicalism, but on adjustments—adjustments between landlord and tenant, between capitalist and wage-earner, and between men and women."

Mr. Bose did not believe that the Congress programme could win freedom for India. The programme by which he believed freedom could be achieved was: (1) organisation of the peasants and workers on a socialistic programme; (2) organisation of the youths into volunteer corps under strict discipline; (3) abolition of the caste system and eradication of the social and religious superstitions of all kinds; (4) organisation of women's associations for getting our womenfolk to accept the new gospel and work out the new programme; (5) intensive programme for boycott of British goods; (6) countrywide propaganda for explaining the new cult, and for organising the new party; (7) creation of new literature for propagating the new cult and propaganda.

Before referring to the Gandhi-Irwin truce Mr. Bose alluded to the Lahore executions and said that Bhagat Singh was the symbol of the spirit of revolt which had taken possession of the country from one end to the other. That spirit was unconquerable, and the flame which that spirit had lit up would not die. India might have to lose many more sons before she could hope to be free. "The recent executions are to me therefore a sure indication that there has been no change of heart on the side of the Government and the time for an honourable settlement has not yet arrived."

"With regard to the truce embodied in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, I may say that it is exceedingly unsatisfactory and highly disappointing. What pains me most is the consideration that, at the time this Pact was drawn up, we actually had more strength than would appear from the contents of the documents."

After citing the inherent weakness in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Mr. Bose said that the truce was now an accomplished fact, and the question was what should be done at this stage. "I do not, for one moment, question the patriotism of those who are responsible for the truce terms. Consequently, the best course for us could be to do some positive work which would strengthen the nation and the nation's demands. For this purpose, I have outlined my programme which the more radical section among my countrymen could do well to adopt and carry out. This will avoid unnecessary conflict with the Congress leaders at a time when such conflict may tend to weaken the people and strengthen the Government. Above all, let us have restraint and self-control, even when we have to criticise others. We shall lose nothing by being courteous and restrained, and we may gain much."

Concluding Mr. Bose said: "India is the keynote to the world edifice and a Free India spells destruction of Imperialism throughout the world. Let us therefore rise to the occasion, and make India free so that humanity may be saved".

## The Political Sufferers' Conference

Seathing condemnation of Government attitude towards the treatment of political prisoners was made at the All India Political Sufferers' Conference held at Karachi on the 1st April 1931 in which Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose presided. A note of warning was struck to the Congress to compel the Government to keep the terms of truce and release all political prisoners before they launch out for R. T. C.

*Swami Govindanand*, the Chairman of the Reception Committee welcoming the delegates said that sixty thousand had gone to jail. Having undergone such an intense suffering they should not now deflect from their path of complete independence. 'Now the Congress is in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi and his word is law there. We must organise ourselves and carry on the fight.' He exhorted them to take courage and redouble their efforts to win complete independence.

*Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose* paid tribute to the number of sacrifices of thousands of young men and women who courted jails. Condemning the treatment of prisoners by the Government, *Sr. Bose* recounted his experiences of jails and various injustices done to the prisoners. "There are many hundreds of undertrial prisoners and if we want to rescue them from the misery of jails we must render them all possible help and arrange legal aid to help them to gain freedom. To realise this we must have an organisation." He appealed for financial help and nearly a thousand rupees was promised on the spot.

### Resolutions

Resolutions were then moved from the Chair expressing condolence at the death of Pandit Motilal and Maulana Mohamedali.

The second resolution congratulated all known and unknown martyrs of Peshawar, Sholapur, Chittagong, and Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

The third condemned the policy of the Government in still keeping patriots in jails.

The fourth demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners, detenus and undertrials and asked the Congress not to participate in the R. T. C. until all the politicals were released.

Another resolution demanded the commutation of death sentences of Dinesh Gupta and his comrades.

All resolutions were passed unanimously.

The next resolution created a good deal of discussion which was moved by *Swami Govindanand* condemning the present system of classification of prisoners in jails and demanding equal treatment for politicals and that should be of a higher class befitting a gentleman. After a good deal of discussion an amendment was accepted asking the political prisoners not to accept any classification as long as the distinctions existed.

Moved by *Dr. Tarachand* the next resolution resolved to form an Indian Political Prisoners' Relief Committee to help the under-trial and released prisoners with money and legal aid and give succour to the families of the victims.

# The Hindustani Seva Dal Conference

The Seventh Annual Session of the Hindustani Seva Dal was held in the Subjects Committee Pandal of the Indian National Congress in Harchandral Nagar, Karachi, on the 31st. March 1931. Among the leaders present were : Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Srimati Sarojini Naidu, Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta, Dr. Choitram Gidwani, Sjt. K. Nageswararao, Sjt. T. Prakasam, Mrs. L. R. Zutshi, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Mangal Singh, Dr. Gopichand, Lala Duni-chand and others.

The President, *Mr. Bulusu Sambamurthi* was received with salute and conducted to the dais by the Secretary and other members of the All-India Board. "Vande Mataram" was sung by a choir of ladies of the Bombay Sevika Dal. As Dr. Sethna, the Chairman of the Reception Committee could not attend in time Mr. Vishnu Sharma of Hyderabad (Sind), the Secretary of the Dal Reception welcomed the delegates in a speech and requested Mr. Sambamurthi to occupy the presidential Gadi and deliver his speech.

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

"The Hindustani Seva Dal was formed seven years ago in Cocanada and during its period of existence, you know it has acquired remarkable strength. The volunteers of the Seva Dal all over India threw themselves heart and soul into the Civil Disobedience campaign and in some provinces undertook the campaign itself with the consent of the Congress Committees. Especially in Karnatak, Bombay, Delhi and Behar the Seva Dal gave its best men and women volunteers to the Congress for the organisation of the Civil Disobedience campaign. Let me briefly say that almost 2000 volunteers of the Hindustani Seva Dal throughout India entered the Jails and many more participated in the organisation work although they did not want to court jail lest the work should suffer.

## AUXILIARY FORCE OF CONGRESS

The Seva Dal is the principal auxiliary force of the Congress and it is the duty of all people to strengthen the organisation, to consolidate it and to organise it in each province so that there is one strong body to carry out the programme of the Congress. Unless we have got an All-India Congress organisation to carry out the programme of the Congress as Volunteers, it will not be possible for us to build up what is known as the real force behind the Congress.

## THE WORK AHEAD

We have therefore undertaken during the course of this year to organise the Dal's branches in various provinces and it is expected that after the inspiration that was given to the nation and after the struggle that we passed through last year, we could find material in every province to have a large organisation of the Hindustani Seva Dal all over India.

The Indian National Congress having reiterated the goal of complete independence, we must push on with the work of the Congress that will really bring about complete independence of India. The Congress has been repeatedly saying that its goal of independence is really the recognition and the establishment of the sovereignty of the people of India over India.

## SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

It is certain that this Swaraj or independence or Purna Swaraj, or call it by whatever name you please, must be Swaraj by the masses ; and for that purpose the Seva Mandal volunteers will have to go to the villages to organise the masses so that we may ultimately achieve the Socialist Republic of India in tune with the rest of the world in realisation of modern political ideals. So there is a large field of work before us in the year to come and the volunteers that have sacrificed their everything in the struggle for freedom during the course of the last year, will cheerfully undertake to organise branches all over India in every province, in every district, and even in every village. The idea has been embodied in a resolution that we should practically start a citizen army and this work will be undertaken throughout the country.



## DISCIPLINE—THE NEED OF THE NATION

Next, I should say that the most important thing for the nation is through discipline. Without discipline we cannot achieve the independence of the Nation; and discipline can only be obtained by systematic training.

## PEACEFUL RESISTANCE

We have chosen the path of peaceful resistance. The Congress being the mother organ, and the creed of the Congress having been adopted by the Hindustani Seva Dal, we must deliberately continue to adopt the path of civil resistance whenever the struggle arises. Although we have been given training in physical culture, in lathi and in other physical exercises, it must be distinctly remembered that we are all pledged to peaceful struggle and self-suffering and we have left off the path of retaliation against armed force. So let us know once for all our own duty in the matter. The Hindustani Seva Dal volunteers, if they consolidate thus and organise throughout India in thousands, they will themselves be able to carry on civil resistance in the country; and when once the masses of the country rise in a body and assert themselves, there is no power on earth that can stand the force of the organisation. I am quite sure that we will be able to achieve Swaraj by suffering, sacrifice and by mass organisation and civil revolt. Now that the Congress has suspended civil disobedience and has chosen the path of negotiation, it is up to the Hindustani Seva Dal to carry out and organise the programme of the Congress in the country".

## Resolutions

The following are some of the resolutions passed:—

"This Conference places on record its admiration for the high patriotism and noble sacrifice made by Sardar Bhagatsingh, Rajguru and Sukhdev in the cause of the freedom of the country and the courage with which they met their death at the hands of the Government.

(b) This Conference further records its condemnation of the execution by the Government of Dhana Shetty, Kurban Hussain, Sarda and Shinde of Sholapur in spite of the universal protest of the country that they were innocent, and offers its condolences to their bereaved families.

This Conference appreciates the great services rendered by women in the recent fight for freedom and resolves that for further effective work, the All India Volunteer Board is directed to take immediate steps to start women volunteer organisations throughout the country; and to render facilities for their proper and necessary training in order to carry on the Congress programme by forming women's committees wherever necessary. These committees shall work under the guidance of the All India Volunteer Board.

In view of the necessity for ambulance work on various occasions connected with the activities of the Congress, this Conference resolves that the All India Volunteer Board do take steps to carry out a scheme for organising an ambulance corps at an early date.

With a view to meet the increasing demand for officers and organisers of the Dal, this Conference calls upon the All-India Board to take steps to start an Officers' Training Corps at an early date.

This Conference is of opinion that the ceremony of hoisting the National Flag on the 1st Sunday of every month should be further popularised, and calls upon all branches of the Dal to intensify the work in this direction by propaganda and by arranging for the above ceremonies being held in as many places as possible in the country.

To commemorate the bold stand and sacrifices made by men and women of India in defence of the National Flag, as the National Flag Day and requests the people of the country to celebrate the same by—

(a) Hoisting and saluting the Flag at 8 a. m. at all places;  
 (b) Arranging processions in the afternoon and holding public meetings in the evening. The significance and the meaning of the National Flag should be explained to the people at the meetings.

This Conference calls upon all the Provincial Boards to maintain a permanent band of full-timed volunteers to be ready for service under emergent circumstances and requests the Provincial Congress Committees on the various Dal Boards and the

nominees of the All-India Board of the Dal in their respective provinces in carrying out this programme.

This Conference is of opinion that it is necessary to recognise the services rendered by those workers of the Dal who have served the Dal for more than five years by presenting appropriate badges and authorises the Secretary General to issue them.

This Conference requests the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress to make a substantial contribution to the funds of the Hindustani Seva Dal to meet the rapidly increasing needs of the Dal.

## The National Liberal Federation

The following is the text of the resolutions passed by the Council of the National Liberal Federation of India at their meeting held at Canada Building, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay on the 19th. April 1931 :—

### LORD IRWIN

The Council of the National Liberal Federation of India records its high appreciation of the signal services rendered by Lord Irwin as Viceroy to India and the Empire and wishes him and Lady Irwin continued prosperity and happiness. The Council is confident that in the succeeding stages of the Round Table Conference and in the British Parliament Lord Irwin will exert his great influence in the furtherance of the Indian national aspiration for Dominion Status and Self-Government.

### LORD WILLINGDON

The Council of the National Liberal Federation of India accords a cordial and respectful welcome to India's old friends, Lord and Lady Willingdon and earnestly hopes that His Excellency's tenure of the Viceroyalty will be rendered memorable by India's achievement of Dominion Status and the inauguration of the system of responsible government.

### ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND IRWIN-GANDHI AGREEMENT

The Council of the National Liberal Federation of India records its sense of satisfaction at the success so far achieved by the Round Table Conference and, in particular, at the Declaration made by the Prime Minister on behalf of His Majesty's Government 'that the responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial.'

The Council is further gratified by the Irwin-Gandhi settlement which terminated a period of unprecedented trouble in India and trusts that representatives of the Indian National Congress will take part in the future deliberations of the Round Table Conference.

### RESUMPTION OF CONFERENCE WORK

The Council of the National Liberal Federation invites the attention of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and the new Viceroy and the Governor-General to the unanimous decision of the Conference 'that arrangements should be made to pursue without interruption the work upon which it has been engaged,' and urges the necessity of such resumption without any more delay.

### PROTEST AGAINST SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT

The Council of the National Liberal Federation regrets that while the Round Table Conference only 'received and noted' the reports of the sub-committees and then recorded notes attached to them and was not asked to take any decision on them and although the report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee specifically recorded that any agreement arrived at was 'provisional' and that 'every member of the Sub-Committee reserves to himself the right of modifying his opinions', a declaration has since been made in Parliament on behalf of His Majesty's Government, that there

can be 'no abatement' of 'reservations and safeguards'. The Council must strongly urge that all the conclusions of the Sub-Committees of the Conference must, as it was declared that they would, be treated as being open to further discussion, reconsideration and settlement.

#### BURMA

The Council of the National Liberal Federation is constrained to express its regret and surprise at the statement by the Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government have already decided upon the separation of Burma while the proceedings of the Round Table Conference clearly show that such separation is still an open question.

#### THE ARMY

While the Council accepts the necessity of a period of transition during which the complete responsibility for the administration of the subject of Defence would not be placed in the hands of a Government responsible to the Legislature, it is strongly of opinion that the Government of India should have power to accelerate the Indianisation of the Army so as to replace the present British army by a Dominion army and that the Legislature should have full power of discussion of the Army Estimate and the right to vote when supplies in excess of the non-votable grant fixed from time to time by a Committee representative of experts and the legislature are asked for.

#### FINANCIAL SAFEGUARDS

The Council cannot agree to any financial safeguards curtailing the control of the Indian Legislature and the Government over Currency and Exchange operation or as to any other matters except external loans in which case provisions similar to those contained in other Dominion Constitutions may be embodied in the Indian Constitution.

#### TRANSITORY PERIOD

The Council feels very strongly that all constitutional provisions as to safeguards and transitional arrangements should be coupled with provisions ensuring the termination of each one of them in the shortest possible period so as to lead to the early realisation of full responsible government.

#### FEDERATION

The Council of the National Liberal Federation welcomes the support given by the Indian princes to the idea of 'Federation' and it expresses the earnest hope that proposals equitable to both the provinces and the States will be agreed to at the next session of the Conference in respect of the quantum and the method of representation in both houses of the federal legislature and the responsibility of the federal executive of the federal legislature.

#### THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

The Council of the National Liberal Federation regrets that until now it has not been found possible by the communities concerned to reach a settlement by consent of what is known as the communal question. The Council makes an earnest appeal to them to approach the consideration of the problem from the standpoint of the national interests of India as a whole and to arrive at decisions which will promote national unity while adequately protecting the interests of minorities. It appeals to all communities to accept joint electorates with such legitimate reservations and weightage as will be conducive to peace and harmony against the communities concerned.

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# THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

## Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce

Mahatma Gandhi opened in the old Assembly Chamber, Delhi on the 7th. April 1931 the fourth annual meeting of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The hall and the galleries were full with a distinguished gathering. Among the visitors were Sir George Schuster, Sir B. N. Mitra, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoolah, Sir Wilberforce Barker, Sir Frank Noyce, Mr. Woodhead, Sir Vijayaraghavachariar, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Malaviya.

Inviting Gandhiji to open the Federation *Lala Shriram*, President paid a warm tribute to Lord Irwin and Gandhiji for the Gandhi-Irwin settlement and requested His Excellency to continue to use his good offices towards the consolidation of the peace arrived at by securing for India a place of honour and respect in the Commonwealth of the British Empire. He also assured Gandhiji that the commercial community had stood by the just cause which Gandhiji had so earnestly espoused, and were in no way behind any other community in India in seeking the substance of Swaraj for this country so that, in all domestic affairs, Indians might be masters in their own house. But given the substance of freedom, the Indian delegation to the London Conference, the speaker urged, should not be a stickler for forms.

### FEDERATION AND THE R. T. C.

Reviewing the work of the year, *Lala Shriram* said that failing to obtain a declaration from the Government that the establishment of Dominion Status with necessary safeguards during the transitional period would be the scope and function of the Round Table Conference, the Federation decided to abstain from participation in the London Conference. The Federation also expressed its strong feelings of dissatisfaction over India's representation at the Imperial Conference in London.

*Lala Shriram* next referred to "the catastrophic fall in the prices of our chief staple agricultural commodities with the result that the purchasing power of the agriculturist has been reduced in a single year to an unparalleled extent." Secondly, *Mr. Shriram* said that exports had fared worse than imports in that respect. The result was that there was a general lack of confidence in the country and there were no signs whatever of any serious constructive effort on the part of the Government to raise the country out of what was veritably a slough of despondency.

### GOVERNMENT'S CURRENCY POLICY CRITICISED

*Mr. Shriram* repudiated the suggestion that unproductive debts, large social expenditure, unemployment, high tariff walls, etc., were responsible for the difficulties. Much of their suffering, on the other hand, could be laid at the door of Government's currency policy. *Mr. Shriram*, therefore, urged that in the absence of any tangible evidence of effective international co-operation for stabilising the value of gold, the best policy for India would be to let exchange take its own course. Another major cause of depression in Indian trade, said *Mr. Shriram*, was the borrowing policy of the Government of India. "While in the world outside falling prices and trade depression had been followed by a steady fall in money rates, the rate of interest in India has actually risen, because of the borrowing policy of the Government and their persistence in stabilising exchange in the shape of sharply falling prices in the world outside."

Quoting the League of Nations figures, the speaker said that while the public debt of India, reduced to the pre-war level, rose only by 16.3 centum on 1920 over its level in 1924, the gross interest charges reduced to the pre-war level increased in the same period by 94.2 centum. The heavy taxation of the Government, due to excessive expenditure, was another blighting influence on trade and industry. In this connection, the speaker pleaded that high officials should give a lead by self-sacrifice in the matter of their salaries.

Alluding to the forthcoming constitutional changes, Mr. Shriram criticised the Government of India's despatch. He could not agree with the Government's view that the present was an unfavourable moment for the establishment of a Reserve Bank and that the present salaries and allowances of the All India Services should be secured by statute irrespective of the fall in prices.

Mr. Shriram next referred to the demand for equality of trading rights for Europeans under a Swaraj Government, and said that they could not agree to Indian trade and industry being denied assistance and encouragement which national governments accorded everywhere to their own industry. Mr. Shriram did not accept the Government's suggestion that fiscal autonomy convention would meet the legitimate demand of India. He urged upon the British business community, the need for endeavouring to convert advocates of boycott of British goods into advocates of preference for British over non-British products, instead of seeking statutory safeguards for their interests.

In conclusion, the speaker urged that in any distribution of functions, between the Central and Provincial Governments, the provinces and the Indian States should not be divided among themselves on the question of the economic development of the country.

#### Mahatma Gandhi's Speech

Mahatma Gandhi, in opening the proceedings, said that during the War, when Lord Chelmsford had called them to a conference, he had asked and the Viceroy had agreed that he (Mahatma Gandhi), should speak in Hindi. That had occurred in this very chamber and he had been reminded of that to-day. He had since then been encouraged to speak in Hindi. This Federation was of the Indian commercial community, and it should be their 'dharma' to conduct the proceedings in their mother tongue. No country in the world, whether free or enslaved, carried on the proceedings in a foreign tongue. When the Dutch and the English fought in South Africa they ultimately decided on keeping both the languages in force.

#### EUROPEANS UNDER SWARAJ

Mahatma Gandhi next referred to the remarks of the president regarding the rights of Englishmen in India. He said there could be no greater mistake than that Swaraj in India should mean Hindu Raj, for if it mean such Raj, then he (Mahatma Gandhi) would fight it with all his strength. Swaraj to him meant the rule of justice whereunder Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees and all others would remain happy and contented. If this is true, then no Englishman should have any fear, and no Englishman should ask that their rights should be properly safeguarded.

#### PRESERVATION OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

He illustrated the position by drawing on his South African experience and said: "When I met Gen. Smuts he said to me: 'You and I were reading in England at the same time. I was not prejudiced at that time nor am I now. If we had known each other in England we should have lived as brothers. What is there that out here makes us work against each other?'" He said it was not race prejudice, though there were ignorant people on both sides who talked of it. He said the real truth in saying: "Asiatic and European civilisations are separate. We do not want to take to your Eastern civilisation, that is why we pass all these laws," I understood him. We decided that so long as we lived in South Africa we should try to live according to their standard and civilisation. In India the question is similar. We should consider it carefully. I want to tell my English friends that English and Indian civilisations are wide apart. The Viceroy may be a very good man, but his way of living and our way of living are different. I have known Indians of rich families who after years of Western life come back to their family and immediately get back to their Indian way of living. We are thankful to God that our family life has not been uprooted. If we have to go to the West and copy them for a time, we live among them for business, it is a different thing; but in India we have to live and preserve our own civilisation. The same had been done in Europe and the United States of America. The Chinese have not been tolerated in England and the United States has put a ban against Asiatics. We do not say that our civilisation is higher than that of Englishmen. We feel that if they want us to live on the basis of their civilisation there will be a great clash between the two civilisations."

## TRADERS AND CONGRESS

Mahatma Gandhi, continuing, referred to the president's remarks regarding the Congress resolution on the declaration of rights. He said the Congress was the protector of the poor, but it did not wish to destroy the commercial bodies. It wished to promote India's trade and commerce. The merchants had done a great deal of service for the Congress. The Congress would not omit to consult them, but he said that the mercantile community could make the Congress their own by making self-sacrifices in the cause of patriotism. This Congress is meant for all peasants, merchants and rajas alike. It says to them all: "Hitherto you have lived on the shoulders of poor people; get down from those shoulders and become the protector of the poor." Let Englishmen also become true servants of the people of India if they wish to live in their midst. They will be welcome as friends and colleagues, but no longer as masters.

Referring to the 20 points in the Karachi resolution, he said these were not new, except one or two. "There can be no more democratic constitution than that of the Congress. It is based on adult suffrage. When I am asked how Swaraj will be run on the basis of adult suffrage I tell them that the Congress has been run on that basis for ten years and that the strength of the Congress had increased in the very ten years that it has had adult suffrage. You, the commercial community, can come and take charge of it, but power will come not through the purse but the capacity for sacrifice in the cause of the poor."

Mahatma Gandhi again referred to the position of Englishmen in future. He said: "If there is real Swaraj, persons like Mr. Andrews can always come. I would like to point out that Sir William Wedderburn, Hume and Annie Besant were English. Why, even the Congress itself took birth in the brain of an Englishman. We want Englishmen to come into the Congress and render service to the poor. Let me also state that our nationalism is not such that any race may be afraid of it. We do not want to exploit other nations and we do not wish to allow others to exploit us. I want Shudh Swaraj, which will be to the good of rajas, merchants, peasants and Englishmen, all alike. That is where I indicated that it could lead to world brotherhood. But if you, the commercial classes, make further sacrifices, you will give such strength to the country that its movement for Swaraj will become irresistible."

Mr. G. D. Birla, in thanking Mahatma Gandhi, assured him that the commercial classes had great faith in Mahatma Gandhi and would render every possible assistance to the cause of Swaraj. But as regards the commercial classes coming into the Congress he said there was always some misunderstanding created by the word "capitalist", and in order not to create such misunderstanding the commercial classes would like to render help from outside rather than from within. Mr. Birla next replied to Mahatma Gandhi's remarks that business should be run without greed, and said that though greed was inevitable, businessmen had shown that they were ever ready to sacrifice for the sake of the country and had done so.

In conclusion, Mr. Birla said: "They were grateful to Mahatma Gandhi for opening their proceedings and would follow his lead. Mr. Birla said that this thanksgiving was originally to be done by Sir Purshottamdas but as Mahatma Gandhi had enjoined on them to speak in Hindi so he (Mr. Birla) had been asked to perform this task. Mr. Birla then presented to Mahatma Gandhi a khadi-bound book on the currency and exchange policy of the Government which had been prepared under the auspices of the Federation.

## Proceedings and Resolutions

The business session of the Federation commenced in the afternoon. In the absence of Lala Shri Ram who was ill, Mr. G. D. Birla presided. Sir George Rainy, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and Sir Frank Noyce attended the session by invitation.

## ABNORMAL DEPRESSION

Mr. Walchand Hirachand moved the following resolution:—

"This Federation views with alarm the abnormal depression brought about by the unprecedented fall in the prices of agricultural produce, especially wheat, cotton, groundnuts, jute, etc., and while noting the Government's action in reducing the rail freight rates on wheat in certain cases, deploras the general apathy in giving immediate relief to the agricultural population of the country.

"The Federation suggests for the acceptance of the Government of India a substantial reduction in the railway freight on agricultural produce which would also result in stimulating a greater volume of trade.

"The Federation expresses gratification at the recent imposition of an import duty on wheat, even though it is a very tardy step in that direction, bearing in mind that the price of wheat in market centres upcountry had declined to under the cost of cultivation about a year back.

"The Federation suggests a similar import duty on, or prohibition of, the import of rice from foreign countries.

"The Federation further urges upon the Government of India the necessity of revising the land revenue policy with a view to afford adequate relief to the agriculturists in the case of such an unprecedented slump in the prices."

The mover said that there was a severe depression all over. The general level of prices of agricultural produce was nearly 50 centum higher during the current year. But the prices actually realised by the cultivator at the farms were still lower because most of the standing charges, such as railway freight etc., were the same. Mr. Walchand held that even if the agriculturists all over the world were suffering from trading depression, it was no argument for refusing relief to the Indian farmers, whose poverty and lack of staying power were too well-known to need emphasis. The speaker regretted that the Government, except in the case of wheat and some other minor instances, had remained apathetic and indifferent towards the entire question of relief to the agricultural interests. When the question of industrial advancement was under consideration, they were told that India was an agricultural country and must concentrate on agricultural development. But in the present case, when the agricultural industry was being hard hit by foreign competition and world depression, the Government did not see their way to safeguard the agricultural interests. The establishment of the research council for agriculture was even more tardy and inadequate than the establishment of the *Dufferin* for promoting the mercantile marine.

The most important method of relief, said the speaker, was reduction in the railway freight to the extent of 50 centum, the loss of which the Government could meet by imposing a higher rate of freight on foreign imports such as luxuries. The speaker suggested that the Government could ask the Federation to appoint a committee to assist them for meeting this deficit.

*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar* dwelt on the disorganised state of the Indian cultivator and the apathy of the Government towards them. He bitterly complained that all appeals to the Government to introduce a jute restriction scheme had gone unheeded. He suggested the creation of a marketing board for agricultural produce.

*Mr. Ramdas Pantulu* mainly criticised the land revenue policy of the Government and said that two bills on the subject were turned down by the Government of India. He complained of inelasticity in the system of assessment and said that unless the Government and the railway's policy was changed there was no chance for the development of side industries to agriculture.

*Mr. K. L. Gauba* felt that merely reducing freights on wheat to Karachi had complicated matters for the flour mills. After a six months' agitation, the Government had imposed an import duty on wheat but had exempted contracts in that commodity. Who knew how many thousands of tons had been pledged in bogus contracts? He wanted the Government to realise that the prosperity of the country depended on the welfare of the agricultural classes.

*Mr. Ratilal Gandhi* pointed out that the Central Cotton Committee had made out a case that the cultivation of cotton had become an uneconomic proposition. The speaker held that it was true of other agricultural produce.

*Mr. B. N. Karoyia* held that the main cause of the fall in the prices in India was a fall in the prices of silver. He, however, warned the Government that the ruination of the Indian agriculturist would be the ruination of the west also, as the latter would lose their best customer.

*Mr. Kishan Prasad* pointed out a case where due to the fall in the prices, people were burning cotton seed instead of wood.

*Sir George Rainy*, dealing mainly with the question of freights and the protective policy of the Government, referred to the case of jute. Jute was mostly carried by river navigation and would be unaffected by reduction in the railway freights. Further, unlike other agricultural commodities, foreign competition did not affect that article. The trouble was the absence of demand in spite of the low prices.

Regarding the suggestion to levy a prohibitive import duty on rice, Sir George Rainy said that duties were levied to increase the scope of the market. So long as a certain commodity was reaching the world market at parity with the world price, there would be no use in imposing a duty. This was true of rice.

Dealing with the question of reduction in railway freights on agricultural produce other than jute, Sir George Rainy said that the Government's policy was determined by the consideration as to whether any reduction would stimulate the movement of a particular commodity. He held that reduction in the railway freight would open foreign markets for wheat on account of the world prices. He regretted it had not been possible to reduce the freight on cotton, but the government now contemplated to set up a small committee to investigate the question of intermediary charges on cotton as compared to such charges in other countries and expected to be in a position to have definite views on the subject by August next. Lastly, Sir George said that at the present moment the question of reduction in freight could not be taken up on account of the financial stringency.

*Sir Fazl-i-Hussain* explained the position of the Government in regard to the land revenue policy. He said that in the Punjab, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province, law in accordance with the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee had been enacted. The two bills referred to by Mr. Pantulu stood on a different level as they sought to fix the commutation of prices. This could not be done through legislation, specially when there were interested parties in the legislature. He gave figures to show how much land revenue had been suspended or remitted in Delhi, the Punjab, the N. W. F. P., the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, and Bombay. The local Governments were fully alive to the need of the hour and had taken all necessary action in order to give relief to the cultivator.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

#### INSURANCE LEGISLATION

*Mr. Ramchandra Iyer* next moved: "The Federation regrets the absence of any effort on the part of the Government of India to introduce insurance legislation on the lines of the recommendation of the Federation made at its last annual session and emphasised upon the Government the necessity of undertaking such legislation at an early date."

*Mr. Iyer* complained of the rate-cutting competition by foreign companies and urged for a restriction to be placed on foreign insurance companies in India on the lines of foreign countries.

*Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar* supported the resolution.

*Sir George Rainy*, replying, said that there were constant complaints of rate-cutting all over the world, but he had not come across any instances of unfair competition in which the Indian companies were badly hit. He asked the House to bring to his notice when such instances occurred.

In regard to the appeal for an amendment of the Insurance Act, *Sir George Rainy* said that the whole question of discriminatory legislation was before the Round Table Conference and unless a decision was taken one way or the other the Government could not undertake any such legislation. Last year specially, the atmosphere in the country was such that the Government could not undertake any legislation which could have roused racial controversies.

The resolution was adopted.

#### CENSURE OF OLD EXECUTIVE

The meeting was adjourned till the next day, but before this *Mr. Sodhbans* moved an adjournment of the House in order to discuss why on the eve of the election of a new executive the old executive had selected *Sir Purushotamdas Thakurdas*, *Mr. G. D. Birla* and *Mr. Jamal Mahomed Sahib* to be their delegates to the Round Table Conference.

The discussion took place in *camera* but it was understood only about six voted in favour of the adjournment motion which was rejected.

#### SECOND DAY—5th. APRIL 1931

At to-day's sitting of the Federation *Mr. M. A. Master* moved the following resolution:—

"The Federation calls upon the Government of India to take active steps



towards the development of Indian Industries in general. It regrets the inaction of the Government of India in giving relief to the chemical industry and in dealing with the report of the Tariff Board submitted on the question as far back as July 1929. It draws the attention of the Government to the urgent necessity of taking steps to (1) make India self-supporting in the matter of salt supply, (2) secure acceptance by the Swedish Match Company of certain recommendations made by the Tariff Board in view of its unfair activities, such as rate war with the end of ruining the indigenous industry, and (3) give effect to the recommendations of the Hide Cess Committee.

"(b) With a view to give adequate protection to the Indian tanning industry, the Federation urges upon the Government of India to set up immediately an inquiry through the Tariff Board to examine the case of the industry and, pending the report of the Tariff Board, to levy a duty to give it the immediate relief which it requires.

"(c) The Federation deeply regrets the apathetic and indifferent attitude taken up by the Government of India after the failure of the shipping conference convened by the Viceroy last year regarding the development of a national mercantile marine and prevails upon the Government of India the urgency of taking immediate steps for the development and protection thereof."

Mr. Master said that Karachi alone would supply the bulk of Indian demand in salt, if it was given proper facilities. What they required in Karachi was a channel to join the salt producing area to the sea at the modest cost of a lakh and a half. He could not understand why the Indian Government was so apathetic when the Italian Government had constructed salt works on the Red sea at a cost of £ 40,000,000 to capture the Indian market. He claimed that India could support sufficient salt not only for the whole of India but also for neighbouring countries and urged more effective methods of encouraging the production of salt.

With regard to hides and skins the speaker said that the whole world looked to India for 51 per cent. of the total supply and, therefore, India was in a position to dictate her own terms.

Mr. Master then referred to the history of Mr. Haji's Coastal Reservation Bill and said that all along Indians were given assurances that their national mercantile marine would be developed, but nothing tangible had been done so far. Now the Government told them that the whole question of discriminatory legislation was before the Round Table Conference and unless a decision was taken one way or the other, they could not move in the matter. If the Government could not reach a settlement with the European community on the question, they could at least withhold contracts from them unless the foreign companies gave Indians facilities for training and manning ships. Round Table Conference or no Round Table Conference, we want national protection for the Indian mercantile marine which we want to be manned and run by the sons of the soil.

*Raja Sir Dayakishan Kaul* mainly dealt with the question of protection to the match industry. The speaker held that free trade was unsuitable to Indian conditions, but even when protection was granted to certain industries, foreigners captured such industries to the detriment of Indians. The speaker could not understand how equality of trading rights could be given to countries where Indians did not enjoy even the right of citizenship. The Indian match industry was being ruined to-day by the monopoly of a Swedish syndicate.

*Mr. Hussainbhat Lalji* congratulating the Government on whatever action they had taken to protect the Indian salt industry, said that 54 per cent of the foreign salt supply had passed over to non-British foreign hands within the last ten years. In regard to chemicals, the speaker said that in England and elsewhere the chemical industry was subsidized by the Government, while in India the Government through their inactivity helped non-British foreigners to get strong at the cost of India in order to fight the Empire. Alluding to hides and skins, Mr. Lalji said that during the war when the Government were in need of Indian leather, they had appointed a special officer to assist the industry. But the moment the war was over, the industry was allowed to drift to ruination.

*Mr. Muhammad Ismail*, supporting the resolution, said the leather industry gave employment to about three million Indians, but the chances were that it would be ruined unless immediate assistance was granted.

*Sir George Rainy*, speaking on behalf of the Government, regarded it an anomaly that a non-Indian should be in charge of the Indian commerce department. He was convinced that the time had come when the department should be handed over

to an Indian who should be responsible to the people of the country. Great changes, he said, were about to take place in the relations between India and England and he was sure the Round Table Conference would find a commercial agreement which would be to the mutual benefit of India and England and would result in goodwill between the two great nations.

In regard to the chemical industry, he assured the House that there was no sinister motive behind the Government's action. The Government looked to the whole question of Indian industries, including chemicals and salt, from the angle from which they looked upon the steel industry. In the matter of the salt industry, the Government had already given proof of their intentions to meet the wishes of the people and the same course should be expected in regard to other industries.

Referring to the match industry, Sir George Rainy said that the whole question was now before the department of Industries and Labour. Sir J. Bhore already called a conference of Indian representatives of the match industry and he expected to meet the Swedish industry representatives at Simla to place their case before the Government. When that had been done the Government would be in a position to take the necessary action. The Government had already got the report of the director-general of commercial intelligence to show that there was for the present a rate war in India.

The same could be said in regard to hide and skins. The Government were still awaiting the reports of the local Governments, without which they could not proceed. He, however, warned the house that export duties were a complicated affair and sometimes did not operate in the manner desired. There was also a danger of retaliation by other countries. In the meanwhile he asked the tanning industry representatives to furnish him with figures to show the benefit the United States enjoyed in neutral markets by import duty.

In regard to mercantile marine, Sir George Rainy said he still held that the matter could be settled by mutual agreement between the two communities which meant concession by both sides. It would, however, be regrettable if the matter was decided otherwise. He held that the way to the creation of an Indian mercantile marine would be opened by a Round Table Conference under the auspices of the Government of India. 'I look forward and hope that it will be so created.'

Replying to a question by Mr. Hussainbhai Lalji, Sir George Rainy said that the commercial agreement at the Round Table Conference would be between Indians and the British people. Foreigners did not come into the picture at all.

Further consideration of the resolution was at this stage adjourned.

#### FINANCE AND CURRENCY

*Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas* next moved :—

"(a) The Federation views with great apprehension the financial and currency policy of the Government which had the effect of (1) reducing the purchasing power of the people, (2) increasing the liability of every debtor including the Government, (3) creating artificial stringency at even unnatural periods during the last few years in the money market and undermining the credit of the Government both at home and abroad, and (4) frittering away the gold resources in the currency reserves which threatens in the near future the convertibility of the currency of the country.

"(b) The Federation is of opinion that unless immediate steps are taken to (1) make drastic retrenchment in every department of national expenditure both in the central and provincial Governments, (2) generally to regulate the currency and fiscal policy of the Government in a manner calculated to promote to productivity of the country and (3) to stop further efforts at maintaining the value of the rupee at 18 pence, the situation cannot but develop most alarmingly, causing irreparable harm to the economic structure of the country.

"(c) The Federation repeats its emphatic protest against the fact that in spite of its warnings during the last few years a policy diametrically opposed to the unequivocally expressed responsible Indian opinion has been pursued and is amazed at the Government's determined persistence in that policy on the eve of the transfer of Finance and Commerce to popular control."

Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas referred to the budget speech of the Finance Member and said that the people of India had absolute faith in their currency in spite of its bad handling and they were not the people who had exported money outside on account of nervousness for India's future. The Government, therefore, should rise to the occasion and should show to the country that they would do everything to retain their confidence. Unfortunately, to-day the currency policy was being dictated by the die-hard school in England and had not the interests of

the country at heart. 'It is we, the commercial classes, who have a real stake in the country. The Finance Member should not take us as mere politicians. If we take to politics, it is only when we are convinced that the economic fabric of the country was being woven by other than Indian interests.'

The speaker wanted the Finance Member to take the people into his confidence and thereby share his burden with the people of India. The committee of the Federation could assist the Government on matters financial. The Government should not feel shy of this, as there were other matters equally important for discussion than a reversion of the ratio to 18 pence. Referring to the retrenchment committee, the speaker said the days of cutting down a little here and little there had gone. What they wanted was retrenchment of crores in public expenditure.

*Mr. D. P. Khaitan* said that for the last ten years it was not exchange which had lived for the country, but the country which had lived for the exchange. India had been mortgaged in order to maintain the 18 pence ratio in the interests of the City of London. Today, the people who had frittered away the gold resources of India, depleted the currency reserve and floated loans at ruinous rates of interest, claimed that in order to keep India's credit unimpaired, the financial control should not be transferred to the people of India. *Mr. Khaitan* said that India had no confidence in the way the Indian currency and finance had been managed in the past.

*Seth Kasturbhai Lalbhai* said that the currency policy had lowered the purchasing powers of the people and in spite of the 50 per cent reduction in the imports of foreign piecegoods, the Indian mills found it very difficult to clear their stocks.

*Mr. B. S. Dabke* held that the contraction of currency had lowered the purchasing power of the masses and urged that gold bullion or gold securities should be kept in the currency reserves in order to guarantee convertibility.

*Mr. B. K. Shiva* said that every year the currency question was discussed in as strong terms as possible and every time it was opposed by the Government equally vehemently. The question, he said, had penetrated deep into the root of the economic condition of India affecting the cultivators. He remarked that Mahatma Gandhi had included the problem in his eleven points and the Federation should be grateful that the National Congress had taken up the cause of the mercantile community. He suggested to the executive committee to give it a practical shape by seeing that the exporting firms and produce sellers and business did with all foreign countries except England. *Mr. Shiva* concluded by saying that unless the Government showed a change of heart the vital question could never be solved.

*Mr. Begraj Gupta* who spoke next stated that the gold reserve which was only 55 crores now would not have been so poor if the 1s. 4d. ratio had been maintained and now it had been grown very difficult even if the ratio were lower than 1s. 4d.

*Mr. Rajendra Ram Narain* who spoke next showed how ruinous the 1s. 6d. ratio was. He warned the Government of the growing national spirit of Indians who were getting prepared to take up the challenge.

*Sir George Schuster*, in defending the Government's currency and exchange policy, spoke for over an hour and expressed amazement at the change of the Indian commercial opinion on the subject of exchange. They were now advocating not an alternative ratio but that the exchange rate be left to drift, while every Indian commercial body in submitting its case before the last Currency Commission had laid absolute emphasis on the need for stability and for a fool-proof and knave-proof machinery to control the credit and currency. This change of attitude was against the best interests of India. He admitted that in theory there was a great deal to be said for letting the exchange drift because India valued her internal trade more than internal trade. But he warned them that nothing but chaos like that in China would follow any attempt to juggle with exchange as proposed in their resolution.

He asked them to take a lesson from the fact that Indian securities began to depreciate from November 1929, from which date apparently the outside world began to feel that a big change was coming over India. That uncertainty was worsened by the civil disobedience movement and until the constitutional question was settled it would not be removed.

He appealed to the Indian commercial leaders to do nothing to create doubts and lack of confidence during the period of transition till the new government was established. He quoted figures to show that against a fall of 36 per cent. in wholesale prices, the contraction of currency in India had been 18 per cent. and this was less than in western countries and in Japan.

The way to get over abnormal circumstances was not to juggle with currency and exchange and try to promote the interests of one class at the expense of all

other classes. He asked them, therefore, to rule out an enquiry into the question of exchange, but offered to assist the Indian commercial classes if they appointed a committee to see how better to promote the stability of exchange.

Similarly, he would welcome assistance in carrying out retrenchment which, he agreed, must be carried out thoroughly. He concluded: 'Do not ask us to wreck the future of this country by asking us to do something we know to be wrong.'

*Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas*, replying to *Sir George Schuster*, said that the last two suggestions of the Finance Member meant more business than his lengthy speech. He remarked: 'The screw is tight enough and whoever runs it tighter still shall be doing a crime to the commercial and industrial India.' Speaking about banking facilities in India and New York about which reference had been made by *Sir George Schuster*, he remarked there was no parallel between these two countries as other countries were not suffering from the dearth of money from which India was suffering. He asked *Sir George Schuster* why when he was ready to discuss the currency question he refused to tackle the question of ratio and said that no one was ready to discuss the question with the Government on these grounds. Regarding the retrenchment question he said that the Federation was ready to send representatives to discuss with the Government provided the latter were to take into consideration the military and other departments also.

*Sir George Schuster* finished the discussion by replying that he was unwilling to take up the ratio question, for if they made a change in the value of the rupee disadvantages and evils would befall the country and prove disastrous for business.

The resolution was then put to vote and passed unanimously.

#### INDUSTRIES RESOLUTION

The next subject to be taken up was the unfinished industries resolution. *Mr. K. S. Mahomed* appealed for protection of the match industry. He remarked that the whole industry was being usurped by foreigners and when Indian vested interests were at stake it was a pity the Government was slack.

The resolution was put to vote and passed unanimously.

#### SEPARATION OF BURMA

The next resolution to be taken up was about the separation of Burma which read: 'The Federation is of opinion that the question of constitutional evolution of Burma should be left to the decision of the people of Burma. There are ample indications to show that responsible Burmese opinion is dissatisfied with the decision of the Round Table Conference and the Secretary of State's statement in the House of Commons on the 20th January last to pursue separation without Dominion Status. The Federation of Indian States and provinces has created a new position under which Burma can join with such a Federation with great advantage to herself. The Federation, therefore, urges that full and proper facilities should be provided for the people of Burma to express their free and clear opinion in this matter otherwise rendered more difficult owing to repressive laws now in force.'

*Mr. Ranchordas H. Gandhi* moving the resolution said that Indian culture and Burmese culture were the same and so separation was undesirable. General opinion in Burma was against separation and the Government should take this into consideration before undertaking the work.

*Mr. B. Das*, seconding, said that Indians never accepted the Prime Minister's wisdom of separation of Burma from India. He stated that the idea must have been inspired due to the European mercantile communities' interests being in question. Indians did not want separation and wanted Burma to get Dominion Status with India and Burma should also be in the Asiatic federation.

*Moung Moungji* made a stirring appeal for the non-separation of Burma from India. He said there was a great cultural, spiritual and economic connection between the two and if separation was effected Burma would be worse off economically. He said that in the unity of both lay the salvation to exploit Burma. He added that as Buddha gave spiritual freedom in the past, Mahatma Gandhi was giving it to-day and it would be a pity if Indians shut their doors against the Burmese now.

The resolution was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Two resolutions nos. 7 and 8 were then passed without any discussion.

#### RIGHTS OF BRITISH MERCANTILE COMMUNITY

The seventh resolution read as follows:—

'The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry disapproves of clause 14 of the report of the Sub-committee No. 3 of the Round Table Confer-

ence which deals with the rights of the British mercantile community. The Federation cannot agree to any restriction on the discretion of the future Government of India to which there is no parallel in the constitution of any other free country as in the opinion of the Federation any restrictions of the kind suggested would so fetter the future Government as to render it powerless to protect or promote indigenous enterprise and the Federation puts its view on record that no reservations or safeguards of any nature whatsoever will be acceptable unless they are proved to be in the interests of India."

The eighth resolution ran as follows:—

#### CONDITIONS OF LABOUR

"While fully recognising that without the adequate protection, patronage and co-operation of the State to withstand competition from foreign countries it is not possible to bring in India conditions which will improve to a satisfactory standard the well-being of all workers, the Federation calls upon the members of bodies to make strenuous efforts to bring about such improvements in wages, in the hours of labour and conditions of work, agricultural, industrial, commercial and others, as is possible under the existing unsatisfactory conditions in respect of protection, tariffs and exchange and currency policy of the State."

*Mr. Watchand Hirachand* having withdrawn, *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce, Madras and the Southern India Skin and Hide Merchants' Association, Madras, was elected by the Federation for the presidency. The Federation adopted the fourth annual report and the statement of accounts for the year ending the 30th November, 1930. They also elected *Dr. M. K. Dandikar* as honorary auditor.

#### THIRD DAY—9TH APRIL 1931.

The Federation concluded its session this afternoon after adopting several resolutions.

#### REPRESENTATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

At the outset the discussion was resumed on the proposal of *Mr. J. K. Mehta* for the appointment of representatives of the Federation in various foreign countries with a view to develop India's trade abroad.

*Mr. Birla*, who presided, explained that the proposal before the House was to appoint as an experimental measure a part-time man in Germany on Rs. 1,500 a year.

*Mr. Fakirji Cowasjee* felt that the creation of a permanent secretariat in India to assist the executive committee of the Federation was more important than the appointment of representatives abroad. The need for such a secretariat was all the greater to-day to assist and prepare the case for the Federation's delegates to the Round Table Conference. *Mr. Cowasjee*, however, did not oppose the proposal provided the necessary funds and the right type of men were available.

*Mr. J. K. Mehta*, explaining the proposal, said the functions of trade commissioners were very different from those expected from their representatives. As long as the present system of government remained they could not expect trade commissioners to do any propaganda for them. Their representatives would not only do their propaganda but would also collect information for them and would make the best endeavour to get their grievances redressed whenever they were brought to their notice.

*Mr. Bagraj Gupta* held that there was much for the Federation to achieve in this country before diverting its energies to foreign countries. He suggested intensive propaganda in rural areas for popularising Swadeshi goods.

*Mr. N. E. Dinshaw* supported the idea behind the proposal, but wanted the Federation to launch the scheme after it had secured sufficient funds to appoint representatives not only in Germany but in other parts of the world also.

*Mr. Gandhi* urged that the Federation should first decide the principle whether they were to create parallel institutions. He suggested that the Government be moved to appoint trade commissioners in consultation with the Federation. The speaker held that a part-time man would not meet their requirements.

*Mr. A. L. Ojha* supported the proposal as trade commissioners could not serve the national point of view.

*Mr. Srikrishna* stated that nothing prevented them from creating a permanent secretariat, as also appointing representatives abroad.

*Mr. B. S. Dabke* urged the postponement of the question for a year as the Government of the country was about to be transferred to popular control, when trade commissioners could safely be entrusted with their work.

*Mr. Devidas* wanted to know if the Federation proposed to appoint representatives only in places where there were no trade commissioners or in all foreign countries.

*Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas* explained that their representatives would be supplementing the work of trade commissioners rather than be parallel institutions. They would be in the nature of correspondents. It would pay India a hundredfold if correct information could be obtained and given out to people in foreign countries through proper men and proper channels.

The proposal was adopted by the House by a large majority.

#### MANAGING AGENTS OF COMPANIES

*Mr. Sidhwa* next moved that the Government be requested to appoint a committee with a view to amend the Indian Companies Act. The speaker specially took exception to the clause in the Act relating to the Managing agents, who in his opinion, were responsible for the ruination of many companies.

*Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas*, opposing the motion, repudiated the charge against managing agents, and said he would like to amend the system rather than end it.

The motion was rejected by a majority.

#### DELEGATES TO THE R. T. C.

*Mr. Sidhwa* next moved that the representatives at the different international and imperial conferences and committees be appointed by the Federation after consultation with the affiliated bodies. He also moved that the delegates of the Federation to the Round Table Conference be instructed to retire from the conference or not participate in it at all if Mahatma Gandhi took such action.

The discussion on this resolution was held *in camera*, but it was understood that *Mr. Sidhwa* withdrew his motion when it was explained to him that their delegates had already been instructed to retire from the conference or abstain from participating in it if Mahatma Gandhi did so on the constitutional issue. A meeting of the executive of the Federation was to be called to give fresh instructions to the delegates if Mahatma Gandhi's action was based on any other consideration.

The following two resolutions were moved from the chair and adopted :—

#### PATRONAGE TO INDIAN INDUSTRIES

(1) The Federation expects that all Indian industrialists who claim protection and patronage in any form should in their purchases and dealings and general policy give the same protection and patronage to Indian industries, specially those which are Indian and Indian-managed.

#### RATE WAR AGAINST INDIAN ENTERPRISE.

(2) The Federation desires to impress on the Government the necessity of taking steps to protect Indian enterprise by putting a stop to unfair activities, such as the rate war of foreign concerns against them, and requests the Government to institute a thorough and impartial enquiry in such cases and grant relief where grievances of such a nature exist.

#### NEW EXECUTIVE

The following executive was elected for the next year :—

*Mr. Jamal Mohamad Sahib* (president) : *Mr. G. D. Birla*, *Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas*, *Mr. Watchand Hirachand*, *Mr. Naliniranjan Sarkar*, *Sir Chunilal Mehta*, *Lala Shriram*, *Seth Kasturbhai Lalbhai*, *Mr. Ranchordas Gandhi*, *Mr. M. A. Master*, *Mr. Fakirjee Cowasjee*, *Mr. Hoosainbhai Laljee*, *Mr. M. L. Dahanukar* (members) : *Mr. D. P. Khaitan* and *Mr. R. L. Nopany* (Honorary Treasurers).

With votes of thanks to *Lala Shriram*, the retiring president and to *Mr. G. D. Birla*, who in the absence of *Lala Shriram* conducted the proceedings with great tact, ability and impartiality, the session came to a close.

## Bombay Indian Chamber Of Commerce

*Mr. Hussainbhoj A. Laljee*, retiring President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber presiding over the Annual General Meeting of the Bombay Indian Chamber of Commerce held on 24th, January 1931, said :

The Chamber has worked, throughout in the past, not only as a representative commercial organisation but also as a leading public body which aims at serving the general public interest. Your Chamber has played a great and conspicuous part on not a few occasions in the past, and on not a few occasions some of the most eminent public leaders have acknowledged and appreciated the work done by it.

The function of a Chamber of Commerce is to serve as an intermediary between the Government and the Commercial community and the reply to a Government which is unresponsive is not to cease this particular form of agitation but to make it more impressive and forceful by taking all constitutional means to make the Government responsive. One advantage of this method of agitation is that every question has to be fully studied and completely threshed out and even if the Government remain unresponsive it serves to educate the public opinion.

How would it have served our purpose if at the time of the well-known exchange agitation this Chamber had remained silent and quiet? The agitation organised and conducted by the Chamber served to make the public interested even in this economic and highly technical question with the result that agriculturists, traders and businessmen now know how the 1sh. 6d. ratio has served to give a very great blow to the interests of agriculture, industries and trade. The erudite dissenting report of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, the writings and speeches of the late Mr. Madon and the agitation of the Currency League and this Chamber may all therefore be considered a great achievement in the fight for national freedom. I make bold to say that in the universal desire manifest to have responsible Government at the Centre and specially with regard to finance and commerce, all that fight of ours has played no small a part. It shows the justification for our agitation that the eleven points of Mahatma Gandhi were all based upon the economic and financial platforms of this Chamber and other similar institutions. I admit that the unresponsive character of Government has led many minds—perhaps some of the most brilliant we have got—and some personalities—some of the most patriotic and self-sacrificing we have got—to believe no longer in the method of political agitation which Lokmanya Tilak styled responsive co-operation and to start a method known as direct action. While some of us may not agree with it, we agree to differ and cannot sympathise with Government when they plausibly argue that the only method to fight such a political agitation is repression and physical force. No less a person than His Excellency the Viceroy, speaking recently at the Dinner of the European Association at Calcutta, observed that :

"The conditions, for example, of prosperous and friendly commercial intercourse will always depend far more upon Government action, and however emphatically we may condemn the civil disobedience movement and nobody can feel more strongly than I do the harm that it has done and is doing to the cause of India whatever powers we may find it necessary to take to combat it so long as it persists, we should I am satisfied make a profound mistake if we under-estimate the genuine and powerful feeling of nationalism that is to-day animating much of Indian thought and for this no simple complete or permanent cure ever has been or ever will be found in strong action by Government."

### LOW PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

World causes, like the shortage of gold, have been responsible for the economic depression throughout the different countries. While saying this, one has however to bear in mind that each different country has got its own quota of economic causes which have accentuated, within its own borders, the effects of international economic depression.

I am sorry therefore that I cannot agree with the Hon'ble Sir George Schuster when he recently emphasised, while speaking before the Provincial Finance Secretaries who met in Simla, that the main cause of the low prices (of cotton) was the extremely difficult conditions created by the political situation in Bombay. His argument was that if the Home Market had not been disturbed and if Indian mills

were able to purchase more freely, we might be seeing a different state of affairs.

While I do not say that political agitation has nothing to do with the present economic and financial disturbances and depression in this country, I am obliged to remark that the Hon. the Finance Member has read wrongly the situation in the Indian cotton textile industry. This particular industry has been suffering from years past not because of political agitation but because of the lack of sympathy and absence of proper action on the part of the authorities that be, and if the political agitation has done anything for the economic good of the country it is to give the much-needed encouragement to the industry which stood most sadly in need of it. The fact that several mills in Ahmedabad and Bombay have begun to work double shift and that your committee have, as a matter of fact, approached the Central Board of Revenue for a special consideration with regard to depreciation percentage in case of those mills which are working double shift is significant to show how in a way the political agitation has proved a God-send to this staple industry of the Presidency. It is not the absence of purchase by mills but it is the world factors combined with the exchange causes which have brought about the abnormally low level of prices of agricultural commodities, the principal among them being cotton.

That Australia is able to place its wheat, in a wheat-producing country like India, in competition with her own wheat, shows how the benefit of a higher exchange enables foreign producers and manufacturers to place their raw stuff and manufactured products in this country with the advantage of 12½ per cent they obtain.

#### THE RATIO QUESTION

When the Hon'ble Sir George Schuster assumed the reins of office from Sir Basil Blackett he considered the 1sh. 6d. exchange as a bad heritage he had succeeded to. He has been obliged to nurse and feed this orphan left to him and he appears to have conceived a charm for it through this nursing and feeding. He observed, therefore, while speaking before the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, that his paramount duty was to preserve India's national credit and that was the consideration which was dominant in his mind when suggestions were made that Government should alter the exchange value of the Rupee.

He emphasised: "I can only regard such a course as an act of repudiation—an act which would so severely shake India's credit that no one who really had India's interests at heart could contemplate it for a moment".

Well, many so-called settled facts have had to be unsettled because of economic pressure; and I would not be surprised if even this so-called settled fact of 1sh. 6d. Exchange comes to be unsettled in the near future. I am sorry to read in this connection the rather somewhat sinister suggestion often made in different quarters that the Government of India have sufficient resources at their command to maintain the exchange at the statutory level.

It was this same reasoning which cost India Rs. 36 crores in 1920, and I fear that unless there is a sustained agitation by the Chambers of Commerce, all our gold resources will be dissipated to maintain the new statutory level. There is a proverb in English: Give a dog a bad name and hang it. It is very well to bring in the red herring of repudiation even with regard to this exchange question and draw it in the eyes of the British public and Indian people.

#### NO REPUDIATION

We should, however, like to know whether a change in the Exchange ratio becomes repudiation only in the year of grace, 1931, or it was a repudiation even in 1927 when Sir George Schuster's predecessor in the teeth of opposition of the whole country threw overboard a ratio which had worked well for years and placed quite a new ratio on the statute book.

Our friend, the late Mr. Madon, was never tired of emphasising even at that time the character of repudiating the obligations Government had incurred under the old ratio; and yet Government turned a deaf ear to all those reasonings. Are we now to be told that the act of restoration of the old ratio which was such a help to India's trade, industries and agriculture would be a act of repudiation and that the continuance of the new ratio is required for India's final credit?

Was the credit of France affected adversely when Mr. Poincare with a supreme financial daring and far-sightedness stabilised the franc on a ratio of 125 to the £?



So far as the opinion of the economic critics of Government are concerned, this action instead of ruining the financial credit of France enhanced it and stabilised it and the present prosperity of France and the absence of unemployment, which is to be found to an abnormal extent in England, Germany and the United States, are all ascribed to that financial step.

#### THE PREMIER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

When I am going to speak something relating to the announcement that His Majesty's Government have made, you will permit me to tell you that I have been in the public life for well nigh 20 years, and many of you must have had an opportunity to know my views and policy.

When I was elected by you to the Presidential Chair of this Chamber, it was about the time when the Indian National Congress had given its decision on both the Simon Commission Report and the Nehru Report. I mention this fact in order to show that both you and I knew the difficult times through which we were to pass. The first thing that I did then was to study the course that your Chamber had adopted with credit to themselves in the service of the country for well nigh a quarter of a century under the guidance of so many eminent Presidents before me, and I took as my sheet-anchor to follow those traditions of the Chamber and always did my level best to keep the policy of the Chamber in consonance with the public opinion and specially in the interests of commerce and industry of this country. Gentlemen, it had been my duty also to watch the interests of different sections of the Chamber and the object for which this Chamber has been established. A body like that of your Chamber which obtained for itself so much importance cannot afford to show any sign of being carried away except after considering every question in its widest aspect and the ultimate result thereof.

Your Chamber fulfils the function of creating between all concerned that understanding which businessmen pride themselves on being able to achieve. Your Chamber has acted as an intermediary between Government and people, between different sections of people, between different people of different political views, and even between the Indian and European commercial communities, and I may say, it has also endeavoured to appeal to Congress with that confidence as it has done to Government.

Our object has been and is the economic well-being of the country, and every step that I have taken while acting, as said above, has been with that object alone. The representations that we have made to Government and even to the Viceroy, to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilalji, will bear out what I have said. The discussions that we have had with Europeans and our Indian brethren who are known of liberal political colour, have been all in keeping with our traditions and with the only object of doing the best for the country.

To err is human, but I feel confident that when peace and quiet in the country are restored, what we have done will stand as the best test of our work. I am prepared to stand any criticism and shall certainly admit at least on my behalf any shortcomings that may then be pronounced. In these days criticism is welcome, but I should certainly ask your indulgence to judge the work when peace and quiet are restored.

I expected that the decision over the conference that was held in England and known as the Round Table Conference, would come in the time of my illustrious successor, Sir Chunilal Mehta, but as it has been announced during the last few days of my regime, I felt it my duty not to shirk the responsibility that had fallen upon my shoulders at the 12th. hour. I felt a great deal of difficulty but I must say that the informal conference that I had with some leading gentlemen only a couple of days back helped me in my endeavour to express my opinion generally on the subject.

I admit we have not yet got all details, but from what we have got and the last message that we have got from men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and others, and the willingness which the Working Committee of the Congress has shown, at their request through Pandit Motilalji, to postpone publishing any resolutions, emboldens me to make an appeal to you and, through you to both the country and the Government. There is no doubt that had Government, in the first instance, admitted Indians in the Simon Commission, a lot of what has happened to embitter the feelings in India would not have happened. Secondly, when His Excellency the Viceroy gave an interview to Mahatma Gandhi after the deliberations of the Simon Com-

mission, all that has now been said at the Round Table Conference by the Government had been said to Mahatma Gandhi, I am sure that would have been a right thing done at the right moment. Even in the months of May and June, after the march of Mahatmaj, if the Government had acceded to the request of leading Indians and made the announcement, I feel the position would not have been so bad. Now we find that not only our people of all schools of political thought have made a great advance in their views, but even the Princes in India have demanded what is India's due, and further the British Government has tried to meet us to a large extent, and the Prime Minister and others have shown a desire to go further into these matters while others have shown a desire to go further into these matters with the leaders of the country. I think this opportunity must be utilised and should not be missed. It is not because we want to agree to all that has been said, but when we feel a change in principle we ought not to turn our face but must be prepared to meet fairly and squarely I say, and say with all the emphasis at my command, that important principles have been conceded so far as provincial administration is concerned and if we stand united we are sure to have a square deal even so far as the Central Government is concerned. Dr. Moonji has said that we have got merely everything that we want.

## Calcutta Indian Chamber of Commerce.

The Presidential address of *Mr. D. P. Khaitan* at the fifth annual general meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, held in Calcutta on the 11th. February 1931, was read by *Mr. A. L. Ojah*, *Mr. Khaitan* being out of the town in connection with the work of the Banking Enquiry Committee of which he was a member. The following is the text :—

"The country is to-day the poorer for the loss caused by Pandit Motilalji's death, and we mourn it in common with the rest of the Indian community. The time at which it has occurred adds poignancy to our grief. It will be some consolation to those including Pandit Jawaharlalji whose loss is the most personal that their sorrow is shared by millions of their countrymen in whose hearts Motilalji's memory is enshrined and who regard his life as an embodiment of sacrifice in the country's cause.

"Since our last meeting there has been an event of outstanding importance in the Premier's declaration and I may be permitted to give expression to the views held by the Indian Mercantile community on the subject which is of such compelling interest to all sections of public opinion at present. Let me say at the outset that we all welcome the release of Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders, even though we consider the Government gesture as falling far short of the requirements of the times. The Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers, embracing all indigenous interests in the sphere of commerce and industry, have proclaimed their adhesion to the programme of reforms on which Mahatma Gandhi has been insisting and it is no small satisfaction to us that at what perhaps is the most critical point in the history of Indo-British relationship, he is free to offer his most valuable co-operation to those who may care to have it. The resolution of the Committee of the Federation makes it plain that,

"No constitution will be acceptable to the country including the Indian Mercantile community which does not give sufficient and effective power to a responsible Indian Government to carry out the administrative and economic reforms indicated by Mahatma Gandhi is his eleven points and which does not vest full economic control in the Legislature of India".

### GANDHIJI'S ELEVEN POINTS THE BEST REMEDY

"I may say just a few words by way of explaining our attitude. It is our considered opinion that India is at present groaning under an unbearable burden of taxation, and that until the productivity of the country is appreciably increased, its economic strength can offer no margin for any increase of taxation to finance re-

forms like education and sanitation. Extreme poverty on the one hand and heavy taxation on the other make the condition of the masses progressively wretched. The costliness of administration is one of the most potent causes of the peoples' burden to a considerable extent. We have in this connection considered Mahatma Gandhi's eleven points and have come to the conclusion that they may mostly meet the economic difficulty and we believe that the country will not be satisfied with anything that does not cover these points.

"While we fully adhere to the principle of the early establishment of Self-Government amounting to complete Dominion Status in this country, we are quite prepared to consider the question of reservations and safeguards for the transitional period. It is our view, however, that the reservations and safeguards which the Premier's statement contemplates must necessarily be of a very restricted nature if they are not to convert the new Government into an agency for collecting the taxes necessary for the maintenance of these reservations and safeguards and thus nullify the very object of the establishment of responsibility at the centre.

"The total revenues (net) of the Central Government and of the Provincial Governments amount to nearly 175 crores, of which the reservations and safeguards, if they are not restricted, would absorb about a half made up as follows:—

- 55 crores for the Army.
- 15 crores for Debt Service (including Railway debt).
- 7 crores for Pensions.
- 10 crores for Services and other reservations (approximately).

87 crores.

This would leave about 81 crores spread over a number of items in which the possibilities of retrenchment are all too limited. And it would be virtually impossible, under the circumstances, to carry out even in part the programme adumbrated in Mahatmaji's eleven points with which we associate ourselves and which mean a drop of about 45 crores on the side of revenue.

"Unless, therefore, the reservations contemplated in the Premier's statement are substantially modified, it will mean the starting of the new Government upon its career with a heavy mortgage, which at no time in the near future it can be in a position to redeem.

"I, however, hope that the substantial modifications suggested here are not precluded by the terms of the Premier's statement. In fact, I imagine that the statement is perhaps necessarily vague and leaves ample room for suggestions of the kind I have made. I cannot believe that the reservations which he speaks of have been meant to be the last word.

"I, therefore, think that any discussions to be able to yield a resolution of the problem must centre round the necessary reservations ensuring.

"(1) Allotment for the Army which should not exceed a sum of Rs. 20 crores.

"(2) Provision of financial safeguards subject to an impartial examination of India's debt liability and to full popular control over the proposed Reserve Bank, and

"(3) Protection of minorities.

"I have carefully studied the statement issued by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other delegates of the Round Table Conference on their return. They have tried to allay some of the apprehensions in the popular mind regarding the proposed safeguards. I do really wish that our apprehensions proved to be baseless, but I cannot say that the statement has succeeded in allaying or removing them. They have assured us that in matters relating to Currency and Exchange, the transfer of power will be complete subject to the establishment of a Reserve Bank. I have not the least desire to prejudge the issue, but the emphasis that is being laid on such a Bank as the condition precedent to any transfer of control is not calculated to remove the suspicion that the transfer is meant to be more formal than real. The promise of responsibility at the centre can have no meaning if His Majesty's Government contemplate the establishment of more than one centre in the economic sphere. Whatever machinery may be devised for purpose of regulation or administration and howsoever its component part may vary in their functions, there must be a unity of control to ensure its satisfactory working and that control can only vest in the Legislature to whom as we are assured the Executive is to be made completely responsible.

"Whilst I thus submit the popular point of view for the earnest consideration of Government and those claiming to speak on their behalf, it may not be amiss to

suggest to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress that the time has come when they should explore the possibilities of an honourable settlement. The Indian Mercantile Community would invite them to share its belief that the Premier's statement does not preclude the possibility of the suggested modifications and it would therefore appeal to them to lose no opportunity for a discussion of such modifications, should it offer itself.

#### GOOD FAITH—NOT DIPLOMACY

"We have already assured them that no constitution which does not guarantee a substantial measure of economic control sufficient for the purpose of carrying out the programme of reforms indicated by Mahatma Gandhi's eleven points will be acceptable to the Indian Mercantile Community. But we quite clearly see that the Congress co-operation would be practically impossible without the complete cessation of repression, discharge of political prisoners and pre-restoration of repressive conditions. We, therefore, strongly appeal to the Government to follow up the release of the leaders by the further gesture indicated by us.

"We all want peace. Mahatma Gandhi has said in so many words that he is hankering after it. But it cannot be a peace at any price. The Indian problem can be solved by really good faith—not diplomacy, old or new. If, as has been said, the Premier's declaration promises to give the country all that it has been fighting for, I can see nothing to stand in the way of a lasting solution of the problem. But if it does not, if the scheme it contemplates is to be little more than a piece of political jugglery, then let it be made as plain as words can make it, that the performance will not deceive India and those who may be about to stage such an optical illusion had better spare themselves the trouble."

## The S. I. Chamber of Commerce.

The annual meeting of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce was held on 31st. March 1931 at the Indian Chamber Buildings, Madras. Mr. M. Jamal Mahomed Saib, President of the Chamber, presided. Mr. Jamal Mahomed Saib, moving the adoption of the annual report, said :—

I have great pleasure in moving the adoption of the Annual Report of the Chamber and the audited statements for the year 1930. As the report has been previously circulated to the members of the Chamber, I think I have your permission to take it as read.

At the last annual meeting of the Chamber I said that the country was passing through a period of severe economic depression. Those words have since then proved to be too modest to give even a faint idea of the sufferings of the business people during the twelve months that have passed : neither had I in mind at the time any alarming forebodings commensurate with the depth and extensiveness of the gloom that actually came on us particularly in the closing months of 1930. Starting from the collapse of Wall Street in October 1929, the tornado spread from country to country and from trade to trade and industry to industry till the whole world has been enveloped in it. International trade is so nicely equipoised that a violent disturbance in one big country at once reflects itself on the exports and imports of every other country with which it has trade relations. In this manner the shock is communicated from country to country causing a tremendous fall in trade, a heavy drop in prices, restriction of credit, failure of banks and mercantile houses and widespread unemployment and industrial unrest. It is idle to seek to find a single all-pervasive cause for this world trouble affecting every country.

The special circumstances that prevailed in India which made her a tremendous factor contributing to the general world slump are not far to seek. Our troubles did not commence with October 1929 as some interested people would have us believe. They struck their roots several years ago when in a fateful moment a ridiculously narrow majority of the Legislative Assembly consisting of the solid Government's phalanx of nominated members with a handful of elected members walked into 18d. lobby against the vital interests of the millions of India. The continuous drain of the Indian ryots' resources by a loss of 2 as. in every rupee worth of goods sold

by him has much impoverished the country. And the blow dealt by the adverse ratio has been slowly and surely crippling our industries if not actually threatening them out of existence.

#### FALL IN PRICES

I desire to give you an idea of the extent of the calamity that has befallen the country. During the year 1930, the value of Indian exports of private merchandise declined by 21 per cent from 321 crores to 233 crores, inspite of the fact that the total volume of exports remained practically the same. The total volume would have shown a marked decline had it not been for the fact of increased demand for wheat for the United Kingdom and for rice for China, Straights Settlements and the United Kingdom aggregating 7 lakhs of tons extra. The diminution in almost every other article of export, viz., 24 million lbs. in tea, 3 lakhs tons in all seeds, 2½ lakhs in raw jute, 1 lakh tons in jute manufactures and about 8 thousand bales in raw cotton, and so on, was effectively set off by the extra demand in wheat and rice. Groundnut kernels declined from Rs. 50 to Rs. 22 per candy during the year, wheat from Rs. 143 to Rs. 64 per ton, rice from Rs. 150 to Rs. 107 per ton, raw cotton from Rs. 313 to Rs. 174 per candy and raw jute from Rs. 56 to Rs. 28 per bale. The value of Indian imports declined by 26 per cent from 249 crores in 1929 to 185 crores in 1930, and in this case there was a diminution in volume to the extent of 16 per cent. It shows how little the prices of import articles which are mostly manufactured goods, had declined as against the heavy drop all along the line of India's export products which are mostly agricultural produce. This indicates most conclusively the danger of any country being backward in industrial activities and confining itself predominantly to raising agricultural products. The tremendous loss sustained by India by a fall well over 50 per cent in the prices of her staples like wheat, raw jute, raw cotton, and oil seeds and from 25 to 40 per cent in rice, hides and skins, jute and cotton manufactures can better be imagined than expressed.

Coming to this presidency, I find that the value of the foreign exports has fallen by 21 per cent from 45 crores to 36 crores of rupees, the chief items contributing to the fall being ground nuts and castor seeds accounting for 4½ crores, raw cotton for 2½, and tanned skins and hides for 82 lakhs. There was deterioration in import only by 17 per cent from 27 crores to 22½ crores, the chief contribution being 180 lakhs in cotton manufactures, 42 lakhs in metals and ores, 39 lakhs in sugar, 33 lakhs in machinery and mill stores.

What are the chief adverse factors that handicap our Exports? The outstanding factor is that unlike in the case of manufacturing industries, agricultural production could not be readily curtailed to counter-balance the diminished demand from abroad so that our oilseeds, grains, cotton, rubber, coir, etc. had to be sold at whatever price they would fetch. Sir George Schuster said in his last Budget speech: "In these times of bad world conditions and of general overproduction of the agricultural products on which India relies, she has been able to maintain the volume of her exports; it is a sign of general health in the economic condition which in spite of the diminished prices received, must on an impartial view be regarded as satisfactory."

Sir George evidently forgot that when faced with a falling market, groundnuts, castor seeds, rice, wheat, etc. are not the commodities which could be held off the market to wait for better prices. It rather indicates the abject helplessness of the Indian ryot in having to export his stuff for what it fetches as an alternative to refusing to harvest his crop, which extreme step too has been known to have been practised during the current year in some places at least in the ground-nut districts.

#### HIDES AND SKINS

The market for tanned hides and skins has been woefully affected. The persistent and remorseless foreign exploitation of our resources of raw materials and the terrible world depression are the causes of the sufferings of the Indian tanner. To these has been recently added the revised American tariff which is practically dealing a knock-out blow to the industry. The Americans who have usually been buying large quantities of our tanned goods both from here and in the London Market have almost ceased to do so on account of the tariff that came into force in September last. It imposes 10 per cent import duty on tanned skins, and none on raw skins; 15 per cent on tanned hides and 10 per cent on raw hides. The net result is that

our export duty of 5 per cent on raw hides is entirely neutralised and that on raw skins is not only offset but is met by an extra handicap of 5 per cent on tanners in India. Since the imposition of the new duties our exports of tanned goods to America have suffered considerably. That this is not due to general depression may be made clear by comparing also the exports of raw skins and hides to America. Shipments of raw skins and hides to America for five months, September to January were Rs. 131 lakhs in 1928-29, Rs. 130 lakhs in 1929-30, and Rs. 93 lakhs in 1930-31. That is to say, only a fall of 28 and 29 per cent as compared with the previous two years. Tanned skins and hides exported to America dropped from Rs. 24½ lakhs for the same period in 1928-29, to 13½ lakhs in 1929-30, and to as low as Rs. 2 lakhs in 1930-31. That is to say, there was a deterioration of 86 per cent as compared with 1929-30 and 92 per cent as compared with 1928-29. Does that indicate only the general depression or also the fatal consequences of the discriminating tariff? Just to restore the *status quo* existing prior to the inauguration of the revised American tariff, the export duties should be increased to 10 per cent on raw hides and 15 per cent on raw skins. But if the industry should resume the position of 1923 when the Government of India succumbed to the self-interested agitation of a handful of exporters of raw goods and reduced the export duty from 15 per cent to 5 per cent, there ought to be a 20 per cent duty on raw hides and 25 per cent on raw skins. After all this endless sufferings of the industry, the Hon'ble Sir George Rainy so far shook himself free from the charm in which His Excellency Sir Charles Innes seems to have long held him, and conceded a few days ago in the Assembly that there was a case for raw goat skins. We must be thankful for even these small mercies and we are glad that after all light has dawned on his mind on this question though so late and yet so imperfectly, but the trade can be satisfied with nothing less than adequate rate to cover both hides and skins. It has pampered sufficiently longer to the promotion of industries in Europe and America on the ashes of Indian industries and to the draining away of our supplies of raw materials to the serious injury of the vital economic materials in this country.

#### GROUNDNUTS

Coming to the chief export product in South India, it is a pity to note that the inexorable Margarine Union of Holland has cut the groundnut prices to the bone by the sheer force of a dictating buyers' combine, who at the same time, thanks to the misplaced philanthropy of the Government of India, find in India a ready market for the unrestricted import of their vegetable ghee and other margarine products. In view of this combine of foreign buyers, and of the growing competition from substitutes like the olive oil of the Mediterranean region, the palm oil of Africa, the peanut and soya beans of China and Japan, the Government of India ought to lose no time in conserving the vegetable oil industry of the country and developing the home market for its products. The current year has shown to what pathetic condition the ryots' dependence solely on a foreign market has reduced them. There is a grave danger of dislocation in Indian agriculture, if oilseed cultivation gets to be discouraged, particularly in view of reports of vast extensions of cultivations of our alternative crops, viz. wheat in Russia, Canada and Argentine and rice in several countries like Spain, Italy, United States of America and Japan, which are not only making organised efforts towards self-sufficiency but rapidly establishing an export trade.

#### TAX BURDEN

I have endeavoured to give only a few glimpses into the pathetic condition of our chief export products. But apart from the slump that affects the people generally, the Government have not been slow to contribute liberally for their prostration by piling tax upon tax as though from a spirit of vengeance. The incometax and supertax are undoubtedly a damper on the commercial and industrial development of the country even in ordinary times and the people have been asking for substantial relief from such burden. It is therefore extremely disappointing to note that they should have gone exactly in the opposite direction and enhanced the rates from top to bottom when the country is hopelessly prostrate from the industrial and commercial point of view, and particularly when there are ways and means to get substantial amounts of new money, while at the same time giving protection and encouragement to our hard-pressed industries, and also when the top-heavy items of expenditure ought to be cut down in keeping with the tremendous fall of prices and general depression. That in enhancing the taxes they should have found it expedient to set one class of people against the another is still more

deplorable. Gentlemen, you all know full well that with the development of the commerce and industry of the country is bound up the well-being of all classes of the people and that anything which hampers the growth of economic enterprises as these taxes on income are bound to do, is surely an obstacle, by no means inconsiderable, to the general well-being of the country. The Legislative Assembly which is the custodian of the rights and interests of the country twice rejected such proposals of taxation but the Government have proved incapable of making a generous response. Apparently they have with their usual scorn and indifference to popular opinion induced a great and good Viceroy to certify the Finance Bill and have thus embittered the last days of his Viceroyalty. His Excellency was probably overpowered by the implorable obduracy of his irresponsible advisers but the Government has nonetheless lost heavily in the people's confidence and have again proved that there is yet no change of heart. Nor does this action of the Government inspire us with confidence as to their future efforts at retrenchment, while we note that it is only for about a crore of rupees that they have thought fit to override the popular vote twice recorded.

#### CURRENCY POLICY

No more crucial test is required of the bonafides of the Government of this country than their attitude in respect of the currency and exchange question of the country. It is widely admitted now that our commodity prices have not adjusted to the present ratio. As the Hon. Sir George Rainy admitted recently in His Railway Budget speech, internal prices of agricultural products generally ruled above export parity and thus restricted the natural outflow of Indian produce. Is there anything more required to reduce the value of our commodities and to cripple the Indian ryot? And yet the Government with characteristic bombast assert that they will use all the resources at their command to carry out this fell policy to its bitterest end without any regard to the vital interests of the country and its long suffering poor people. The Government of India appear to have completely lost themselves in the freedom which their peculiar position as the currency and credit authority of the country has given them. It would have been impossible for a national Government to choose a year of severest trial to the agricultural and commercial communities for the hobby of contracting currency, borrowing indefinitely and at high rates, and enforce a bank rate as high as 7 per cent when other countries keep it down to 2 or 3 per cent, and increase the tax burden all round for no other purpose than to keep going a currency and exchange fiction and a bloated expenditure budget.

Sir George Schuster in his recent budget speech also spoke in justification of this policy of contraction of currency because trade depression and falling prices required less currency. I had asked him, and would repeat the question now, which other countries have done so in similar situations and in the same manner. A big country, almost a sub-continent, with a rapidly growing population and in the course of developing economic resources, must require more and more currency and not less of it if there is any sign of normal health. But though he may not care to admit it, it is the present exchange ratio that has undoubtedly necessitated it. For by depressing the industries and commerce of the country it has cut down the export trade and is also at the same time driving capital from the country. In the result the Government find it difficult to make remittances home, and as a consequence thereof, reserves are being dissipated, currency is being contracted, and money is being borrowed in London at high rates, piling debt upon debt and interest liabilities in rapid succession. The Government very often refer to the maintenance of the gold standard in India. What the country really requires is not so much the gold standard as gold currency, because gold standard without a gold currency is no good to us. You know the present heavy fall in the prices of silver. In case of national crisis people here have only token coins in their possession worth about 8 or 9d. or thereabouts though they are supposed to be worth 18d., and they are the chief investments and the assets of the masses. It is also urged in this connection that it may disturb the supply of gold to the world. It may be that the supply of gold to the world may not be enough to go round. That is the look-out of other countries. Let us take care of ourselves. Others know how to take care of themselves.

#### FLIGHT OF CAPITAL

Gentlemen, I would like to say a few words in connection with the alarming flight of capital noticeable now-a-days. The said flight of capital is easily explained. Since our industries, commerce and agriculture are depressed and since investment

here has become unprofitable, thanks to the present exchange, what else would capital do? Capital naturally finds its way out, and added to that, there is the profit to be made by remitting abroad when the exchange is high. In short, as long as this exchange is high, there will always be this flight of capital and if there is still any doubt about that one has only to compare the figures of export of capital from the country. In the year 1920 when the exchange was very high, and in the years since it became 1sh.-6d, with the figures of those years when the exchange was 1s. 4d. to know for oneself the real cause of the flight of capital.

Now we shall turn to something more pleasant to take note of. Gentlemen, we are indebted to the Government for two important pieces of recent legislation for the benefit of the mercantile community; one was by the central Legislature for the amendment of the existing law for sale of goods which has removed a great deal of the obscurity of the old section further complicated by the enormous growth of conflicting case law around them. The other is by the Madras Legislative Council relating to the administration of local boards and district municipalities which merges the old obnoxious companies' tax and the profession tax and places the new tax on an equitable basis of ascertaining income. I desire however to protest that the local government's schedule of percentages of turnover passed in the Council recently is arbitrary and drawn up without consulting the commercial bodies which is indeed strange for a Minister's department to do.

#### PROBLEM AHEAD

There are many more things that have to be done for the relief of merchants. I hope the Indian Partnership Bill with suitable modifications will soon be placed on the Statute Book. Government ought to devote some attention to the development by means of tariffs, bounties and efficient administration of food adulteration laws, the industries connected with the Indian agricultural produce both for the home market and for the export trade. Margarine products, starch, malted food, confectionary, poultry and dairy products are only a few of the many enterprises which would give support to the suffering ryot of the country. The stores purchase rules have formally been revised with effect from the 1st January 1931 for introducing the rupee tender system, but there are enough loopholes in them to enable a recalcitrant administrator to ignore them and there is no definite preference for nationals. The virtue of the new rules still leaves much to the personality and outlook of the officers and departments. What greatly detracts from the benefit of these rules is the freedom enjoyed by quasi-Government institutions like the Port Trusts and Railway Companies which are in practice sufficiently free from the control both of the Government and of the people to decide their own policy.

India has surely got a difficult time ahead. A complete solution of her economic problems is too much for the Government of India to be expected to attempt as constituted at present. They are problems whose tackling is every day becoming more and more urgent and imperative as they devitalise the country and the people in a hopelessly rapid manner so long as they remain unsolved either wholly or in part. I have only to emphasise that they had to handle with the single object of promoting the prosperity of this country and the economic life and vitality of its people alone and none else.

## The Andhra Chamber Of Commerce

The second annual general meeting of the Andhra Chamber of Commerce was held on the 25th. April 1931 at the Hindu Theological High School, Madras. *Seth Narayandas Giridhardas*, President of the Chamber presided. The following is the text of his speech :—

Our country is in the throes of great constitutional changes, and it is of happy augury that the birth of our chamber synchronised with this great national upheaval. As a result of the deliberations of the Round Table Conference, India is to be conceded a substantial measure of Dominion Status on Federal basis. We can trust to our politicians to safeguard our liberties on the political side. Now that the future constitution of the Government of the country is on the anvil, we should try to



secure complete independence in respect of vital matters affecting the economic welfare and prosperity of the country, viz., finance, trade, commerce, industry and the fiscal policy of our country. There should be no compromise or yielding in these matters to gain some political advantage which may reduce itself to nothing without complete independence in these vital matters. As far as economic freedom is concerned, we must see that our interests are not jeopardised for the sake of any paltry political privilege which may give some more power and employment to Indians. So we appeal to the Government and Mahatmaji to invite a large number of merchants to participate in the final shaping of the constitution. The preliminary discussions reveal that the Europeans and the British Government desire "guarantees" and "safeguards" in the new constitution in respect of finance, trade and commerce amongst other matters. This demand is fraught with great danger to the economic progress of the country. To guarantee against "discriminatory" legislation will keep India in economic bondage for ever. In order to give special advantages to the Nationals of the country in removing the existing handicaps, it shall be necessary to have discriminatory legislation. The development of the mineral wealth of the country for the benefit of the nationals can be effected only by gaining and reserving concessions, which are discriminatory in nature. To enable India to convert the raw produce into finished products in the country itself and to foster the starting of home industries, you will have to enact protective legislation. To start and maintain key industries for nationals you will have to use discrimination. If we yield in the matter of giving "guarantees" against measures of this kind, we cannot remove the grinding poverty of the country and foster the growth of industries already established or create new ones. But we can guarantee against discriminatory legislation of a negative, vindictive and retaliatory character. Subject to this reservation, we cannot think of any "guarantees" and "safeguards" to our own national detriment. First and foremost importance should be attached to matters referred to above by me, viz., finance, trade, commerce and fiscal policy even in preference to political freedom because it is through these sources the wealth of the country is obtained and conserved without exploitation by the outsider to the disadvantage of its nationals. In order to maintain their present position which they have attained at the cost of the Nationals of the country the commercial interests both in India and England have set themselves against the granting of any real Swaraj Constitution without proper guarantees or safeguards for themselves as they apprehend that they cannot maintain their position of advantage under an Indian National Government.

#### THE DEMAND FOR SAFEGUARDS

The demand for safeguards by statute in respect of trade and other connected matters are made with a view to their continuing the economic exploitations of our country, to establish their right perpetually and also to maintain their dominating position in the trade and industries of the country unshaken and untransferred from their hands. Our aim in shaping any future constitution of the country should be to put a stop to further exploitation by outsider and to conserve the economic wealth of the country for the benefit of its Nationals.

Now the word Dominion Status connotes full liberty on all matters and therefore provision of safeguards or other restrictions in matters connected with the internal administration of the country, such as Fiscal or Commercial matters, will deprive it of the benefits or advantages of the new status or constitution, the intention to giving of which is heralded with noise and pomp and it would not even amount to granting a substantial measure of independence which the Congress and the country have been asking in no unambiguous terms.

Now the British trading interests here want equality and protection. They have already entrenched themselves by securing a large part of the country's trade and industry to the disadvantage of Indians. It is no wonder that they want equality now. How can there be equality of treatment under these conditions? It shall always be the aim of a National Government to help its own people in preference to others. It has been the policy of the British trading interests both here and in England to discourage all attempts by Indians to promote Swadeshi Industries. Exchange Banks also have largely supported this policy. Even the Bank established in our country and which is enjoying the benefit of a large amount of the Indian taxpayers' money has also not treated the Indians and the Europeans alike.

India already possesses fiscal autonomy in name. When tariffs were imposed on imports to protect our indigenous industry, non-nationals have exploited Indian resources by erecting factories in India and competing with Indian indigenous manufacture to keep us in bondage for ever. The conspicuous example of the Match

Industry of the sons of the soil being throttled and ruined by the Swedish Trust should open your eyes to the necessity for the amendment of the company law requiring a certain proportion of the capital to be Indian in such concerns as the Indian consumer bears the high cost of duty. When the Americans wanted to invest in the shares of the Electrical concerns of England it was prevented by the Government of England. We want only to do the same thing. We have got the example of the Tata Iron and Steel Industry going to the hands of the Americans after the payment of a large subsidy from the Indian revenues and the Government of this country permitted it. Such a step has never been allowed nor will be allowed in their own country. So we must not agree to any guarantees and we must reject any constitution which does not provide for a free and full growth of our citizenship and freedom in trade, commerce and industry of our own country. So the problem ahead of us is the internal reconstruction of the commercial, and industrial prosperity of the country. This can be achieved only by stopping the flight of capital from the country.

#### PROTECTION OF INDIAN INTERESTS

How are you going to do it? The British Investments in India are some where about a thousand million pounds. Nearly 4000 million pounds are borrowed capital for sterling loans and semi-government loans, and the remaining 600 million pounds are British Investments in India. A return of 6 per cent on this sum amounts to nearly 48 crores of rupees and this is a huge drain. Ways and means should be devised to stop this huge drain. Besides these things the invisible export of capital in the field of shipping, banking and insurance is another additional drain upon the country's resources. Foreign banks and insurance companies drain nearly 10 crores every year. Not content with this they adopt various tactics to ruin indigenous institutions by rate-war, withholding of facilities and discrimination.

The shipping operations are the sole monopoly of foreigners. Here, can you develop the trade of the country with these handicaps? We should legislate immediately to reserve the coastal trade to Indian shipping, to create a Reserve Bank to control the exchange and currency of the country and enact laws to promote the growth of Indian Insurance enterprises. The Government have delayed these salutary legislations by various tactics.

The Committee appointed by the Government have supported these measures. The history of other nations warrants the introduction thereof. There is equity and justice in our demands. How long can you wait? You are getting poorer every day. If you allow this drain to go on you will be getting poorer still every day you delay these measures.

Until we get the necessary constitutional powers to legislate we can help the trade and commerce effectively by preaching Swadeshi to our own people. There are well-established and reputable Indian Shipping Companies, Banks and Institutions with which we can have all our business done and thus prevent the outgo of Indian capital through these sources.

It is in times of such stupendous economic stagnation that we are grimly reminded of the thoroughly helpless situation in which Indian businessmen are placed. Few indigenous industries have yet come under the notice of the Tariff Board and fewer still have received the good graces of the Government. Plenty are the resources of this country for the manufacture of textiles, vegetable oils, cement, papers, paints and varnishes, and metals and machinery but the tariff of the Government towards alien enterprises, and the day-to-day administration of the country are all nicely adjusted for the promotion of foreigners' business at the expense of the nationals. The fiscal policy of the country is nominally in the hands of the Government of India and each Secretary of State from Mr. Montagu downwards has never been tired of reiterating it time and again, but in practice the interests of Lancashire Mills or of Birmingham foundries or of Glasgow ship-yards have been the determining factors in all Indian questions, whether political or economic.

#### POSITION OF INDIAN INSURANCE COMPANIES

Insurance is an important field in commercial enterprise for the national prosperity. According to the latest Blue Book published by the Government of India, nearly 245 Insurance Companies are doing business in India, of which only 97 are Indian companies. Among the Indian Companies only a dozen offices transact general Insurance business and the others are all purely Life Insurance Companies. The total insurance income in both life and other lines amount to nearly 8 three fourth crores

of rupees, of which 6½ crores represent Life Insurance premium and the other 2½ crores represent Fire, Marine, Motor and other lines of insurance. Nearly 3 crores of rupees go to the account of non-national companies in Life Insurance Business and in the other lines the Indian Companies earn only 41 lakhs out of the 2½ crores. On account of Insurance alone there is a drain of nearly five crores. This is really a scandalous state of things. Other countries have introduced legislation putting restrictions on the activities of the non-national concerns. Recently, Turkey has passed a law setting up a state monopoly for reinsurance to prevent foreign exploitation. China has introduced similar legislation and even a small State like Siam has taken a similar step. No doubt there is no such legislation in England where their own people are patriotic enough to insure in their own national concerns. But such a legislation is necessary in India, without which the Indian Companies cannot thrive in the face of the rate-war and the indirect help rendered to the non-national companies by the European Commerce and Exchange Banks.

Indian insurance companies' policies are not accepted by Exchange Banks when negotiating bills of foreign export and trade associations in England rule out in contracts that insurance policies of British companies only are accepted. In America, insurance business is controlled by the State and no company can operate there without obtaining a license, which enjoins a deposit of necessary reserve in American securities to meet the obligations of the American business. During the Japanese earthquake, the losses fell heavily upon many foreign insurance companies, and the Government of Japan assisted their nationals to recover their claims from these companies by extending credit facilities. Similarly, the non-Indian companies must invest a proportion of their income in India to meet their obligations effectively in times of great and severe losses. Otherwise, there is no adequate security for Indians for placing their business with foreign companies, and it is a duty of the Government to introduce such a legislation.

Life insurance companies contribute to the accumulation of wealth of a nation by encouraging thrift among its population. This accumulated wealth in turn can be utilised for the industrial and economic development of the country.

Similarly, legislation is badly required in the matter of amendment of the Indian Companies Act which is too much out of date. It is quite in keeping with the progress of the times that whenever such a revision is undertaken proper safeguards should be introduced for the interests of policy-holders, as in the case of proprietary life insurance companies and of depositors in banking institutions, by securing for them an effective voice and control in the administration.

#### THE TRADE DEPRESSION

The year 1930 is an eventful year. The depression in trade has given rise to great distress in our country. This depression is attributed to world causes. While it may partly be due to world causes, the unsympathetic exchange and currency policy of the Government has contributed in a greater measure to aggravate the situation. No doubt, India suffered in common with the rest of the world, but her sufferings are greater owing to the bigger fall in prices in agricultural produce than in manufactured articles and the indifference of unsympathetic Government prompt in adopting remedial measures. This indifference of the Government has recoiled on themselves as much as it has affected the people so that the Provincial Governments, the Central Government and the local authorities are all faced with the problem of huge revenue deficits. In a period of heavy business losses, the commercial public are, on that account, being saddled with another inopportune burden in the shape of additional direct and indirect taxes. The Government have shown themselves totally lacking in a correct appreciation of the sufferings of the people because the idea of adjusting expenditure to the revenue has never occurred to them, while they regard the expenditure budget as more or less sacrosanct. The Government of India have now covered their whole deficit with new taxes in the teeth of the bitterest opposition in the Legislative Assembly, and hereafter propose to enter on elaborate consultation with the Provincial custodians of the purse and the mercantile houses and public institutions as to the scope for retrenchment in Government offices. It has always been the case that by the time these Retrenchment Committees report the Government will have turned the corner and there will be no need for retrenchment, If the Government had proceeded in a less half-hearted manner and left a few crores to be made by the Retrenchment Committee from cuts in the departments, the people would have had greater confidence in them and would not have grudged to be taxed extra in emergencies.

**INDIA IN PARLIAMENT & ABROAD**

**January---June 1931**

# INDIA IN PARLIAMENT

## Debate on Round Table Conference

HOUSE OF COMMONS—26th. JANUARY 1931

Immediately after question in the Commons, the Premier initiated the debate on the Round Table Conference by moving an adjournment. The debate was in the nature of a review of the work of the Round Table Conference. There was no formal motion before the House and there was no division. Lord Reading, Earl Russell, Lord Burnham and Lord Lloyd were present in the Peer's Gallery. The Dominions gallery was full. Sir Leslie Wilson and Sir Michael O'Dwyer were also present.

*The Prime Minister*, moving an adjournment, said: "As the House knows, this is being done to enable a statement to be made to-day on the Round Table Conference. To enable the House to discuss it I should like to begin by emphasising the fact that the present position has been the result of evolution taken step by step, each with its inevitable consequence of a further step being taken later on.

I see by the newspapers that Mr. Churchill propose to make some observations which I am informed will be highly critical. I hope the Right Hon'ble Gentleman will not forget, however, his own connection with this evolution. He was a member of the Cabinet and President of the Board of Trade in 1908 when the King-Emperor made the proclamation to Princes and peoples of India read by the Viceroy in the durbar held on the 2nd November 1908 and in that proclamation this sentence occurs:

"From the first, principle of representative institutions began to be introduced and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my councillors, that principle may prudently be extended."

Later on, when the next step was taken, a proclamation was made to the people of India on 23rd December 1919, Mr. Churchill, still with the sound theory of Cabinet responsibility, being one who shared responsibility for the issue of the statement. There it was said:

"The Act of 1861 sowed the seed of representative institutions and the seed was quickened into life by the Act of 1909. The Act, that has now become law, entrusts the elected representatives of the people with a definite share of the Government and points the way to full responsible Government hereafter."

Later, in the same proclamation it said, talking of the benefits that we had given India:

"But there is one gift which yet remains and without which the progress of a country cannot be consummated—a representative of the people to direct her affairs and safeguard her interests. The defence of India against foreign aggression is the duty of common Imperial interest. The control of domestic concerns is the burden which India may legitimately aspire to take upon her own shoulders. The burden is too heavy to be borne in full until time and experience have brought the necessary strength, but opportunity will be given for experience to grow and for opportunity to increase with the capacity. Without it the work of British India will be incomplete."

It was therefore with wise judgment that the beginnings of representative institutions were laid many years ago. Their scope has been extended stage by stage until there now lies before us the definite step on the road of Responsible Government.

One further final declaration. I will quote the Ninth Clause of the Revised Instruction issued to Governor-General of India by an order in Council on 9th March 1921 and published in India on 8th June of that year. This is how it reads:

"For, above all things, it is our will and pleasure that plans laid by our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible Government in British India as an integral part of our Empire may come to fruition to the end that British India may attain its due place amongst our Dominions."

That was in 1921. There is also the speech made by my predecessor (Mr. Baldwin), in which he says:

"Since that great stride towards the goal has been made and in all joint activities of British Commonwealth of Nations India now plays her part and in the fullness of time we look forward to seeing her on equal partnership with Dominions."

That was in May 1927. I quote that to blame nobody but to praise every-body, when he had the forethought and foresight to conclude before the event arises that event would one day arise and that it would be wisdom to recognise the fact.

I am talking as briefly as possible on the Conference as the White Paper, which has become a Blue Book, is in the hands of the members and the Secretary of State for India who bore such heavy responsibilities with such success during the Conference (cheers) will be prepared to supply any details required. We sat for ten weeks from 12th November until 19th January.

The Conference was held—let there be no mistake about this—as the result of pledges given from time to time, whilst the enquiries were going on in India. It is perfectly true that consultations took place and the conference as it met was not precisely the same thing as we had in mind when we anticipated that consultations should take place. I do not make that by way of a confession. But what we found as weeks went on, was that the situation changed, that new currents came into the scheme of events, and that certain movements took place in India and I should have been, and my colleagues with me would have been, blameworthy rather than praise worthy if we had stuck to the letter of declaration made in circumstances which no longer existed.

Our purpose was this. First of all we wanted a Conference and if as days went on one obstacle after another was put in the way of getting the Conference to meet, it was my business and that of my colleagues to remove those obstacles and if, with the removal of the obstacles with a little variation of the plan, the first plan of the Joint Committee of this House and the House of Lords having first gone over, we made up our minds in the main as to who we were to propose, then having some Indian representatives coming over not so much in negotiating, perhaps as in a consultative capacity, if that is changed, then I plead guilty to supporting the change, but my guilt consists in the variation of the letter in order to secure effectively the operation of the spirit of the Conference.

"I must say before going further how much everybody in the House, whether they are opposed to the business of the Conference or not, ought to show their thanks and gratitude to men and women, who came from India to take part in it. They came at very great risk, not only to their reputation, they came at great inconvenience and great loss. Everyone who had the pleasure—and I am perfectly certain that I am speaking this with respect for those who sit opposite me—of co-operating with them, held them in higher esteem as days went on and as we got closer and closer to grips with the tremendous problem which framing the constitution for India presents. We ought also to thank our experts. I never worked with a more efficient body of men than those both from India Office and in Indian Civil Service, who were specially told off to keep us in touch with realities and prevent us from making ideas get out of contact with experience."

"Then our raw material was what was known as the Simon Report. I have already said and said in the Conference, (I have nothing to withdraw from what I have said and I will repeat it as often as may be necessary) that for that report India owes debt which India, as time goes on, will be in better and still better position to appreciate. On that report we had the benefits of the comments of the Government of India. We also had the benefit of the report put in and the advice given by various Provincial Governments like the Punjab Provincial Government regarding the very intricate problem of minority representation in the Punjab. We also had the Nehru Report and without these preparations, one and all, it would have been absolutely impossible for us to have conducted the business of the Conference.

The purpose of the Conference was to get first of all, by personal contact, the conviction put into the hearts of those Indians, at any rate who came here, that not only were the Government but Parliament, the three parties and both Houses, were honestly endeavouring to meet the legitimate expectations of India.

"We also by this Conference, had the great advantage of stating across the Conference Table the real problems involved in further advance by ourselves and hearing the claims of India put by some of the most able advocates India has got to-day and it gave also the opportunity of expressing our views of putting the problem from our point of view and of putting into common pool the experiences which we had of governing India so that they might be mixed up with the experiences which Indians had of being governed by us. In that way things that

have not been considered by either side, but important considerations that have been considered by both sides from their point of view and only from their point of view, assumed a different relative importance, when the problem was brought down to the actual realities of building up architectural ideas in the form of stone and lime, so to speak.

The third advantage was this. We had not met to frame a constitution. Make no mistake about that. It was never the intention of anybody to sit down, draft word after word, line after line, clause after clause of a constitution, but what we meant to do, and what, I think, we have been very successful in doing, was to agree upon the principle, which, in advance, should be applied to the Indian Government and which should be made the foundation of any constitution that should ultimately be granted. In order to do that work, we met at a preliminary open meeting of the whole Conference. Then the whole Conference met in Committee and the Conference divided into Sub-Committees, of which there were nine.

If the Hon. Members have read the Blue Book published at the end of the last week they will see in that book the reports. I am sorry we have not been able to give more. But I can assure the House that what we have been able to produce in the short time at our disposal, is, to the best of my belief, all that is essential for a judgment upon the work of the Conference.

The Honourable Members who have read the Blue Book will have noted that it is clearly stated that everything in it is provisional. The stability and success of the work that has to be done depends upon how the structure as a whole is to be built up. The general belief (I confess, I share it whole-heartedly after having gone through the business of the Conference and done its work and not only publicly but also privately discussed with the representatives of the people in that delightfully informal candid way one can do round a fireside or across a fireside), I believe most sincerely, is that a structure can be built up. It is a new structure. In the course of our studies we have had to get hold of many constitutions—Japanese constitution before the War, constitutions of the United States and our own Dominion Constitutions—in order to find out how it is possible, practically to produce something that would work and yet would meet the extraordinary variety and novel requirements of Indian conditions.

"I believe it can be done. But the first thing in order to enable it to be done was to remove all Indian problems from the field of suspicion, with candour and goodwill and to get them, at any rate those whom we could influence, to see exposed in all its naked weakness, the sort of policy which has been pursued in India for so long, the policy of so-called Passive Resistance, but which is only a polite, and a sort of moral cloak for what we have been accustomed to meet for many many years in the west and have always called it by the honest name of lawlessness. To remove all that and start co-operative negotiations on the basis of mutual understanding, a body of men including the Princes on the one hand, and representatives of the depressed classes on the other, Hindus and Muslims on the one hand and Trade Union leaders on the other, met together, as far as I know, for the first time in Indian negotiations. At this moment they are on their way to India, sworn champions of the work done, convinced of our sincerity, advocates of cessation of strife and sworn to do their best to inaugurate a regime of goodwill and co-operate to find the solutions of various problems which presented themselves to us at St. James's Palace.

"The Government are now considering how the work is to be carried on. I am sorry I cannot offer any suggestions to-day. I have already seen the Viceroy-elect and I hope if there is anything like good fortune, some few hours of leisure may be given to approach the leaders of both parties with suggestions as to how the work can be carried on, for I feel that it would be one of the greatest calamities imaginable if that very useful and admirable co-operation which existed between ourselves and the representatives of the parties were broken in the future stages of the negotiations. When I say that, I am not implicating any honourable members opposite. We do not always agree but I think we all strove to show a very good example. I do hope it will be possible to carry on that co-operation on the same independent non-committal footing as the co-operation which was carried on through the Conference. As regards the Conference the first formidable question was the question of responsibility at the centre. Speaking for myself before the Conference met, after a study of what had been said in India, I had come to the conclusion that even if British India came into the confederation or the question had to be considered by us we should have had, by hook or by crook, to devise some means of giving some responsibility to the Central Government. Nothing would have been accepted with-

out that. The question was, was it possible to give it? If it was possible it ought to be given. If it was not possible then no agreement was possible.

"There was no difficulty about the provinces. Honourable Members will find the Provincial sketch drawn out by the Committee No. II, the report of whose work they will find in the Blue Book. There it is proposed to establish ordinary representative institutions, provisionally increase the seats in the Legislatures of the provinces and lower the franchise provisionally. It is not agreed as to the figure because Indians are pressing for a little more, but to lower franchise, so that it may be increased by anything between 10 and 22 per cent. Then the Executive shall be held jointly responsible to the legislature just on the model of ordinary western representative institutions. But central responsibility is the problem. Before we had met many hours, a statement made by a representative of the Princes removed a great deal of the difficulty. The Princes declared that they were now prepared to come into a federation and further they were not merely dealing with British India but with the States as well.

"Then the Central Legislature would be representative of the three elements British India, States, and Governor-General representing the Crown in so far as his being the custodian of certain reserved subjects made it necessary that his advisers on those reserved subjects should have access to the Central Legislature. The question arose how the Central Legislature could be composed, how elected. We could not pursue that to the end, but the proposals were noted and the discussions showed, I think, that here again, with a little bit more time, so that the various alternatives might be proposed and devices suggested, agreement can be made. The Honourable Members will find that discussed in considerable detail in the report of the Sub-Committee No. 1, over which Lord Sankey presided with such conspicuous success.

"Then the question of the powers of the Central body arose. I would just content myself by referring the Honourable Members to the schedule of subjects which they will find in two parts of the Blue Book. It is quite obvious that the power of the Central Legislature, when it is created, first of all must be largely a matter of cataloguing and scheduling and the first attempt has been made in the Blue Book.

"Then the question of reserved subjects arose. It is perfectly obvious that defence is a matter which must be reserved, certainly for the time being. External relations is another. This again involves the relation of responsible advisers of the Governor-General to the Central Legislature and Central Executive. That is another little complexity of the constitution, but it has been met before. Fortunately, there are a few precedents for that. So there are various ways in which it can be dealt with. Constitutions with precisely the same provisions to meet precisely the same problems are in working order and have been in working order. To all intents and purposes, as far as the machinery is concerned, though the constitutional spirit and purpose are different, it is akin to the provision made by the pre-war German constitution when Ministers, without being members of the Reichstag, could sit at elevated platforms at the end of the Chamber and address the assembly.

"There is a kind of reserved subject which is not fully a reserved subject, though it is rather in the nature of one. These are subjects which have to be determined by safeguards. First of all there is finance. I am dealing with central authority. Quite obviously, if there are reserved subjects like Defence under control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General must be secured to finance what is required for the exercise of his authority as custodian of those reserved subjects.

"So the first condition of the transfer of responsibility for finance to the executive is the guarantees and safeguards that have to be put in with regard to the finance of reserved subjects. Methods for doing that are accordingly in the report. Then there is another group of financial guarantees. The Secretary of State has undertaken obligations for loans and such things in India's interests and as representative of India and these obligations must be covered by way of a safeguard. Then there is the general position of confidence and credit. It is essential that in the transfer to India of any form or any amount of financial responsibility care must be taken that the transfer is not to be accompanied by loss of confidence or damaged credit. Otherwise India will suffer very severely in the course of the transfer. Here again, the proposal is made in the work of the Sub-Committee concerned that a Federal Reserve Bank, outside political control, should be established, because such a bank, we are advised by our financial advisers, will tend to maintain the credit of India and shield it from the suffering which it might have to undergo if any sort of panic or lack of confidence arose regarding its financial administration.

"Then there are some general safeguards, the maintenance of tranquility, Law and Order and so on. A great deal is being made about this. I see that some of our



critics are placing far too much emphasis upon paper provisions. There are such safeguards in the operation, at least in the background, in every free constitution in the world. We have them here. All that the safeguard amounts to is that in the event of emergency, power must be in somebody's hands to protect the State and to see that Law and Order are not allowed to go to rack and ruin, without any attempt being made to keep them stable. This is not a safeguard suggested to be imposed upon India because we cannot trust her, as I see some of the Indian papers are trying to make out. This is a safeguard transported from every free constitution, where it is in some shape or form into the Indian constitution and it is not meant to be used in ordinary times. It is meant simply to be latent in the backgrounds and we impressed upon the Indians who were here that, on no account were they to allow Indian opinion to assume that that was going to be an active power exercised by the Governor-General but that the less it was used, and if it were almost forgotten, the better would Britain be pleased with regard to the success of the working of the constitution.

"Then there are certain special problems. It has been proposed by every community, from the Mahomedans to the tiniest minority of Indian Christians, that when the constitution has been drafted, it must contain a Declaration of Rights of individuals irrespective of caste, creed, community or anything else and if that Declaration is made, there must be some reserve power and some safeguard given to the Government of the provinces or Governor-General of India.

"Subject to these provisions a Central Executive responsible to the legislature should be established and recognised. There is one other great misunderstanding which I see is being made a good deal of. It is stated that this executive, this Ministry is to be appointed by the Governor-General and we are told by some of our critics in India that that means that he is going to do this out of his own free will.

Those of us, who had sat in the front Opposition benches, and who are sitting here, know perfectly well that we are appointed by His Majesty and that is all that is meant by this. The Governor-General shall appoint these Ministers in precisely the same way as His Majesty himself appoints His Government here and to secure that, there will be instructions in the Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governor-General as soon as this condition of affairs is in being in India.

Therefore, it is possible to create at the centre, a Legislature and a Executive. There will be certain reserved subjects for the time being and there must be certain safeguards and most unfortunately, in the enumeration of safeguards (which must be done), the substance of the safeguards and the activity of the clauses enumerated will give them an importance which as a matter of working fact, they will never have, unless the whole constitution is going to break down.

On reserved subjects, on the conditions imposed on finance, (let there be no mistake about this) there must be a certainty so as to prevent risk. That will be only during the transitional period. There must be safeguards and conditions imposed which will save Indian credit from bankruptcy.

"Another group of problems which faced us will have to be dealt with in the constitution and that is the minority problems and community problems. These divide themselves into two divisions:—the general problem of minorities and of various communities and provisional aspects of those problems. This is going to be one of the most difficult problems we have to face. It is a very curious problem and if Honourable Members who are interested in these constitutional and political points care to read carefully the Minorities Committee's Report and certain parts of the reports of Sub-Committee No 1 where this question is dealt with, I promise them one of the most fascinatingly interesting studies which they have undertaken. It is full of profound interest. Of course it is historical. You build up a legislature as this is built up by constituencies. Voting in constituencies is not to take place and cannot at the moment take place in the way that voting in the constituencies takes place where you might have an aristocrat as one candidate and a working man as another.

"You would have your constituencies divided up into sections with a certain number of working class constituencies where nobody but the working men could run as candidates, a certain number of, say, the Church of England constituencies which nobody but a communicating member of the Church of England could run until you filled up the hundred per cent of your constituencies in this way: Then, before any election took place, it would be perfectly certain that the Church of England people would have, say, 15 per cent of the seats here and working class, say, 25 per cent and so on. That is the simplest and crudest form of claim that is made.

on behalf of the various communities. That means that if every constituency is to be ear-marked as to the community or interest there will be no room left for the growth of what we consider to be purely political organisations which could comprehend all communities, all creeds, all classes and all conditions of faith.

"That is one of the problems which has to be faced because, if India is going to develop a robust political life, there must be room for national political parties based upon conceptions of India's interest and not upon conceptions regarding the well-being of any field that is smaller or less comprehensive than the whole of India.

"Then there is the modified proposal regarding that. A proposal is made that there should not be community constituencies with a community register, but there should be a common register in the constituencies, but that with the common register a certain percentage of representation should be guaranteed to certain communities. It is first a proposal in a somewhat more attractive democratic form but still essentially the same. Another problem which faces us from that point of view is, if your legislature is to be composed in these water-tight compartments how you are going to appoint your executive. The claim is put in that the Executive, that is the administration, the Cabinet shall also be divided into water-tight compartments.

"Now that is the most fascinatingly difficult problem that is in front of us and of the Indian constitution. When you bring it down to the provinces there are two great provinces peculiarly subject to this demand of the communities.—Punjab where there are three important communities, Mussalmans, Hindus and Sikhs and Bengal where there is contest between Mussalmans and Hindus. The trouble comes in here curiously enough. Take Punjab for instance. The Mussalman population is 55 per cent of the Punjab population, but, owing to qualifications required in order to get the name on the register the Mussalman registers show only 46 per cent. Mussalmans are poor and are not qualified to the same extent as Hindus."

*Mr. Isaac Foot* interpolated: "And there are more children."

*The Prime Minister*: "Yes and there are more children, but there it is and the claim there is that representation in the Provincial Legislature should not be representation as shown by population. And with the Sikhs the question of weightage comes in and so on. And it is very difficult to convince so very dear, delightful people that if you give one community weightage you cannot create weightage out of nothing; you have to take it from somebody else. When they discover that, they become very confused indeed and find that they are up against a brickwall. Here again, I am profoundly convinced that an agreement can be made which will be satisfactory to all sides. As a matter of fact, in the case of the Punjab, I got it down to a difference of only one seat and it has never been so close as that before. If we had had more time it is probable that we should have succeeded in reaching a settlement.

"I am afraid that the House, especially if it has read the Blue Book, will feel that I have said quite enough. On the outside there are whole questions, the details of which I need not go into. About Burma we have accepted the principle of separation and it is going to be given effect to by a careful enquiry and the adjustment of claims. The North-West Frontier Province will, under the proposal of the Committee, become a Governor's province with certain modifications. The creation of Sind as an independent province will be made if an expert committee on finance reports that it can be done.

"I would like to draw the attention of the House to the resolution in Blue Book. It is the only resolution carried at the Conference. When it was all over, when all reports had been put in, considered and recorded the Conference unanimously (I believe there is one delegate who said he did not quite agree to something, but I really am right in saying unanimously) carried the resolution:

"That these reports, provisional though they are, together with the recorded notes attached to them, afford in the opinion of the Conference material of the highest value for use in the framing of a constitution for India, embodying as they do a substantial measure of agreement on the main ground plan and many helpful indications of points of details to be further pursued and the Conference feels that arrangements should be made for pursuing, without interruption, the work upon which it has been engaged, including the provision in the constitution of adequate safeguards for Mussalmans, Depressed Classes, Sikhs and all other important sections of community."

"I think that a very satisfactory conclusion to the Conference. The general survey has been made and the line laid down for filling in the details and so I ask

the House to agree to the Government pursuing the problems in detail in consultation with representative Indians and constitutional experts.

"The stage has almost been reached—I am not at all sure, I should not be quite justified in saying that it has actually been reached—when we should begin our plans with trial drafts. If we refused, supposing we do not do this, what are the prospects? Repression; nothing but repression and it is a very curious repression, very uncomfortable repression and a kind of repression from which we shall get neither credit nor success. It is the repression of the masses of the people—a great proportion of these masses being women and children.

"It is repression not of organisations, not of bodies but it will develop into a repression of a whole population. If we are prepared to march our soldiers from Himalayas to Cape Comorin, then refuse to allow us to go on."

"If we are prepared to subdue by force not only the people but the spirit of the time refuse to allow us to proceed. If we are prepared to stage for the whole world to behold the failure of our political genius and at the same time provide it with a spectacle which will bring our name and our fame very low indeed, then refuse to allow us to go on. If, on the other hand, you wish to bind India to you by bonds of confidence and make her happy within your Empire and Commonwealth, if you wish to hear her praise you in gratitude and remain with you in pride, then accept the work that has been done by the Conference and instruct the Government to proceed with it to its complete conclusion." (Cheers.)

*Sir Samuel Hoare* agreed with every word of the Premier regarding the Indian delegates. He said that it was a great privilege and profit to him to sit at the Conference day by day with the Indian colleagues discussing questions of the greatest complexity and importance to both India and British.

Sir S. Hoare said first that it was of great importance that for a long period the Conference concentrated the attention of Britain, the Empire and India on questions that were often insufficiently considered. It was not possible to exaggerate the services which the delegates had performed. Discussing the report of the sub-committee, Sir S. Hoare considered that there were three main results:

(1) The emergence of an All-India Federation as a practicable programme, in which connection Sir S. Hoare paid a tribute to the Simon Commission, who had made the Federation the very basis of their work;

(2) The fact that all had agreed on the introduction of responsible government in the Provinces and

(3) The fact that every member of the Conference, to a greater or lesser degree, had accepted the necessity of safeguards.

Sir S. Hoare pointed out that Conservatives considered that a measure of general agreement had been reached, but there were serious questions which had been scarcely discussed and others which had not been settled.

Sir S. Hoare mentioned that these points were not to blame the Conference for it was impossible to settle all great and complicated questions within ten weeks but because the fact must be taken into account. Sir S. Hoare declared that the Conservative delegation had made their position clear that they could not give a definite answer until the question was more definite. They were clear that unless the fact were faced and talking in generalities was abandoned, there could not be a constitutional advance. Sir S. Hoare mentioned the questions of Defence, Finance and Minorities as concrete examples of the difficulties and said that the Conservatives were not creating difficulties. They were inherent in the problem. They were so stubborn and so incontrovertible that he was certain that they were only to be solved in a spirit of goodwill and co-operation and with a frank admission of their existence.

Sir S. Hoare added that the Conservatives were realists and were prepared to face facts. They did not like promises which they were not sure of fulfilling and while they recognised the great changes occurring in the East, there were certain solemn obligations which they were unable to abandon.

Sir S. Hoare pointed out that the obligation for defence of India still rested on Britain. Foreign affairs and international obligations must still be controlled by the Crown. Internal security and financial stability must be safeguarded and protection of minorities must still be our solemn obligation. Unfair discrimination against British traders must be prevented and the rights of the Services preserved. Lastly, the constitution must be maintained on a sure and stable foundation. These are our fundamental interests in India. We should be false to our whole history and national character if we abandoned them. Satisfy our legitimate demands in these respects, show us that the constitution can be framed with effective safeguards

and that the system of government will have a reasonable chance of working and succeeding and we shall not split hairs about words or oppose a proposal because of details that do not matter.

The Conservatives no less than any party in the House wished to see a peaceful and contented India in which the British and Indians would work side by side with no feeling of inequality of status. Britain's task in India was far from accomplished. We were entering on a new phase in which partnership and co-operation should be the moving principle. Sir S. Hoare did not expect peace with irreconcilable extremists, but he was certain that we would pull through and live to see the partnership of which he had spoken.

*Mr. Issac Foot* prefaced his speech with the remark that he was well aware that there were all kinds of anomalies in the R. T. C. proposals, but declared that there was no anomaly so great as a Government of India by the British people. He said that the matter was important before all others that came before the House. The difference between a friendly India and an alienated India was so great that no statesman could appreciate it and no economist could compute it. Mr. Foot paid a tribute to the Premier and hoped that he would allow nothing to interfere with the completion of the task. He paid a tribute also to Lord Saukey, Mr. Benn and Sir John Simon, but for whom the Conference, if held, would not have succeeded. Mr. Foot emphasised the importance of not delaying the carrying on the work of the Conference. He said good faith was equally important. It was good faith that had made the present Viceroy a most honoured man in India. Mr. Foot hoped that after his fine work was completed, it would be continued by another whose name was honourably associated with India. Mr. Foot considered that some criticism made here was unworthy of Britain and asked the critics what was their alternative. What would they have said to the statement of Dr. Sapru when he ended his speech which in a certain sense might influence the future of the world.

Mr. Foot said that the difficulty with India was that the common sentiment was opposed to authority. Prison in Britain meant a mark of degradation, but in India, after Gandhi was imprisoned, prison meant a badge of honour. The question was not whether the spirit deserved praise or blame but what was to be done with it?

Mr. Foot referred to the emphasis laid on responsibility at the centre and said that it was quite clear that if it was not granted, the Conference would fail. An unqualified demand had been made for it while the Princes had made it clear that they would only federate with a self-governing British India. Mr. Foot paid tribute to Lord Reading whose declaration was "the great divide on the Conference."

Mr. Foot admitted that there were risks in central responsibility, but pointed out that India would be the greatest sufferer by disturbance and chaos. He regretted that the minorities' problem had not been settled, but pinned his faith in this regard to the youth and the women of India.

Mr. Foot continued: "I believe that the demand for self-Government is mainly a claim for status. It is not merely a claim for material ends. India a few years ago was swept with anger because of the treatment of her Nationals in other parts of the Empire. The Imperial Conference of 1923 did something to restore confidence. He believes that he is equal to any race in the world and that he is not one of the subject people and ignorant race. He has civilisation with ours, not always to our advantage. He sees in our Western civilisation much that he does not want in India. He believes that in our Western civilisation there are some elements he would adopt, but he wants to adopt them as a free man, not because he is obliged to do so as a member of a subject race. It is not a claim merely for status but also for liberty. "We have given the Indian people the love of Liberty and when we are told that Gandhism and all it stands for is to be crushed, I ask, "what are we to do with English literature? If the literature of Liberty is excluded, practically all literature we have will be excluded."

Mr. Foot referred to the disabilities of the depressed classes and said: "If we do not establish safeguards for their protection their blood may cry out against us. We have placed upon us the great responsibility of dealing with these people. If I had any advice to give to the future Governors it will be: 'Let your main concern be for these people.' They may be defenceless now but one day they will be strong. As there is justice upon this earth there is no bank that can keep back for ever the accumulated sufferings of these people. The real test of the progress of India twenty years hence will be, 'what have you done for these people?' I am a believer in self-government for India, because I believe that upon those lines there is the best hope for these people."

Mr. Foot concluded: "Our task of bringing India within the commonwealth is the biggest thing we have ever yet attempted. The great problem of the future will be the problem of race and colour. The peace of the world largely depends on a solution of this problem. We have had long association with India. There have been put upon us a great responsibility. If we have given the greatest blessings of peace to India and a common language and recognition of justice, would it not be a most lamentable thing if that long and honourable association should now be broken in the midst of anger, hatred and ill-will? I believe that along the lines of the proposed settlement that association can be maintained and that problem cannot be solved except upon lines of friendship.

*Major Graham Pole* considered that the release of Mr. Gandhi and others showed great courage and foresight. He said that they were making an attempt to redeem pledges often given. This would open a new chapter in the history of India—a momentous chapter for India and Britain. He hoped that India would accept it in the spirit in which the offer was made.

*Sir J. Simon* pointed out that the Conference had accomplished two very great things:—firstly, the princes had been brought into a discussion not only with British but with their own British Indian compatriots on the constitutional question; secondly, it had begun the work of bringing British politicians on the other face to face with the stupendous difficulties of the Indian problem and succeeded in getting rid of suspicion and misunderstanding in a remarkable way. *Sir J. Simon* thought that the contrast between Indian and British ways of looking at things constituted a large part of the difficulty in constitutional discussions. He was glad there had been an opportunity of meeting Indian statesmen and contemplating the nature of some problems but thought that Parliament would not discharge its duty unless it was assured that the scheme would work.

*Sir J. Simon* had not expected the R. T. C. to reach agreed conclusions on every point, but, without wishing to deprecate the good work, he wished that it had been possible to carry some matters further. He referred in this connection to the proportion of States in the Central Legislature, the position of their representatives when British Indian affairs were discussed, Paramountcy, communal problem and the question of representation of minorities in the Executive. He emphasised that he was not trying to minimise the results achieved, but felt that until more progress was made on some of these main heads, it was impossible to feel quite confident how the proposals would work.

Summing up, *Sir J. Simon* said that firstly, he rejoiced at the Conference's success in securing the Princes' adhesion to the idea of Federation; secondly, inevitably in the time available the Conference had been unable to produce a practical solution of so many most difficult and cardinal matters and; thirdly, while recognising how much satisfaction the formula of responsibility with safeguards could give, he was unable to regard the unformulated safeguards on vital matter as mere questions of detail, since the formulation of the methods whereby safeguards would work into the scheme was really the essence of the scheme itself. They were fundamental. He did not believe that even the broad outlines of the Indian constitution, could be regarded as satisfactorily laid until these main matters were nearer settlement. Lastly, *Sir J. Simon* urged that the good work of the Conference should be recognised as the beginning not the end. He begged Parliament now to undertake its own duty and also contribute with patience and good-will to the practical work of recasting the constitution and developing the responsibilities of India. Before concluding, *Sir J. Simon* took the opportunity "as there has never been a debate in the House, of course, on the Simon Commission's report", of expressing his deep obligations to his colleagues of all parties who had served with him in the enquiry.

*Mr. Churchill*, who made it clear that he was not speaking for the Official Opposition, considered that the handling of Indian affairs during the last eighteen months had been most unfortunate and had already led to results which would be long lamented. He asked why the procedure decided upon when the Simon Commission was appointed had not been observed. *Mr. Churchill* said that the Viceroy's announcement of November 1929 was not called for and constituted an intervention between Parliament and the Simon Commission whose report was profoundly prejudiced before publication and Indian political classes simultaneously made enormously increased demands. *Mr. Churchill* complained that the Simon Commission report had been shelved and its members excluded from the Conference in vain hopes of persuading Indian extremists to attend. He declared that the Conference which was

not an authorised constituent assembly came to the conclusion which was utterly unforeseen even a year ago in almost any quarter of the House. Mr. Churchill said that the immense body of knowledge represented by the Simon Commission's report and the great body of reason and authority represented by the Government of India had all been set aside within a few weeks and we were confronted with a constitution outlined in Blue Book. In this historical landslide of opinion, Conservative delegates almost alone kept their heads. The rapid landslide of British opinion and policy has been accompanied in India by a steady development of unrest, disorder, disloyalty and assassination.

Mr. Churchill declared that he accepted the Preamble of the Act of 1919 and also clause 41 of the Act. He said that the former showed the ultimate goal to which India might aspire and the latter the right of Parliament to advance or restrict the development of constitutional Government. Mr. Churchill declared that 'we were not relieving ourselves of the burdens and responsibilities in India, but were merely settling a scene for a more complicated controversy. The Conference's scheme provided no solution. The clash and agitation in India would continue, but they would no longer be confined to rioting in streets and demonstrations in the legislature. They would invade the heart and the brains of the Government of India. Two centuries of effort and achievement had given Britain her own rights in India and when a nation found the whole position in jeopardy, there would be a sharp awakening and reaction of the most vehement character would sweep the country.

*Mr. Fenner Brockway*, after criticism of Mr. Churchill whose policy he said would have caused imprisonment, not of sixty thousand but of six hundred thousand, said that the extraordinary development since the beginning of the Round Table Conference in public opinion in Britain was largely due to the way in which Indian delegates had put their case, but a much greater force was the strength of the present movement in India. The unseen powers at the Round Table Conference had been Mr. Gandhi in jail and behind him sixty thousand others. Mr. Brockway welcomed the release of Mr. Gandhi and others and urged the Government if it really wanted the Congress to participate in the discussions to open the prison doors of every political offenders, including Meerut and 1919 prisoners. Mr. Brockway concluded with the statement that Britain ultimately would have to recognise India's right to full self-government and full self-determination.

*Mr. Lane Fox* declared that Mr. Churchill was ignorant of the realities of the situation. Mr. Lane Fox did not wish to take a pessimistic view, but it would be fatal if Government encouraged the belief that there was any prospect of immediate success from the conference. This would not be achieved in a month or a year but would be spread over many years and many governments and it would be the duty of the government to carry on the work.

*Earl Winterton* said that the two points which arose as a result of the Conference were, could the recommendations worked out eventually into a constitution, for India had to be governed, not only with understanding, but with a firm resolve to make the new plan a success.

*Mr. Oliver Stanley* said that they were trying to enlist Indians in governing India inviting their co-operation and good-will, but of what assistance would that be if Mr. Churchill's programme became Britain's policy? Were the thousands in prison, were the eighty delegates to the Round Table Conference all to be classed as implacable in hatred and impervious to reason intent only on destruction. A movement like a Nationalist movement was not to be put down by a few flam-boyant speeches or arm-chair critics.

It might be that wisdom, conciliation and good-will would fail, but Mr. Stanley believed that the delegates went to the Conference sincerely anxious to find a settlement, which would bring peace to India and preserve the obligations, duties and responsibilities of Britain. Mr. Stanley replied to some of Churchill's and Sir J. Simon's points and referring to the safeguards, emphasised that they were determined upon the principle that Britain had certain obligations, which she could not abandon. Mr. Stanley considered it natural that Indians attached importance to responsibility at the centre and said that Mr. Churchill would have had a grievance if he had entered the Commons, twenty-five years ago and been condemned to perpetual Opposition. Mr. Stanley believed that they had to make it clear that there were certain fundamentals by which they stood and from which they would not be frightened by any threats and if those were granted, they should take this perhaps the last opportunity of bringing peace to a troubled land.

*Mr. Baldwin* (Conservative Party leader) pointed out that it was not uncommon in India for the statesmen, politicians and leaders of the people to impose on themselves a day of silence and said that if that had happened to-day for Mr. Churchill, Mr. Baldwin would not have intervened. He continued: "I should like to say a few words which it is incumbent on me to say. I never like disagreeing with a colleague, especially a colleague, who has stood close to my side at a difficult time. Mr. Churchill said quite clearly at the beginning of his speech that he was not representing my views, nor the views of the Conservative Party. I think it is only fair to say both to him and the House, that I recognise in every word he says that he spoke from his own conviction. He has put before the House a point of view held on by many people in this country—a point of view, which has helped to make the whole problem as difficult of solution in this country as many of the wild views held in certain quarters in India make it difficult there. Mr. Stanley has just delivered a most interesting speech, which I think represents the views of the younger members of the Conservative Party to-day.

"Mr. Churchill has asked a very pertinent question. He has said: Why was the whole scene changed so swiftly that we are discussing things to-day that we should have thought impossible of even consideration a few weeks or a few months ago? I think the answer to that has been voiced in some speeches delivered to-day, among them the speech of Sir John Simon. The whole situation has altered because, contrary to our expectations and the expectations of the members of the Simon Commission, light has been thrown on the possible creation of a Federal system of all India."

The imagination of the whole country had been caught by the ideas of the United States of India. Therefore we were on entirely fresh territory. The whole situation had been changed by the attitudes of the Princes.

Mr. Baldwin proceeded to refer to the statement of Mr. Churchill that the Conservative Delegation had skilfully extricated themselves from a difficult situation and preserved the party's freedom to use its own judgment. He said Mr. Churchill had unintentionally conveyed a rather false impression. Mr. Baldwin continued: I wish to pay a tribute as Leader of the Party to Lord Peel, Lord Zetland, Sir S. Hoare and Mr. Stanley. They went into the Conference with the single idea of doing all in their power to help to get something done and there was the question of extrication. It is true in a way as Mr. Churchill says, regarding their having a free hand in the future, but the free hand is limited in this way (it is quite clear to me and I would point this out to the whole of my party) for it should happen that we should change places with Mr. Mac Donald and the members behind him, who have only one duty, and that is to implement, as far as we can, what has been done in the Conference. I quite agree with what has been said by Sir S. Hoare and Sir J. Simon that very little indeed has been agreed to by the conference, but none the less the striking fact is the agreement in principle that we should work for a federal system.

"That is what I mean by implementing the work. I should consider it my duty, as far as I were able, if I were leading the Party still, to use every effort in my power to bring about that federal constitution. When I say that I recognise, as Sir John Simon and Sir S. Hoare recognise, and more fully perhaps than many members opposite, the difficulties, but I would face those difficulties in the hope that neither British nor Indian statesmanship was bankrupt. I do not believe that there will be any permanent solution of the question of Indian Government until you get complete co-operation, understanding and goodwill between Indians and ourselves. Certain of my friends would have sympathised with what Mr. Churchill said and I should like to put this point. They are all parts of a party who will be responsible for carrying on His Majesty's Government and they will have to answer this question. We often hear it said in this country that what is wanted is a party able to form a very strong Government.

"It is very difficult to define what you mean by that, but assuming we are in agreement as to what it means, I would say that it is perfectly possible you can only hope to succeed upon that policy if there is unanimity among the political parties at home and an effective policy. It was because both these preliminary aspects were absent in the case of Ireland—and in the Irish question one had a calamity between the alternative of complete surrender or war—that I supported as a member of the Government at the time the solution of surrender. None of us wanted to, but it was the only choice. I merely point out that instance from history, which I think it well that all members should give consideration to before responsi-

bility rests upon them for the consideration of the greatest and most difficult policy, which faces us in the Empire to-day.

"I would make one more observation. I do not know whether all my party will agree. I am profoundly convinced of it and that is that there is general agreement on principle but not in detail between the parties of this country. Unless as much agreement continues as existed since the setting up of the Parliamentary Commission, the Government of India from London by one single party will be impossible, believing that, as I do, there will be no endeavour spared in my part as during the past 18 months, none has been spared, to keep as far as possible the parties in line. It may mean not going as far as the Labour Party would like or farther than the Conservative Party would like, but to break up that unity means that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India should have no chance of coping with the government of that country.

"The difficulties are enormous and perhaps there is no greater difficulty than that of adjudicating fairly and rightly between the different races and creeds, principally between Hindus and Moslems. That is the spot on which all who wish ill to an agreement will concentrate. If anyone wishes to prevent any chance of agreement and settlement let him devote himself in this country to breaking down the Parliamentary unity and devote himself in India to making it impossible for agreement to take place. We have to watch those two spots. The task of those who have to go forward and progress in government is not an easy one.

"I think we may take comfort in the famous phrase which was told me to-night of Lord Minto that no man is so strong as he that is not afraid to be called weak. Those who use their best endeavours to get a settlement will be at some stage or another called weak and there are few men perhaps who enjoy that. I do not under-rate or minimise for a moment the difficulties. They are difficulties and they have to be faced by the Prime Minister now and undoubtedly at another time. They will have to be faced by the members on this side or possibly by the Prime Minister again because these difficulties will go on for many years. Even if a constitution be devised, two three or four years would not be long, for we have by far the most difficult tasks we have ever undertaken. If ever I am called again to bear responsibility, I will do all in my power, subject to what has been said by Mr. Stanley in the matter of safeguards, and will do all I can to ensure that co-operation and that working together in equal partnership to carry out undertakings given again by the Government of this country."

*Mr. Wedgwood Benn*, Secretary of State for India, said: "I do not know whether Mr. Churchill will allow me to commiserate with him. I listened with the very greatest interest to his speech and made very copious notes for the purpose of technical reply to him but such unanimity has broken out in the House this evening that I feel, it will be idle on my part to attempt any reply. It all seems to me, to use his own phrase, to be in the cabin of the ship of his own opinions, where, listening to the jazz music of his own oratory, he is sinking in a calm sea of universal popular disapproval. It is not a job, which any one who enjoys contests in the House, as I do, can look forward to, to explain what has been explained and, so to speak, to be constantly pushing at an open door. But perhaps the House will indulge me if, in an objective way, I tried to explain who it is that the views expressed by Mr. Churchill to-night and others at other times, are impossible for persons, who view the situation as it actually is to-day.

"The central feature of Mr. Churchill's speech was this. He rejects the motion that responsibility at the Centre can be part of the new Indian Constitution.

"I should like to put to him, or any one who understands that—I do not confine myself to that particular point—the following objections to that, to which I have not been able to find any answer. The first objection is to deny the principle of Central Responsibility in Indian Government, is to fly flat in the face of all pledges which have been given not only by members of all parties but by representatives of the British Government. These pledges stand. They must be accepted or rejected. They bind this and all the future Governments and unless you keep the principle of responsibility of the Central Government of India you cannot say you are keeping those (?) inform him and the House so that he may frame his opinion and exercise his judgment. It is remarkable that people, who have money to lose in great commercial enterprises in India, should be backing this movement and the most significant thing of all is the part, which the women of India are laying in the national movement. Some of them, I regret to say, are in prison at present.



"This appeal is based both upon political and moral reasons. The political reason is this—somebody has to be responsible for the Government of India."

Mr. Balfour (Conservative) interjected, "Hear, hear."

Mr. Benn: Mr. Balfour says 'hear, hear.' I am sure he means that we are going to be responsible for the Government of India.

Mr. Balfour: "For a long time to come."

Mr. Benn: "Yes, for a long time to come. Let me ask whether he has prepared himself to bear real responsibility for the Government of India, this large continent of 320 million people and nine provinces. Does he, capable and able as he is, feel capable of sitting here having all the responsibility of his constituents in Hampstead as well as taking on this responsibility?"

Mr. Balfour: "I say this most deliberately. I decline to deny the responsibility of this country to India until we are certain that a better constitution will be set up."

Mr. Benn: "We are engaged, with the assistance of men of all parties, in setting up such a constitution. I really did not intend to indulge in controversy. I did not think anybody would deny the practical truth of what I am saying."

Mr. Balfour: "It is a matter of time."

Mr. Benn: "It has been my experience, in the few months I have been in office, that problems come up—the problem of railway policy, of commercial policy, the question of the action of the police, the question of social policy. How can I even know the facts, let alone bring their responsibility, home to the members of the House? The task is practically impossible. Therefore, unless you are going to hand the task over to the bureaucracy, you have to find shoulders upon which, as an important practical necessity, you can lay the task."

"The task on which we are engaged is that of trying to find shoulders upon which that burden can be laid. People sometimes talk about 'conferring' responsibilities. I would rather say 'imposing' responsibilities. We want some one to carry burden and carry it with local knowledge and sober judgment."

Mr. Balfour: "And shirk our own."

Mr. Benn: This has a bearing upon the question of safeguards. I would repeat what was mentioned by the Prime Minister regarding safeguards:

"If we believe that it is only by the conferment of duties that you can evoke strength and experience and if we desire to find some one that will bear the burden, it is obvious that the safeguards must be so framed as not to undermine the responsibility of Ministers in the provinces and not to enable them to take shelter behind reserve powers of the Governor. That is to say, the powers of the Minister must wax and the reserve emergency powers of the Governors must be kept in the background and wane. We desire to lend a helping hand. There is the difference between the helping hand and the surgical boot. One strengthens while the other atrophies the limb."

"The second practical reason why we are compelled to give self-Government to India is that no Government can survive unless it has the support of public opinion. All struggle in India in the last year has not been a physical struggle at all. It has never been a question of force and power. We have had power in plenty. We have had police forces and armies."

"The struggle in India has been a struggle for the support of Indian opinion. No Government can be strong unless it has moral support. Force, so far from being of increasing assistance, is a diminishing asset. The more it is applied without the support of public opinion the weaker it becomes in its effect."

"The real struggle has been a struggle for the support of Indian opinion and it is because the masses of Indian opinion continue to believe in the goodwill of our policy that we have so far succeeded. The reason why Lord Irwin has been able to maintain his position and power—a position and power of infinite benefit to the Empire in India to-day, despite the fact that he has been compelled, by circumstances, to pass nine Ordinances is that the people of India believe that he intends to discharge obligations which we have promised to discharge towards them."

"When the Congress attack us and impugn our good faith they get an ally in Mr. Churchill and his friends whose speeches do more to undermine the true strength of the Government in India than anything else. The cause of trust and understanding triumphed in the Round Table Conference. That is its great triumph. It has done something to restore trust and confidence between the peoples of the two countries. There is one possible answer that Mr. Churchill may make. It is what I may call the argument of "the mute millions": that all this agitation comes from

a handful of people. How far is that true? It may have been true fifty years ago. I am perfectly certain that the paternal relations between the district officers and the people then were relations of contentment, respect and gratitude, but is it true to-day, as a practical fact, that this movement can be neglected and that it is not growing? Will Mr. Churchill remember that at the end of the war thousands of Indian soldiers who had come forward to fight for our cause and who remain in gaols to-day and who made notable sacrifice at that time for the cause of the Empire have gone back to their villages and told the people there: 'We went to Europe to engage in a great war and were victorious in order that people could settle their own destinies'. These missionaries have probably some influence among their own people. Nobody who read the news from India will deny that young people of both sexes are supporting the Indian National Movement. Mothers of citizens of to-morrow, and themselves citizens, are supporting the movement and any person who expresses contempt for the opinion of the youth of the nation does not show much foresight as a statesman.

"Again many leaders of the movement, I am not speaking about the Civil Disobedience Movement necessarily, people who have expressed sympathy and support for the Indian national aspirations, number among them many distinguished men and who have rendered social service and have been singled out by the Governors of their provinces and rewarded for their social services. These men consider it their duty to champion the national cause to-day. Another remarkable symptom of the situation is that Indian commercial classes are behind not only the national movement but in many cases behind the movement, called Civil Disobedience."

Earl Winterton asked: "When Mr. Benn talks of the national movement, is he referring to the Congress Movement of the National Party or what movement?"

Mr. Benn replied: "I am referring to that body of opinion in India which desires to see satisfied the National aspiration of Self-Government—the declaration of 1st November of last year. I desire to examine the arguments that, in point of fact, this movement has no substance and that the mute millions are on the side of Mr. Churchill. I have taken the case of the youth of India and the case of the leaders of this movement and I have given one of the most remarkable of cases, the commercial classes. It is no good blinking at these facts. I get telegrams every day bringing home the tremendous difficulties of the position and it is my duty, as Mr. Balfour wants to bear his share of the responsibility for governing India, to pledge us either in spirit or in letter. It is very often said that, because pledges have been foolishly given in the past, we got into that position and cannot help but go forward. I do not think that really represents the view of men in the past history of England. You can go back a hundred years and you will find that whatever the popular opinion may have been, the statesmen dealing with the relations between England and India shaped the policy towards the day when India would assume responsibility for her own Government.

"Then there has been the most remarkable change in opinion of European communities in India. If Honourable Members will read 'The Times of India' which is friendly to Indian views and 'The Statesman', they will find there, I don't say unanimity, but a most remarkable confirmation of the view I am expressing, namely, that this movement cannot be regarded as something that only exists in the minds of a few but is in fact a great national movement penetrating into every rank of society in every part of the country.

"Further Mr. Churchill gave us the views of several distinguished ex-Indian Civil Servants. Are their views up to date? They were in India 15, 10, 5 or one year ago. Do they know the state of India to-day? The delegates to the Round Table Conference said repeatedly, "I have been away from India ten weeks. I really do not know what is going on."

Mr. Churchill asked: "Really, are His Majesty's Government changing their opinion on these fundamental issues with that rapidity?"

Mr. Benn said: "His Majesty's Government is attempting to inform itself of the facts of the case in order that a policy may be framed suitable to the facts. If Mr. Churchill thinks that the fundamental fact in politics was established 10, 20 or 50 years ago, he is making a mistake. You must find out the facts as they are to-day. I say that not only did these people from India say that India was marching forward, as that reckless Elizabethan man of courage Mr. Mahomed Ali said in his last speech, with seven-league boots, but they said it was moving so fast that even the absence of three months from India made them unable to speak with the knowledge of the present situation in India. If Mr. Churchill argues that in

fact the views and sympathies of the Indian national cause are only shared by a handful of people, has he consulted any person and is his case founded on that?"

Mr. Churchill : "No, my case is founded, among other things, upon the proportion of Indian political classes to the vast masses of the Indian population. That does not preclude the fact that Indian political classes are numerous."

Mr. Benn replied : "If Mr. Churchill discards the evidence, has he consulted any one of the 80 or 90 distinguished Indians who came to the Round Table Conference? There is no one prince or representative of the depressed classes who will not tell him that this movement is vast and spreading and that they all share sympathy with it. What is Mr. Churchill's solution to this if he admits that the situation, as I say, "Strong Government". What does he mean by 'strong Government'?"

Members : "Sydney Street."

Mr. Benn : "He does not mean a Government which seeks the support of popular opinions. That is our plan. He means Government by force".

Mr. Churchill said : I suggest, after due deliberation, that the House should proceed upon lines indicated in the report of the Statutory Commission to develop effective real organisms of local Provincial Government in the provinces and that is the immediate step to take before you get carried away week by week into these decisions."

Mr. Benn replied : "Mr. Churchill has evaded my question. He talks about evolving organisms. What is to be the strength? Indian opinion? Mr. Churchill will not answer that question."

Mr. Churchill replied : Partly British decisions and Indian loyalty and good-will."

Mr. Benn said : What that has meant is lathi, stick and, after rifle, the machinegun. You must either base the Government on the assent of the people or govern by force. The logical consequence of Mr. Churchill's policy, if put into force, is Government by force, without the assent of the people. The alternative is Government by the people for the people. That is why people of all parties have grasped the principle almost with unanimity. The views conscientiously expressed by Mr. Churchill have been discarded and, in the House, practical unanimity has been found for the views of the Government and the principles that the Round Table Conference has put forth."

Mr. Churchill said : "When Mr. Benn tries to fix on me the odium of wishing to settle the matter by force, when I am criticising the policy which he and his friends are pursuing, I must remind him of the admission that sixty-thousand persons are in jail in India to-day."

Mr. Benn replied : "I am coming to that in a moment. Mr. Churchill's policy is condemned on four grounds :

Firstly, it is blankly defiant of the pledges made to India. Secondly, you cannot practically base a Government upon it. Thirdly, you cannot morally base a Government upon it because it lacks the assent of the governed. Fourthly, it means Government by force which public opinion in this country would not stand."

"As against Mr. Churchill's policy there is the policy which I would call the Parliament plan, that is the plan which is the outcome of the Conference to which not only members of His Majesty's Government but members of other parties were a party. The work of the Conference has been embodied in the resolution saying that certain agreement has been reached and much work remain to be done. The agreements reached really amount to three. It is, as it were, a triangular view on the part of British India :

"It is an understanding that, in the interests of India and for sometime to come British service should be enlisted in order to help India to establish an efficient and sound form of Self-government. On the part of the Princes it is an undertaking rather more solid than Sir John Simon imagines, to enter a general federation. On the part of the Parliament-men it is an undertaking always provisional and on the condition that the picture should be completed that this Parliament would confer upon the Government of India Central and local responsibility."

Sir Samuel Hoare said he was afraid he was unable to agree with Mr. Benn's interpretation of those principles.

Mr. Benn agreed that he was not entitled to speak for Sir S. Hoare, but he thought he would agree that he was not attempting to go beyond anything Mr. Baldwin had said. When Mr. Benn said safeguards, federation and responsibility he covered three sides of the triangle. Mr. Benn continued : "Those are three aspects of the agreement reached and when the Leader of the Opposition says "We are going to work for a federal India"; I would remind him that he cannot have a

Federal India without giving responsibility at the centre. The Princes would not be willing to enter a federation unless you confer responsibility at the centre.

"Therefore when we all work together in all parts of the House for a Federation it must be a federation in which the principle of responsibility is included. Sir John Simon was quite correct when he said that it is only the sketching of an outline, but it is an outline that has to be filled in, not one that has to be rubbed out. Secondly, it is an outline to the design of which much of the previous labour has gone. On this occasion which marks the epoch in the history of India, one thinks of many acts of foresight and significant courage. I think naturally of the name of Edwin Montagu, who thirteen years ago, laid the foundations of this part of our movement. His work must be remembered, just as the work of the Simon Commission made possible the rapid passage in the Committees of the Conference of many decisions which were arrived at. There are others, to be remembered too. There is Sir Sankaran Nair's Committee, the All-Parties' Committee in India of which Dr. Sapru was a member and especially the decisions which were come to prior to their arrival in this country by the Princes which alone made the special solution which is at present holding the field possible.

"But, if much has been done, much remains to be done. Many questions are unsettled and many parts of the design are incomplete. The proportions of the central body, the character of the Executive, the nature of its stability and most important of all, the protection which is to be accorded to the Minorities, because, eager as we are to see the constitution working, we are no less eager to ensure that it shall come into being with general good-will. But, though much remains to be done, we may say with justice that something has been achieved. First, I should say that the happy result of the Conference has improved the prestige of Britain in the world and I would like to read three extracts in support of this contention. The first is from "The Times" correspondent in New York printed the day after the conference closed: "It is probably not too much to say that with the publication of the results of the conference to-day opinion in this country is more kindly disposed towards the policy of Government in India than it has been for many years." That is a tribute which a statesman would not treat with disdain.

Let me quote from *Journal de Geneve*: "In eliminating from the long list of its cares the greatest among them, in avoiding in India the difficulties of the state of war which existed in Ireland for so long, Mr. Macdonald has rendered eminent service not to one country but to all Europe; or again the comment by "The Times" correspondent at Geneva: "There is a good deal of friendly comment by many foreign Ministers. It is commonly remarked that any agreement that contributes to appeasement in one part of the world is likely now-a-days to have beneficial repercussions elsewhere." I do not overestimate the importance of these messages, but I say that, if it is true that the prestige of Britain is raised in the world, it increases her power for usefulness.

"The second gain of the Conference is that we can no longer talk of two Indias. We must talk of one India, the greater India and Federated India, India comprising the Princes and the provinces—and we can speak of India so federated that within the British Commonwealth she will occupy a position of power comparable to that of the other great oriental countries.

"The third gain is the settlement of the question of the status of the Indians. For the very moment we sat down together as equals and talked the matter over the question was virtually settled. The moment the Prime Minister made his statement on 19th January the equality of status of India was declared—from the Indian point of view—a great gain.

A further gain was the improvement of the relations between Britain and India. I speak first of the commercial relations. It is perceptible.—not great yet but perceptible. The trade between Britain and India is as important to India as Britain. Much more than that, we have done something and I think it is one of the greatest gains of the Conference to establish political understanding and good-will between the two peoples. They came here risking their political life amidst the warning, even reproaches, of their fellow countrymen; they risked it because of their love for their own land and they go back happy for, as one of their spokesman said, they came with misgivings and go back with a wealth of confidence and trust.

"It is anything but gain that we should, after the happy years to which I have referred and which must be a source of shame to any Responsible Government, be beginning to re-establish understanding and trust between peoples. Best of all, there is the direct contact between Indian people and representatives of Parliament

that I count as one of the greatest gains of the Conference. As the Prime Minister stated at the end of the Conference :

"It is the fixed policy of the Government that this contact should only be continued. We ought never to loose contact with these men and women who came and rendered great service to their own country, but we may also hope to extend the contact so as to associate those who, though great leaders in their own country, failed when invited to come forward to give us their advice.

"For the future, in our judgment, two things are necessary: one thing is sincerity, the second is speed. One of the effects of the Conference is that we have begun to re-establish the tender plant of understanding and trust by continuing the work of the Conference. We shall foster this plant for that purpose. Speed is necessary. What can be gained by delay? If India is to be fitted for self-Government she must be fitted for it at the earliest moment?

"Delay has been the tragedy in the past. Thirty years ago, men, who, to-day are opposing us in India, were firm advocates of the British connection.

"Mr. Gandhi was a stretcher-bearer in the South-African War and it was his influence which got us a large contribution of money and endless troops. There is no tragedy like delay and that is why I say it will require not only sincerity, but also speed.

"Supposing that, by the labours of all parties in the House, something is done, supposing we succeed in building up a constitution, not of sealed and delivered pattern on the English model, but something unique and moulded according to the tradition and spirit of the Indian people and resting in their good-will, if we can succeed in that, we shall have done something to discharge the true mission of the British Commonwealth, which is to extend the area of peace and contentment in the world among the free peoples."

The debate was automatically adjourned.

## Commons Debate on India

HOUSE OF COMMONS—12th. MARCH 1931

Galleries were crowded during the Commons debate on India on the 12th. March 1931. Viscount Peel and Lord Lloyd were in the Peers' gallery and a number of Indians were in the Dominions gallery.

When the debate on India began on the Civil Estimate vote, Mr. Churchill at the outset sought a ruling regarding the permissible scope of the debate.

The Chairman ruled that there could be a general debate on the administration, but future legislation could not be discussed.

Mr. Baldwin opened the debate. He expressed gratitude to the Government for acceding to his request that the promised debate on India should be anticipated and take place this week instead of the next. He thought when he put the question, and still more so to-day, that that was a right and necessary course considering the gravity of the subject itself, in its issues and in its outcome.

He would not take long and would say what he had to say simply in plain language. He hoped free expression might be given in the debate to every shape of opinion from whatever part of the House it might come.

"I can best begin by recalling the words which we are familiar, used in 1917, just one sentence in the proclamation, when the Government spoke of not only the increasing association of India in every branch of the administration but also the grant of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. I quote these words, having firmly in my recollection the phrasing of the Preamble of the Act and the relevant clause of the Act which stresses so markedly the progression by stages. I quote merely because I want to remind my party that we have always prided ourselves and often been twitted by opponents with putting the Empire in the forefront of our speeches, our advertisements and our placards.

"It is particularly essential for us in our party to remember, as some of us perhaps in this country are apt to forget that the Empire, if it is anything, is a living organism and that the Empire to-day is not the Empire of the First Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Nobody, however far-seeing, can see to-day what may be the position of the Empire fifty years hence; it is no dead matter. It is organic and alive, in a constant process of evolution, a process which is being speeded up every day. Few could foresee even a few years ago to what point that evolution would have brought the relation of the great Dominions with the mother country. It cannot be supposed that in this world of evolution, India alone is static. We have given and impregnated India ourselves with western ideas and for good or ill, we are reaping the fruits of our own work. Indeed the declaration itself which I have just read, every word in the Act to which I have alluded give the lie to the idea, if indeed it can be held to-day, that the East at any rate must be static, however far, however fast, West may move.

"After these few preliminary words I am not going to stress the events that led up to the Conference. I will take the Conference as an accepted fact and make one thing perfectly plain, which has always been plain, and on which there could have existed no doubt in any mind at all, if it were not that, in many parts of the country, we are still suffering from the very common after-war effect of nerves and hysteria—a very dangerous condition (laughter).

"The Conservative Party stands exactly where it stood on January 26, when a statement was made on his behalf by Viscount Peel, (Sir S. Hoare?) which I have not yet heard challenged. It stands exactly where I stated it stood in my speech last week at Newton Abbot, one paragraph of which I will read to the House.

"Our main objective is the clear objective of an All-India Federation. But when we have stated our objective, we must not forget that many grave difficulties have to be surmounted before we can attain it. At present we have only sketched the framework. Details have not been filled in and many of them will present serious difficulties. Apart from the pledge of an honest attempt to confront these difficulties and thus carry on the work of the Conference, the Conservative Party is uncommitted; everyone is uncommitted, for the simple reason that it is impossible for any of us to pronounce a definite opinion until a definite plan is before us.

"The Round-Table Conference did not attempt to fill in the details. In the period before us we shall have to judge how far it is possible to achieve the Federal idea without surrendering any essential safeguards that we have clearly and definitely stated and we consider fundamental in any future constitution. That is quite clear.

"I will only add this, that despite what you may have read or heard, the party co-operation which existed since the setting up of the Simon Commission is not broken and remains exactly where it is (cheers). "I owe it to the House to make a few observations of certain events which have transpired. As the Press would say—in the last forty-eight hours—there has been much excitement about nothing.

"What is the position? It was perfectly obvious that, after the conclusion of the Conference the Government, and this will apply to whatever Government may have been in power, would themselves have to say what the next step they should take to go on with the work which had been begun in the Conference. It is, in effect, a simple matter of procedure. It is not really a simple matter, because the whole matter teems with difficulty which none knows better than the Government, I have no doubt that they have considered the diverse courses of action at the present time and no course can be put forward without good arguments being found for taking that course and equally good argument can be found for rejecting that course.

It is perfectly obvious that after the conclusion there was a problem before us.

"The Government put forward one suggestion for our consideration and I believe they did for the consideration of Liberals a consideration that involved sending delegates to India. I have always had a definite view on that subject and the view I took was the view of such colleagues as I consulted and the unanimous view of our delegates who represented our party at the Conference in London.

It was not a question of party co-operation being at an end. It was a legitimate question of difference of opinion on procedure on a particular point at particular moment. I and my friends hold the view that at this juncture it was the business of the Government of the day to take the matter in hand and, in the words of Sir Samuel Hoare, that the picture should become more filled in. It is undesirable possibly to say what course we would have pursued if we were responsible as a Government. But I felt quite clearly. I have been responsible to Government and responsible as the Leader of the Opposition and with every desire to co-operate I

should have felt all the same that at this juncture the work that wants doing in India would best be carried on by the Government of the day in whatever manner they think best to achieve it.

"There are obvious difficulties if a complete party delegation were to reopen discussions at the moment. I want in the way nothing that may cause any difficulties either here or in India and make the path of the men here or in India more difficult than they must be from the necessity of the case. I told the Government, and I shall tell the House, that while we take that view on this particular question at the particular moment, I intimated to the Government that we were willing always to be consulted if the Government thought it desirable and the answer we gave on this point in no way prejudiced our fair and free consideration at any future time of the question of conferring with the delegates and we should judge each case on its merits and when the occasion arises, I make no secret of it.

"Everybody knows that there are differences of opinion in our party on this subject, because there always have been, but there are large numbers of people who are genuinely apprehensive of all that is going on and it so happens that they all belong to our party. On this matter we are faced with certain difficulties which, in spite of the possible difficulties that other party may have in other directions, they are free from. There was a genuine anxiety among many of my supporters whether at this moment the delegates who have been at the London Conference were going to India. But I felt it only fair to relieve them of that anxiety and I did it weeks ago and I acquainted them of my opinion. I think it came as a certain amount of relief. When I was asked if I had any objection to an authentic statement going out that decision had been given, I was in little bit of a difficulty. For this reason, that I would much rather, quite frankly, that no statement had been made. These conversations had been private. The communication between a leader and any committee of his followers ought to be private.

"But I notice that there were some communications between that Committee of my party and that section of the press which has announced that it is trying to smash us and it seems to me, whatever steps I took if this was coming out, I should prefer it should be authenticated by myself.

I realise it might be an unfortunate thing, not for myself—I don't care a tuppence about that—I was afraid of the reaction in India. My fears were justified, but I hope and believe that what has been said since in the course of this debate may not only alleviate, but remove these fears.

"We shall hear from Mr. Benu presently what steps the Government are proposing to take and how they hope to proceed, if I may use the phrase again, of filling in the picture. I would here express the confident hope that the Government will not effect any major changes in the existing constitution, while those questions which were discussed at the Conference are still in the process of negotiation and, we hope, of settlement.

"I would say a word or two here on the conversations between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi. It has been brought to my attention that the results of these conversations were announced in two popular papers by one as a surrender to Mr. Gandhi and by the other as a surrender to the Viceroy. Both these statements cannot be true. I deprecate in the strongest way possible the use of such words as victory and surrender. I have been told that I have surrendered to Mr. Churchill (Laughter). There has been no surrender. There has been no victory. But there has been what I regard as a victory of commonsense—a victory rare enough in India and rare enough at home.

"Such a conclusion as has been reached I believe could have been reached in the circumstances by no other Englishman than Lord Irwin. It is a great tribute to his character—character which has given him a prestige in India that nothing could have given him. We cannot judge the ultimate effects yet of these conversations. The extremism of India or at home dies hard and slowly (Laughter). But we may say that, whatever happens, and even though we may later be disappointed at finding the results not equal to our expectations, yet it has definitely enlarged the area of goodwill and co-operation and it is the one thing wanted to-day more than anything."

Mr. Baldwin said that he would quote a few words on that subject written with more lucidity of thought and lucidity of style than he could even hope to attain. He quoted the following words :

"Our reign in India or any where else has never stood on the basis of physical force alone and it will be fatal to the British Empire if we were to try to base ourselves upon it. The British way of doing things, as my right honourable friends the

Secretary of State for India who feels intently upon this subject has pointed out, has always meant and implied close and perpetual co-operation with the peoples of the country in every part of the British Empire. That has been our aim and in no part have we arrived at such success as in India, whose Princes have spent their Treasury in our cause, whose brave soldiers have fought side by side with our own, whose intelligence-gifted people are co-operating at the present moment with us in every sphere of Government and industry."

"I like the ring of those sentences. So I am going to give two more. The speaker was alluding to some trouble that had broken out in Egypt at that time. The passage continued :

"If a disastrous breakdown which has occurred in a comparatively small country like Egypt, if this absolute rupture between British administration and the people of the country had taken place throughout the mighty regions of our Indian Empire, it would have constituted one of the most melancholy events in the history of the world. That it has not taken place up to the present is, I think, largely due to the constructive policy of His Majesty's Government. I am astonished by the sense of detachment of my Right Honourable friend, when, in the supreme crisis of the war, he calmly journeyed to India and remained for many months absorbed, buried in Indian affairs. It was only when I saw what has happened in Egypt and what is happening in Ireland to-day that I appreciated the enormous utility of such services from the viewpoint of the national interests of the British Empire in helping to keep alive the spirit of comradeship, the sense of unity and progress in co-operation which must for ever bind British and Indian peoples."

At this stage there were cries of 'name' and laughter when Mr. Baldwin indicated Mr. Churchill and proceeded : "I need hardly say I agreed with every word of it to-day. I don't think there could be a better summing up of the situation, possibly with the alteration of a word here and there, than that speech delivered eleven years ago. I have long realised that this question of constitutional Government of India is by far the most important Imperial question, by far the greatest and most difficult, not only that we have to face to-day but that we have ever had to face. It is for that reason that during the last nine months I have abstained even from good work in the hope and attempt to bring the maximum amount of unity into our party on this subject and keep India out of party politics."

The difficulty, for obvious reasons, is one which is more peculiar to our party than to others, but I have said before what I want to say once more, that more important even than party unity is the unity of all parties on this subject."

"I believe now, and I have believed during the last year and when the Simon Commission was set up, that if party co-operation in this country was once broken the whole problem of the Government of India would be insoluble and impossible and I for one would leave the responsibility upon those responsible for breaking up that unity. (Cheers.) Difficult as the case is, the dangers do not come from the difficulties. They come from the extremists in India and at home. I am firmly convinced that such writings as appear in such papers as "The Daily Mail" will do more to lose India from the British Empire (loud cheers) than anything that could be done by any one."

"I had a very characteristic letter last week from a Colonel. It was a Colonel who very nearly threw Disraeli out of leadership in the winter of 1871. He used the phrase "you and Lord Irwin are Negrophiles". That is not the way to cement the Empire. It is the spirit behind that that will break up the Empire and that is what I am asked to fight. (Cheers.)

The responsibilities of leaders of parties are always greater. They have never been greater than to-day and never more difficult. You are all agreed upon that. Even if the rank and file refuse to face facts the leaders must look at them. A leader has got to warn his people and they dislike being warned. It is the supreme duty of a political leader to tell the people of a country the truth, because truth is greater than tactics. There is mutual and reciprocal loyalty between the leader and his followers and if that fails on either side, then that partnership is dissolved.

The principal fact I see in the world to-day is that the unchanging East has changed and not only changed but is changing with alarming rapidity and there are many people in the country who are blind to these things."

"We cannot to-day—however much you may desire or [if you have read the course of recent history—you cannot reverse the engines without breaking up the whole machine. We cannot reverse the engines on the ground of same policy and you cannot reverse the engines of the simple ground of British owner. (Cheers.)



"If I may refer again to those passages which I quoted, whether the problem is going to be solved, whether the attempt is going to be made and the attempt fails, the ultimate result depends not on force but on goodwill, sympathy and understanding between India and Britain and the great work of Lord Irwin is that he has, after many years of suspicion, bridged it by his ability and character. Whatever mistakes he may have made in five years—and there is plenty of time for the best of us to make mistakes—I am firmly convinced that when the history of this time comes to be written, his name will stand out as one of the greatest Viceroys and the Viceroy I had the honour myself of sending to India." (Cheers.)

"I will only say in conclusion that the difficulties confront many of my party, difficulties of conviction and old ties. I don't believe that the bulk of our party either in the House or in the country would take a different view from that I expressed at the early part of my speech.

"I shall carry out, so long as I am here, that policy. I shall carry it out in no niggardly spirit. I shall carry it out with every desire to overcome the stupendous difficulties that face us.

"But if there are those who would approach this subject in niggling, grudging spirit, who would have to have forced out of their reluctant hands one concession after another and if they be in a majority, in God's name let them choose the man to lead them. (Loud cheers).

"If they cannot and if they are in a minority, let them at least refrain from throwing difficulties in the way of those who have undertaken almost a superhuman task on the successful performance of which depends the well-being, prosperity and duration of the whole of the British Empire." (Loud cheers.)

*Mr. Wedgwood Benn* said: After the historic speech to which we have just listened there is really from the point of view of the Indian situation nothing to add to this debate. I am perfectly certain that the words of the Right Honourable Gentlemen will be read with relief and delight by all sections of opinion in India and I am perfectly certain that no one will feel more encouraged in the vast task he has in hand than the Viceroy for whose appointment Mr. Baldwin and the Party opposite were responsible. He said that they stood where they stood on January 26. If that is so (and that is so) the work on which we all have been engaged together can go forward with some hope of success.

"If the House would have the patience I should like to trace for a few moments the history of the efforts we have made to secure co-operation between parties and co-operation between this country and the people of India. Mr. Baldwin himself has said that the first stage in the co-operation between parties was in the Statutory Commission. That was co-operation between parties in this country.

"Towards the conclusion of the Labours of the Commission its Chairman put forward a suggestion that the next stage in its work should be conducted by means of the Conference and that the Conference was set on foot with the accord (applause), with the approval and co-operation, of all parties in the House. The Viceroy, in difficult effort and on first November 1929, set out as the task in which the Government had to engage the removal of what he called the webs of mistrust. It would be true to say that the whole object of the policy of this Government has been through co-operation here and co-operation with India, to remove distrust between the people of the two countries and to set them co-operatively at constructive work. My endeavour will be to trace the history of that effort which has been sustained and to remind the House of what measure of success we have achieved up to the present moment. It is a matter of immense difficulty owing to the distances, the diversity of thought and diversity of interest and outlook. The first success we had in attempting to remove the webs of mistrust was in the meeting of the conference itself. There was a time when it was doubtful whether the representative men from India would come to this country for the conference. I am not speaking of the Congress at all. I am speaking of British Indian and other representatives of non-Congress parties. There was a grave doubt as to whether they could ever be persuaded to come to the conference, but the conference met with a personnel of a very wide, though not complete, authority, not complete because everyone recognised that, as it was without the presence of the representatives of the National Congress, it could not be fully representative of Indian opinion. But it met. At the time it was meeting and (?) that we were failing in our efforts to secure the co-operation of all sections of Indian opinion we passed through a deplorable episode called the civil disobedience.

"It would serve no good purpose now that the Government has ceased, to make any detailed reference to it, but I should like, in passing, to pay a tribute to the public officers including the Indian police, who, in a time of very great difficulty, discharged the duties which were laid upon them owing to the failure of politicians, with singular devotion to their work. The maintenance of public order is of prime public interest. I would, in this connection, quote the words of Mr. Gandhi himself, who said the other day, "If we resort to excess we shall be opening the door to self-destruction when we have Swaraj." It is because we wished to hand on the legacy of self-Government to an Indian Government that enjoyed the traditional authority that we did our part in maintaining public order during this campaign of civil disobedience. A firm hand is a good thing, but if you have a firm hand there is no harm in having a clear head and an understanding heart.

Throughout the period of the Civil Disobedience the policy of the Government remained unchanged. It was to encourage, to seek and to welcome the co-operation of representative Indian opinion. For a long time it was not forthcoming in those quarters. Those who had announced their intention of coming to the Conference met with criticism. They were told their efforts would fail. They even met with hostility among their own countrymen. I think that the House, especially those members of it who were concerned in the Conference, would wish to pay a tribute to the patriotism of those Indians, Princes, British Indians, Mahomedans, Sikhs, representatives of the depressed classes and others who often in the face of the discouragement that they received from their fellow countrymen, came to St. James's and gave us our first success in our campaign for co-operation.

"A remarkable thing occurred at the Conference and every member of the House who was a member of the Conference can corroborate this from his own personal experience. A very remarkable impression was created on the minds of the delegates. We had different views. We approached the problem from different angles and perhaps with different measures of enthusiasm, but the delegates returned to India convinced of the good faith of the British Parliament. They came here doubting. They went back fully convinced of our good faith, and I trust we shall never let down the men who have rendered that service and who have shown their trust in British Parliament. Therefore, in the matter of the Round Table Conference and in the impression created upon the Indian delegates who attended it, we won our first battle for understanding with the Indian people—what happened at this Conference itself. Our next attack was to be directed on those who had refused to co-operate in the policy we are pursuing.

"The members of the Round Table Conference, representative men of all parties, said that they believed that if they could go back and explain to their fellow-countrymen what had been done at St. James's they could win them over. Although I very much admire the courage of those missionaries, I myself always considered that they were over-optimistic. I thought it hardly possible that they could succeed, but they said if we are to discuss with the members of the other parties the future and if we are to convince them of the good faith of Great Britain then it is necessary that we should meet them as free men and it was in response to that the Prime Minister made the declaration he made at St. James's in reference to the way in which the Government would meet the gesture of co-operation from the other side. The delegates went back to India.

"In July these same representative men had met Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders and had failed to convince them that this Parliament would keep faith with India. After many efforts they came away having failed to convince the Congress that they could trust Parliament.

"They went back after meeting the representatives of Parliament—not only of one party—and they succeeded in the effort in which in July last they had failed. They succeeded because of the impression that had been produced in their mind by the transparent sincerity of the delegates whom this House sent to the Round Table Conference. So the area of co-operation was extended. As Mr. Baldwin has truly said, that real link that binds India to this country and the Empire is confidence in our good faith. After the conversations which the representatives of the Round-Table Conference had with the representatives of the Congress the leader of the Congress Party, Mr. Gandhi wrote a letter asking the Viceroy whether he might have an interview with him. It was understood that his purpose was to substitute co-operation for the non-co-operation, in which for the last ten years, he had been engaged and I say that at that stage a second battle was won in the campaign for understanding and goodwill between the people of the two countries."

"Mr. Gandhi had said: 'I shall strain every nerve to make the provisional peace a permanent one'. We welcome that expression and reciprocate it and we will remember with gratitude not only what has been done by our own friends at the Round Table Conference, but we look forward with the confident hope to what will be done by our old and new friends when the Conference reassembles at a later date. As the result of these conversations certain things themselves, and the situation as it developed at the end of the conversations, are set out in the White Paper which is in the hands of the members.

"I would like to deal with the results, or perhaps one might almost use the word achievements, of these conversations under several heads. In the first place it should be remarked that the result of the settlement if you like to call it, has been received with universal approval in India. Members of the Council of State and members of the Legislative Assembly have passed resolutions approving it. The resolution in the Legislative Assembly was moved by a distinguished Mahomedan and supported by the leader of the European Group and was unanimously passed. Furthermore, the atmosphere which has been created by the restoration of peace in India is an atmosphere in which it should be very much easier to solve some of the thorny problems which baffled solution in London.

"I think I am right in saying that the communal question which is notably one of the most difficult questions will come nearer to solution owing to the co-operation which now exists between the various parties in India. The second result was that we were enabled, with an immense sign of gratitude, to empty the prisons of people who had been engaged in Civil Disobedience. We were enabled to permit India to revert to Government by the ordinary law instead of being governed by special ordinances which had been necessary—I make no apology—in times of very great stress. From the Indian point of view what does this mean? It does not merely mean that the people, who from patriotic motives, were engaged in this Civil Disobedience campaign, are now free men; it does not mean that the people are merely breathing the freer atmosphere of ordinary law. It means that the people, who had been driven by their love of country to courses which we must all deplore, now have open to them a constructive way which hitherto they had not followed. This is not an insignificant gain from the Indian point of view.

"Then again take the very important question of credit and budgetary position. If the House will permit me I would like to read a somewhat long passage from a speech which was delivered by Sir George Schuster in the Assembly recently when he introduced the budget. This is what he said: 'The implications of the movement have weakened confidence in India as a field for investment, both at home and abroad and this has led to the decline in the price of Indian securities both Government and private, to a lack of credit for traders and capital for new enterprises and to the steady export of capital from the country. This has meant increased expenditure on loans for Government and has forced the Government to take measures to protect the position which have resulted in high money rates with the consequent increase in the difficulties of traders in very difficult times. I have stated the case with studied moderation but I must guard against that moderation being misunderstood. The country has, it is true, survived the past year without irreparable disaster but reserves and credit of all individuals and of public authorities alike have been seriously weakened and any continuance of internal disorder is a matter which all who have the true interests of India at heart must view with the greatest possible concern. It might, in fact, mean that India on the day when she should be inaugurating her new constitution with bright hopes of success would find herself instead of struggling desperately for a mere existence in a morass of economic trouble.

"The gloomy prospect which Sir George Schuster pointed out in that speech is to a large extent relieved by the settlement which has been come to and the disappearance of civil disobedience in India. But I would add this: the importance of both now and under the new constitution of financial stability of India and her credit position cannot possibly be exaggerated in India's own interest, which is that she should maintain the position of confidence she enjoys. The safeguards referred to by the Federal Structure Committee, including the powers of the Governor-General in relation to currency legislation, are essential and cannot be abated if we are to set up a new constitution with success. I may add that here I am specifically referring to the considered view of the Government which indeed is well-known. The passages of that report are familiar to the members of the House.

"Not only was the gloomy financial prospect somewhat relieved by the discontinuance of Civil Disobedience Movement but Indian credit in London was notably improved. The 5½ per cent loan which in the recent slump had been at a discount of 3 per cent is now only at a fractional discount and I think I am overstating the case. I shall, no doubt, receive the corroboration of members of experience in these matters—when I say that one of the effects of the White Paper has been notably to improve the credit of India in the city of London.

"I have spoken of credit and now I come to another result of this White Paper and that is the question of trade. It is too early for me to give any positive figures in this connection for none exist. Speaking on information officially supplied I would go no further than to say that an improved tone is noticeable. Everyone is glad that a settlement has been effected and that tone generally in trade circles is better but if I were asked for unofficial views about this, I would like to give one published on the day when the conversations came to a conclusion. "Leaders of the cotton industry declare to me to-day that it was the best news they had received for a long time and that it would pave the way for a revival of trade with our great market in India." That was the view of the Trade Correspondent of "The Morning Post" on the day that the news was published.

"Here is another question during the course of the conversations: "Bombay buying orders supplied the chief stimulus". That was in "The Daily Mail." There are many of the same kind. There is the opinion of "The Daily Telegraph". I could quote many." I will take "The Times" of this morning in which the City Editor writes: "Since the successful conclusion of the Delhi conversations, they have had evidence," (that is, the correspondents in India), "of a considerable revival of business as shown by the numerous telegrams they have received."

"Without attempting to paint the picture too brightly it must be a source of great gratification to every one that the conclusion of conversations has been marked by improvement in those trade relations and it is not merely a question of overseas trade. We have to think of the position of Indian merchants themselves who have been very hard pressed by the Civil Disobedience movement and many of whom have been forced into financial disaster. Not only Indian merchants but European traders in India have welcomed this settlement with a great sigh of relief. On the trade side it represents to them a very definite improvement indeed.

"Next to trade I should catalogue as one of beneficent results of this settlement the improvement in world opinion of British policy. I am not suggesting that we should be overmindful of the opinion of other countries, but it is obvious that the goodwill of the world is a substantial asset to this country, whether in foreign affairs or matters of armament or in trade or in any other matter and we should seek, as far as possible, consistently with right policy, the goodwill of other nations. I will give the quotations in this connection. The Times' correspondent in New York on the day the settlement was announced wrote: "The news of the agreement between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi has been received in the United States with a chorus of applause."

"The only other quotation I will read is an official telegram which came spontaneously: His Majesty's Government in New Zealand have read with deep satisfaction your telegram of 6th March containing a general summary of the agreement arrived at between the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and representative of the Congress Party. They desire to express to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom their sincere gratification at this notably happy issue of the negotiations and especially to offer to Lord Irwin their warmest congratulations on his supremely successful achievement towards the re-establishment of peace, prosperity and happiness in India and the maintenance of cordial relations with Great Britain. I think, therefore, we are entitled to say that this achievement has not only been well received in the world but has done something to improve the relations among the nations of British Commonwealth.

"We have the two pictures. Before the Agreement—public opinion sore and hopeless, jails full, discontent rife, costs rising, credit falling, the world critical and trade declining; the picture to-day is content and trust growing, money saved, credit improved, trade hopeful and the world friendly.

"If there are critics of this agreement one is entitled to ask this question of them. Do you want the agreement or not? If anyone gets up and denounces either the Government for permitting the Viceroy to receive Mr. Gandhi or denounces the conversations in general, then a fair question to ask him is, 'do you want to put us back into the position we occupied a fortnight ago? You cannot have it both ways.

You either must take the conversations with their beneficial results or you must declare that the conversations should not have taken place. In which case you must say that you wish the situation in India to be what it was three weeks ago.' We may say that when these conversations were complete and this white paper was issued we had won our third battle for trust and co-operation. But that, after all, is in a sense a negative achievement. It gives us public peace and quiet. But there is a positive side and a much more important positive side in this white paper. The Congress will join in the Round Table Conference and it will join on the basis of the St James's findings, agreements or provisional understandings or whatever you like to call them. That is clearly stated in paragraph 2 of the White Paper.

"You stated, Sir, at the beginning of the debate that it would be quite out of order if I were to range over the whole field of future legislation. First, let me say a word about the Conference. It was stated in paragraph two of the White Paper that three outlines of the constitution were sketched, namely, federation, responsibility to be granted at the Centre and safeguards of interest. I should like, in relation to the last question which includes defence, external affairs and the position of minorities and financial credit of India, to make one brief comment. First, as to the position of minorities I would like to lay stress upon the authoritative declaration which was made by the Prime Minister as Chairman of the Conference on behalf of the Government at the concluding meeting of the conference. He said that there must be such guarantees as are required by the minorities to protect their political liberties and rights. He went on to say that it would be the duty of the Government to insert provisions guaranteeing to the various minorities in addition to political representation that the differences of religion, race, sect or caste shall not themselves constitute civic disabilities.

There is, therefore, no ground whatever for apprehension. The Government have approached or will pursue the question of the Indian constitution with impartiality towards any group or community or race. That being so, it will endeavour by co-operation here and in India to promote the spirit of goodwill in which alone we can hope to make advance. What is required now is that I should make some statement about the practical programme which we hope to pursue.

It is the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to continue with the least possible interruption the constitutional discussions of the Round Table Conference and, in considering what steps should now be taken, they have had to be guided by what is practicable here and by what is most convenient for the Indian side of the Conference. They have given very careful consideration to a plan by which a Parliamentary Delegation should go to India forthwith and reconstitute the Round Table Conference which sat at St. James's Palace with the addition of representatives of the Congress. The obvious advantages of this plan were outweighed by important practical considerations here. The exigencies of the Parliamentary situation made it difficult to secure an adequate Parliamentary delegation.

"In India, on the other hand, there is much preliminary work to be done." Here there were Conservative cries: "But are you doing anything"? Whereupon Mr. Benn said: "I beg the Right Honourable Gentlemen not to believe it is not in hand" and Sir Austen Chamberlain interpolated: "I hope it is". After which Mr. Benn continued: "As was indicated by the Prime Minister, in his announcement, which the Indians themselves must undertake. In particular, the issue is still left open by the Minorities Sub-Committee.

"We regard this work in India as of the greatest importance and we desire not to prejudice it. Moreover, the activities which the Round Table Conference pursued must in the case of most of the committees await the results of the expert investigations which the Conference itself has recommended. Subject to what I have just said, His Majesty's Government will seek the co-operation and contact with the Indian side of the Conference in the most convenient form at the earliest practicable date. There need in particular be no great delay in bringing the problems, which have been entrusted to the Federal Relations Committee, under further discussion. Accordingly, as soon as the Indian Delegates, among whom I include the representatives of the Congress, are prepared to resume the discussions we propose to invite them to come to London to resume the work of the Federal Relations Committee. We hope that the Committee's deliberations will make progress here during summer and meanwhile the expert investigation of the particular problems, recommended by the Round Table Conference, will be undertaken in India. By this means, the whole problem will, we hope, be ready for final discussion early in autumn.

Earl Winterton interpolated: "Apart from what we were going to discuss this

afternoon, could the Right Hon. Gentleman say in what way this Federal Structure Committee will be constituted and whether there will be an adherence of further Indian personnel?"

Mr. Benn replied "Yes. The Noble Lord did not hear probably what I said. I will supply him with a written copy of this part of my speech the moment I sit down and then he can make his comment when he makes his speech. Therefore we are to meet again at the Round Table Conference. I would remind the Committee of those words used in connection with this Conference by the Viceroy in his address to the Indian legislature on July 1930: "any agreement at which the Conference is able to arrive will form the basis of the proposal which His Majesty's Government will later submit to Parliament." The Round Table Conference method is vindicated. The work it has done is preserved. Its deliberations are to continue with all the authority that comes from full representation of all interests in Britain and India alike. In his concluding speech at St. James's Palace the Prime Minister had said: 'One of the secrets of our success thus far, in fact, I am not at all sure it is not the main secret, is the personal contact we have been able to establish. Let us get down to facts face to face. Let us sit round at the table. Let each of us state our claims, state our hopes, state our fears, state our expectations. Let each of us be candid, one to another and face to face. There is an enormously better chance of an understanding and agreement than under any other circumstances. I wish to continue that condition'. That is the spirit in which we will advance. If anything were needed to prove the necessity for direct contact, it has been the misunderstandings of the last two days, two whispering galleries separated by an ocean. If we can come face to face with our Indian friends, if we can discuss freely our doubts and difficulties, if the mischief-makers will be silent and men will cease to sow tares, then there is a real hope of peace and understanding."

Mr. Churchill declared that the developments of the past six weeks might be the subject of congratulations among those agreed upon the establishment of an All-India Federation with responsible Government as the precursor of full Dominion Status, but less enthusiasm was pardonable in those who thought these processes premature and dangerous and likely to lead to confusion and disaster. Nevertheless, the fact that the Conservatives would not be represented at any Round Table Conference in India made amends for much. Moreover the chances of agreement that would unite all sections in India and which would be ratified by the British Parliament were remote and slight while the probabilities of breakdown were enormous.

Mr. Churchill declared that it was ridiculous to assert that the decision not to continue the Conference was a mere matter of procedure. On the contrary, it was a reversal of the whole of the immediate programme of which the Government and Government of India had set their minds. The decision just announced left undecided the question whether the Conservative Party should participate in any further conference that might be held in London. He did not suggest that a decision of that kind should be taken now. He himself, with his own hand, in a resolution moved at a private committee upstairs, wrote those words on India. The draft of it has been his own. Expectations, aspirations and appetites throughout India were mounting. He read in newspapers that Mr. Gandhi was surrounded by wealthy men who were anticipating the acquisition of the resources of the Empire on cheaper terms than were ever offered to the world. It reminded him of the story of the Roman Senator dining when he heard the Pretorian Guard had put up the Empire to auction and so ran out and bought it for £200 per soldier. That was fairly cheap but the terms on which the Empire is being offered to this group around Mr. Gandhi are cheaper still. He denied that he was the apostle of violent repression or brutal force. On the other hand a mere tithe of the force and punitive measures which the Socialist Government and the Viceroy has vainly employed would have sufficed if it had been part of a firm and coherent policy of the simple maintenance of Law and Order.

Mr. MacDonald said that he rose to say a few words more by way of summarising the situation in which 'we now found ourselves than of raising new points or even replying to the questions that Earl Winterton had put. He said, "But there is one question I would like to reply to and that is the last question he put regarding the situation on the North-West Frontier. The Government is still awaiting complete reports upon that situation. We have not received them yet. I would like to tell the House this. If the honourable members have not heard a great deal about the situation on the North-West Frontier it has largely been on account of the very

successful handling by the Indian Government of the situation. The road which has been built across the Padura plain has been built with hardly even a paragraph in our newspapers. It is a tremendous triumph of successful handling. When it was mooted first of all it was very doubtful what would be the result. It was begun, it was carried on, it has been finished and no newspaper has found that there was enough sensation in it even to mention it. Case after case like that has taken place, but the Right Hon'ble Gentleman may be assured that, as soon as these reports are in our hands, we will inform him and give him an opportunity of putting him a question so that the whole House may be informed of how the matter stands. I am not going to accuse—using the phrase of the Right Hon'ble Gentleman—any party of being wholly united this afternoon but I am going to claim that a great majority of all the parties are united in standing by the work, the spirit and the method of the Round Table Conference. I say a great majority of all parties stand by them. If Mr. Churchill disputes that he must not dispute it with me. He must dispute it with his own leaders. We are carrying on through the Round Table Conference and its continuation of the work that has been begun before the last Government took office and before this Government took office. We cannot stand by at the present moment with all the change that is going on in the East, more particularly India, and say that what we have said up to now is the last thing that we intend to say.

"We are bound to take a revolving situation in time, so that situation may not be a revolutionary situation but may be confined within the channels of (revolutionary) changes. We co-operated whilst we were in the Opposition, we co-operated with the Government that then existed, in trying to keep those problem of devising a constitution for India outside party politics. Since we came into office we have done everything we can to maintain the same policy and, as long as we are in office and this work is in our hands, we shall do everything we possibly can to maintain that co-operation. It is perfectly true that the Government is responsible and the co-operation which takes place is the co-operation of independent advising bodies. When a decision is taken it will be primarily the Government's decision and will be subject to criticism just as the Right Hon. Gentleman had criticised us in our work this evening. We shall do everything we can to maintain the machinery which enables us to exchange views and be benefited by the advice given from various ends. We hope the co-operation will be as creative and effective as it was during the sittings of the Round Table Conference.

"The Leader of the Opposition said something about filling in the picture and that that should be the work of the Government. May I remind him that, very fortunately, in that work the Opposition has already co-operated. We began to fill in the picture at the Round Table Conference. We did not fill in the details but we planned general aspects of the picture. We laid down the conditions—Federal structure, responsibility at the centre, safeguards of various kinds, the Princes coming in, all communities in India being safeguarded by constitutional provisions. That has been done.

"What is the use of talking about the Round Table Conference having produced nothing? The conference has been more successful in laying down the preliminary condition which must be observed. The Right Hon'ble Gentleman seems to imagine that he can come to his conclusion regarding the details before he has made up his mind about the general aspects of the picture. That work is going on now. It is going on in India and here.

"The first thing that has to be done after the preliminary exploration have been finished is to get the Federal Structure Committee together again. Before the Round Table Conference dispersed, I saw the Indian leaders Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others and they impressed on me the very great advantage that would come if, without any delay at all, it were possible for the Government to arrange that representatives should go to India to keep up the personal touch with them. They told us about the very difficult task they had undertaken. They pledged themselves to us not to go back to India to do nothing and just to leave the newspapers to go on creating the future situation. They pledged themselves to us that they were going back as supporters of the Round Table Conference and its work.

"They said that their influence would be enormously strengthened if the personal contact they had made here with the representatives of Parliament could be continued in India and established without delay. I told them then of the situation here. I told them that while I believed that one of the reasons, if not the main reason, for the success of the Round Table Conference was the effect of personal contact, I visualise the situation in which we have found ourselves here. They were

never promised that that request should be carried out and they were promised that it would be very carefully and sympathetically considered.

"We are going to get the Federal Structure Committee beginning its work here as quickly as we possibly can and an invitation has gone to the Government of India through the Viceroy to do its best to arrange an early meeting of the Committee. The committee's report indicates the big points that have to be discussed together.

"We hope that when they come—I cannot say that we have been officially told but the hope is so strong that it almost goes beyond frontiers of hope—that the Congress representatives, Mr. Gandhi himself for instance, will be here. I hope that is so. With that added element we shall meet our old friends, the men to whom we owe so much. In that Round Table Conference, Princes, Hindus, Moslems, representatives of Labour, who were not at the Round Table Conference, representatives of depressed classes—I hope representatives not only of the Government but representatives of the parties with the same globular representation enlarged by representatives of the Congress, the Federal Structure Committee will pursue its work to a successful conclusion.

"We are placing now a test upon the honour of this country, and not only upon the honour of this country but upon the capacity of this country to face a very difficult political situation—a political situation probably more difficult than any Government has had to face before. That is all a new order of things. It grows. I should have liked to hear my Right Hon. friend give the wording of the resolutions which he accepted at the Imperial Conference of 1926. Everyone knows that verbal statements of a logical kind in all constitutions have to be taken as imperfect expressions of living interests. The Right Hon. Gentleman, in his speech, referred to the organic nature of our Empire. This is the only way in which we can face our problem, in the scientific frame of mind, and that is how we are facing the Indian problem now. I hope that the assurance may go to India without a peradventure, a doubt or a reservation, that the opening part of the statement of the Right Hon'ble Gentleman, that he is where he was when the Round Table Conference finished, still holds good.

## The Lords Debate on India

HOUSE OF LORDS—18th. MARCH 1931

In the House of Lords, on the 18th. March 1931, the Duke of Marlborough drew attention to the "increasing gravity of the situation in India and the adverse effect produced by the Round Table Conference" and invited a categorical statement regarding the safeguards which the British Government considered indispensable. He asked for an opportunity for discussing the Simon Commission's Report, expressed deep concern at the trend of events and said that the appointment of the Round Table Conference had resulted in jettisoning the Simon Commission's Report.

Lord Marlborough denied that the Round Table Conference or any subsequent conference held in London or India could take the place of the Simon Commission. He invited the Government to declare whether they accepted the safeguards mentioned by Sir Samuel Hoare in the Commons on 26th January and asked, if so, what would happen if the existence of safeguards made agreement with India uncertain and possibly ineffective.

Lord Sankey thanked Lord Marlborough for bringing the motion forward and expressed the opinion that the debate would be a real help to those who were engaged in the anxious and difficult task which was outside the ordinary party politics. Lord Sankey thought however that the first sentence "to call attention to the increasing gravity of the situation in India" was more appropriate when set down two months ago, for the situation had greatly improved in the interval.

With regard to the second sentence Lord Sankey stated that he would explain quite briefly why the Round Table Conference had produced not an adverse but good effect and one which was likely to improve Britain's future position in India.



Lord Sankey paid a tribute, at the outset, to the Indian delegates who came to England under unfavourable climatic condition and despite much hostile criticism. He said he desired to place on record, at the earliest possible moment, the contribution they had made to deliberations.

Lord Sankey said their desire to settle some form of responsible government for India was only equalled by their knowledge of law and the practice of Federal constitutions. Lord Sankey also congratulated the Lords on the help that the Round Table Conference had received from the Peers who were members of the Conference. Paying a tribute in this connection to Lord Russell "whose passing away has caused deep regret among his many friends on both sides of this House and outside it as well" he said "he was a tower of strength to the unfortunately small number of Labour Peers and a Rupert of debate. Nobody was more sorry than I that the reply to Lord Marlborough is no longer in the capable hands of late Earl Russell as it would have been had he remained with us."

Lord Sankey continued that there were two other distinguished members of the Lords to whom both England and India were indebted, namely, Lord Burnham and Lord Stratheona, who were members of the famous Statutory Commission, whose work would be remembered with gratitude by all reasonable men. They had endured many months of great physical fatigue and great mental anxiety. They had produced a report which would always hold a prominent place among British state documents. The recommendations of the Commission deserved the most careful consideration "and the fact that the Conference has gone beyond them is due to the patriotic action of the Indian Princes, who declared on their arrival in England for All-India federation."

"That was the ideal which the Statutory Commission had set before themselves, but they saw it through glass darkly. Now it had entered into the realm of practical politics and India is watching the dream that is coming to birth."

Having pointed out that, as far as the discussion on the Statutory Commission's report was concerned, Lord Marlborough could put down a motion on the subject whenever he liked, Lord Sankey proceeded to discuss the Round Table Conference proposals. He pointed out that the members were not plenipotentiaries. They were prepared to examine the facts and make suggestions.

The Federal Structure Committee, in particular, had not aimed at drafting a constitution. Even if it had had the time for it, it would not have attempted to make final proposals, for the members recognised that they did not possess the monopoly of wisdom. They felt that there was a large body of expert and informed views both in England and India, which were not only entitled to be consulted, but whose opinion should be of real value in reaching a satisfactory solution.

Their report, therefore, had been purposely drafted so as to leave many questions open and the committee's conclusions were inevitably, to a large extent, provisional.

Lord Sankey reminded the House that such a constitution could not be reduced at express speed, but opined that there was no Indian problem which was insoluble.

"It is perfectly possible to draft a Federal constitution which will be fair and just to everybody, and with the precedents before us the combined wisdom of the East and West can and will do so. As far as British politics is concerned the future of India does not depend upon party manoeuvres. Much as I respect individual opinion, it appears to me that the collective conscience of the nation will exercise itself in a matter like this more surely than individual conscience, and I have no misgivings as to the ultimate result of our labours."

"There are undoubtedly some of our fellow countrymen who are of opinion that the Round Table Conference was a profound mistake. We hope to convince them that they are wrong."

Lord Sankey proceeded to outline the main recommendations of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee's Report suggesting that it might justly be described as "Indian responsibility with due safeguards for the interests of both Britain and India." Lord Sankey reminded the House that the basic assumption of the report was a recognition of the principle that subject to certain special provision, responsibility for the Federal Government of India should rest in future upon the Indians themselves. He then turned to Lord Marlborough's inquiry regarding safeguards and said that apart from defence and foreign relations, which were reserved to the control of the Governor-General, special provisions would be inserted which were intended to give him adequate powers, amongst other things, in respect of minorities and finance and in respect of a breakdown of the constitution. "These special provisions are generally referred to as safeguards." My answer to Lord Marlborough is this: "Safeguards are indispensable and if they are satisfactory it will be wise to

defer to the Indian views and desires on other details because it is the Indians who will have to work the constitution.

Lord Sankey declared that the answer to the criticism that the system placed too much upon the Governor-General was in the nature of a paradox, for the more responsible Indians became, the better would the proposed constitution work. If they acted as wise and responsible statesmen and relied on themselves there need be no anxiety about the future. It was to be hoped and expected that the safeguards entrusted to the Governor-General will be rather in power than in use.

Referring to finance, Lord Sankey pointed out the necessity of securing India's present commitments and handling properly her future borrowings. He said that her credit and stability must be maintained and pointed out that this subject had passed the critical eye and gained the considered approval of experts.

Lord Sankey acknowledged the assistance rendered by Lord Reading in the matter of finance and then reviewed briefly some of the Sub-Committees' main proposals, mentioning points on which a decision had still to be reached. He pointed out that the recommendations of all Sub-Committees were available in Blue Book and the Government of India's statement on the conclusions of the Irwin-Gandhi conversations in the White Paper.

Lord Sankey proceeded: "Such is the result of our labours and such is the proposals which we have ventured to put forward that it will be quite easy to pick holes in them. That will be a tempting, but will not be a valuable contribution to our deliberations. It is one thing to criticise, another to create. We are not here to pull down; we are here to build up. Let me again, and for the last time, turn back to that part of Lord Marlborough's question which refers to the so-called adverse effect produced by the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. Which is to be our policy in India? What do you want? What are the alternatives? Do you desire an India companioned by content or do you desire an India seething with sedition? Whichever you select you will have to make some sacrifice. If you choose conciliation you will gain nearly all you desire and you will loose but little.

"If you resort to repression your military expenditure will go up, your revenue returns and your trading receipts will go down, and your difficulties will increase and multiply. Put up the sword. Appeal to force is bankruptcy of statecraft. You may indeed impose a peace but you will produce a desert.

"Of one thing rest assured. The future of India is no longer in the melting pot. The metal of her new constitution is being hammered out on the anvil of public opinion. It is natural and to be expected that sparks should fly. Some people are fond of fireworks. But sparks fly forgotten—a moment seen and then gone forever. The true metal remains.

"Give me leave to sum up the situation in which we find ourselves. We never went to India to conquer. We went there to trade. Inherited genius of our race and some fostering star have given us an empire, but it is an Empire which we hold in trust for many creeds and nations whose classes and whose communities are entitled to our protection.

"Rightly or wrongly we have educated Indians in Western ideals. Rightly or wrongly we have encouraged them to adopt western ways. Rightly or wrongly we have introduced them to western representative institutions and admitted them to our Councils. The very language of their Legislative Assembly, the language of the Congress itself, is our own mother tongue. They have learned something more than the catchwords of western civilisation.

"Time after time we have given them pledges. Time after time we have held out hopes to them. A Liberal Government introduced the Morley-Minto Reforms, a Coalition Government authorised the Montague-Chelmsford declaration and the Parliament itself passed the Government of India Act in 1919 with its preamble of promises and its partial grant of representative Government.

"Lord Irwin, the present Viceroy, the great Conservative statesman, in whom the Labour party has implicit confidence, has carried on the tradition. The Statutory Commission itself declared an All-India Federation as the goal to be aimed at. The Prime Minister, with very general assent, put the coping stone to the arch in the last speech he made at the Round Table Conference. Mr. Baldwin, speaking in the Commons on January 26 said: "We are all his Majesty's Opposition and if it should happen that we should change places with the right honourable gentlemen opposite, what do the honourable members behind me suppose our duty would be? We have only one duty and that one duty is to try to implement, as far as we can, what has been done in the Conference."

"My Lords, it is too late to back. We cannot stand still."

"The least dangerous course—it is the only safe course, it is (if the noble lords who happen to disagree with me will forgive me for saying so), the most honourable course—is to go forward. It is our traditional policy. It has been the secret of our success. Then will follow settled Government, material prosperity and reign of law. Finance is undoubtedly important. I yield to no man in my desire to see them amply and safely secured but, though I am anxious for something more than the triumph of our trade, I am still more jealous for the reputation of our statesmanship. It is by their moral actions, not by their material success that the Empires are judged at the bar of public opinion and by the verdict of history. It is spiritual things which exalt the nation and by them we shall be remembered when our triumphs are forgotten. Let us grant a Federal constitution to India and let our hope be that everything in it be so ordered and settled upon the best and surest foundations that peace, happiness, truth and justice may flourish as abundantly in India as they have done here at home."

*Lord Peel* welcomed Lord Sankey's declaration that the Government would insist on safeguards, but he would have liked him to go much further and explain how safeguards were to be worked out and how they were to form an effective part of the new constitution so that Britain might be able to say that all great interests, the responsibility for which still rested on Britain could be adequately discharged.

*Lord Peel* referred to the Irwin-Gandhi negotiations and said that he felt that if anything could put a stop to the miserable non-co-operation, which had done such unfortunate damage to India it was to be welcomed. *Lord Peel* urged that the Moslems should not be allowed to feel that they were not recognised because they had been loyal to the Government. He asked if boycott as an industrial weapon was to be allowed and also asked what proportion of the Princes the Government expected would come into the Federation, whether the Hindu-Moslem settlement was nearer and whether the members of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee would be the same as before,

*Lord Reading* expressed satisfaction at the fact that the debate showed unanimity on the main lines of policy to be pursued in India and said that *Lord Marlborough* had suggested that the Round Table Conference had had an adverse effect. On the contrary, *Lord Reading* declared that the position was much better and pointed out that as the result of the Conference Indian Leaders who were suspicious of Britain had abandoned distrust which had been replaced by trust and confidence.

*Lord Reading* welcomed the declaration that safeguards were indispensable and said they had been introduced as much in the interests of India as of Britain. He was anxious that it should be understood that the safeguards proposed must be accepted if Central Responsibility was to be given.

*Lord Reading* hoped that the agreement among parties would continue hereafter and all would travel along the same road to reach peace and goodwill in India.

*Lord Reading* referring to the Viceroy-Gandhi agreement said that conditions in India had very greatly improved from the moment that agreement which was brought about by the Round Table Conference was reached. The conference, therefore, had enabled peace to be declared in India.

*Lord Lloyd*, counselling caution, said that the Government was going dangerously fast. He subscribed fully to the policy of development of responsible self-Government but was convinced that India was not yet capable of immediate full Self-Government. In these circumstances the only possible safeguard for the interests of the great mass of the Indian people and for the great experiment which was being introduced was that the ultimate decision should remain with Parliament.

*Lord Islington* dwelt on the momentous nature of the change proposed and said that the authors of 1919 scheme had always understood that the journey would be a long one, but a gigantic leap to practically complete self-Government was being taken. He hoped that when the time came Parliament would not be pampered by any outside influence.

*Lord Passfield*, winding up the debate, made it clear that the Government wished for the co-operation of all parties and they would do their utmost to secure the continuance of it, subject to their own necessary responsibility for action.

Answering a query regarding what had happened during the last two months *Lord Passfield* said that there had been a detailed examination of questions considered by the Federal Structure and other Sub-Committees together with the expert examination of correlated questions.

Referring to the question regarding the number of Princes assenting to the Federation, Lord Passfield said that the Government had been considering, in close conjunction with the Viceroy, the best method of facilitating the necessary discussion and agreement and the Viceroy was dealing with it in constant communication with Mr. Wedgwood Benn. Lord Passfield added that the Government's policy was fully concurred with by the Viceroy in whom the Government had absolute confidence.

*The motion was withdrawn.*

#### HOUSE OF LORDS—29th. APRIL 1931

In the House of Lords, on the 29th. April 1931, *Viscount Peel* asked :

(1) Whether it is still the intention of the Government to hold another session of the Federal Structure Commission in this country and, if so, will Indian representation be the same or will new members be added? Will the Committee work on the same reference or will its range be restricted to the proposals by the Government?

(2) Whether the Princes who are not members of the Conference have accepted the Federal Scheme of Government and if so on what terms?

(3) Whether the Government can make a statement to allay the anxiety in this country and in India regarding the serious increase of ill-feeling between Hindus and Muslims?

(4) Whether they are satisfied that under the terms of the arrangement recently concluded the boycott of British goods has ceased and the situation in Gujerat and other places is improving?

(5) To call attention to the unrest in Burma and move for papers.

Lord Peel said that he rejected the suggestion to postpone the discussion until Lord Irwin returned because he felt that it would be unfair to expect the Viceroy to render an account of his administration without first having an opportunity of resting. Moreover Lord Peel desired information rather than on the present than on the future and it was for the Government to answer and take responsibility. Lord Peel proceeded to make a request for information on a number of points; for instance, progress made in India in discussions with the members of the Round Table Conference and asked whether the Government was now in a position to formulate some proposals, and referring to the selection of Mr. Gandhi as the sole representative of the Congress feared that a single representative would be too tied.

Expressing the opinion that the safeguards already laid down constituted the minimum, Lord Peel asked if the Government's position in this regard was unchanged. He said that it would be a profound mistake if those who were to come to London thought that the provisional conclusions regarding safeguards could be whittled away. Lord Peel asked whether the Princes' views had changed and inquired what were the views of those who were not represented at the Round Table Conference and referring to the necessity of the communal settlement said that the incidents of the last few weeks had rendered almost ironical the question whether further basis of agreement had been reached, but he desired to know what steps the Government were taking to try to improve feelings between the two great communities.

Lord Peel invited Government to indicate the personnel and scope of the Conference. If Mr. Gandhi was to be the sole representative of the Congress it was to be noted that from recent meetings at Karachi it did not appear that the views of the Congress were unanimous or homogeneous.

Lord Peel said that his information was that the boycott of British goods was as vigorous as ever. He concluded by asking for an assurance that Burma had returned to the normal and inquiring about the position regarding the separation of Burma.

*Lord Reading* emphasised the necessity of avoiding a misconception regarding the points which would be open for discussion at the renewed Round Table Conference. He said that he felt that the impression existed that Mr. Gandhi, when he attended the Round Table Conference, would be able to abolish the safeguards and reservations or some of them which the Round Table Conference had accepted. Lord Reading said the substance of safeguards and reservations as stated by him, to the Committee, which had been accepted by Government and pronounced for by the Prime Minister, were part and parcel of the whole question and part of the promise or expression in favour of responsibility at the centre.

Speaking for the Liberals Lord Reading desired to make it emphatically clear that they attached very great importance to the reservations and safeguards, which were necessary in India's own interests. It was quite possible to discuss

methods by which they were to be enforced, but their substance must remain. He desired to say plainly and emphatically that they were indispensable.

Proceeding, Lord Reading referred to the communal question and asked whether steps were now being taken for the purpose of settling the controversy. He said nobody could read what had happened at Cawnpore without feeling that it was a scandal that such things were possible for three days and nights. He said that grave responsibility must lie on some quarter or other. He hoped that the Government would supply the information when the Inquiry Commission had fixed the blame.

Lord Reading concluded by making a reference to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency's important speech on 25th April which he declared, showed the justification for the anxiety regarding the position in India and said that Sir G. Montmorency's statement that "our toleration has only in the end bred license" seemed to him a curious observation for the Governor of a province. "The language used makes me wonder what has happened and what is happening."

Lord Reading asked the Government plainly to give the Viceroy an assurance that in every action he might take to carry out Sir G. Montmorency's proposals, the Viceroy would have the support and approval of the Government as Lord Reading was sure he would have the support of the Parliament and the country.

*Lord Burnham* emphasised the increasing gravity of the situation and said that unless Britain made up her mind as to what she meant to do, calamity and catastrophe would emerge from the present growing chaos. Lord Burnham believed that there would be widespread sympathy with Lord Willingdon on his being called at such time to such a heritage.

Referring to the charges of police inaction at Cawnpore Lord Burnham expressed gratitude for what the police had done for the protection of the Simon Commission in India and said that he attributed the inaction, if it was even partially true, to official mismanagement and most of all to want of support and encouragement due to the Government of India's defeatist spirit.

*Lord Snell*, Under-Secretary for India was cheered on the occasion of his first speech when he rose to reply to Lord Peel's questions. He said Government proposed to invite the Indian delegates to London to resume the work of the Federal Structure Committee and Government hoped the Committee's deliberations would make progress here during summer. Indian representation on the Committee was to be the same but Government was considering whether it would not be desirable to add to it representatives of certain interests not directly represented on the original Committee. A definite statement as to the personnel could not be made until Lord Willingdon had had time to consider the matter. Government's plans contemplated bringing problems which had been entrusted to the Federal Structure Committee under further discussion. Specific heads of inquiry referred to the Committee when it sat in London were intended broadly to cover the whole field of the constitution and powers of the Federal or Central Government of the type contemplated by Government.

Plans sketched out in the Committee's two reports left much of that field unexplored. Government hoped in a further session to enable it, if not to complete the work at all events, to make specific progress towards its completion.

Lord Snell read out as a reminder of the basis on which work was to be carried on Paragraph II of the Government of India's statement of 5th March on the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement. He said that this applied to the programme of the Conference as a whole and therefore generally to the work of the Federal Structure Committee. Lord Snell said that he had not yet received information regarding the reaction towards a Federation of individual rulers who were not present in London. But the States delegation was now engaged in obtaining the views of brother Princes and hoped shortly to have a representative body of opinion.

Lord Snell confessed that he attempted to answer Lord Peel's third question with considerable diffidence because the matter was very delicate and a solution was primarily for Indians. He said: "All that His Majesty's Government can do is to reiterate that the new constitution must contain such guarantees as the minorities require to protect their political liberties and rights. This is one of the basic conditions on which not only the Government but all the parties in the Conference took their stand."

Continuing Lord Snell said that the time was too short for confident opinion regarding the effect on trade of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement, which any way, would be complicated by other economic forces. He had no reason to believe that the

undertaking as regards the boycott of British commodities was generally being disregarded though certain difficulties had arisen which the Government of India was considering. Lord Snell was informed that the open preaching of boycott as a political weapon had practically ceased, but efforts were still being made to persuade Indians to cease using foreign cloth. That was consistent with the Agreement. The Government of India had received the general impression that the sales of foreign cloth, including British cloth had increased and existing stocks were being cleared.

Referring to the political situation he said while there was definite improvement in Bombay Presidency, the position in the United Provinces and the Punjab was less satisfactory. Lord Snell reviewed the position in the provinces and said that there were undoubtedly a widespread desire for peace all over India and there would be general regret if the settlement broke down. There were undoubtedly difficult times ahead, but greater difficulties had been faced and overcome in the past and the Government saw nothing in the situation to justify the mood of pessimism.

Referring to Burma, Lord Snell said that the superstition and ignorance of the peasantry had been exploited by the organisers of rebellion assisted by economic distress. Although disturbances continued, local officers were hopeful that the situation would be controlled. He concluded by expressing the opinion that the information he was able to supply was reassuring and said that the situation in India required both patience and tolerant understanding.

*Lord Peel*, while thanking Lord Snell, intimated that he would again raise some questions later. *The motion for papers was withdrawn.*

## The Commons Debate on India

HOUSE OF COMMONS—13th. MAY 1931

Lord Irwin listened from the Peers' Gallery to the Commons debate on India Office Estimates reviewing the effect of his agreement with Mr. Gandhi on the trade between Britain and India.

The debate was opened by *Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister* who lamented that there was no evidence of an improvement and complained that the agreement, "if agreement it could be called" was not being carried out in the letter and certainly not in the spirit, while the attempt to found a company for the re-export of stock of British cotton goods at present in India was a violent breach of the whole spirit of the Agreement.

*Sir Herbert Samuel* expressed the Liberals' gratitude that *Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister* had voiced the protest of Lancashire whose feelings were too deep and widespread for the Commons to fail to take cognizance of.

*Sir H. Samuel* expressed the opinion that, despite the strength of Japanese competition and decline in India's purchasing power, Indian tariff and Indian boycott constituted a most important cause of the collapse of Lancashire trade. He said that the only course was to follow energetically and sincerely the lines laid down by the Round Table Conference, but a favourable atmosphere was necessary for this both in India and Britain.

*Sir Herbert Samuel* invited the Secretary of State for India to indicate the steps that were being taken to press on while necessary measures to implement the conclusions of the Round Table Conference for, the sooner this was done, the more likely it would be that troubles in India would cease.

*Mr. Wedgwood Benn* reminded the House that, though distressed by Lancashire's trouble the House had an equal responsibility for the welfare of the people of India. He deprecated concentrating on one aspect of the picture and pointed out that Lancashire's trade was not the only industry to suffer severely in recent years. Moreover, Lancashire's exports to other countries had also declined.

*Mr. Benn* said in some quarters it was wrongly imagined that the difficulties through which Lancashire was passing were solely due to the political cause being mishandled in India but it must be remembered that, in the last ten years, the

whole of British export trade had suffered a severe decline. Dealing with the Irwin-Gandhi conversations he pointed out that the Government of India were encouraging Indian industry. The salvation of India's huge agricultural population lay in the encouragement of the village industry. The economic value to India of this movement was not fully appreciated here, but if the economic position of India could be improved Lancashire cloth trade would benefit.

The total demand for cotton goods in India was nearly four million yards and as the production of Indian mills was only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million yards there was a big margin which would have to be filled from external sources, particularly as the demand for better quality had increased.

Having emphasised the effect of Japanese competition and India's loss of purchasing power, in which regard he laid stress on the advantage Lancashire would derive from the improvement of Indian economic conditions, Mr. Benn pointed out that the Boycott Clause of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement was two-sided. It not merely permitted the free sale of foreign goods but Government undertook to assist in encouraging Indian industry.

Mr. Benn made it clear that the Agreement did not affect the operation of the ordinary law which would be enforced with the goodwill of the Congress.

Mr. Benn thought that the recent trade indications offered some slight encouragement and said that all were agreed that Britain should obtain a fair share of the unsatisfied demand which must exist in India for many years. All were agreed equally that India's fiscal policy should be governed by the Fiscal Autonomy Convention.

Mr. Benn stressed the duty of improving the relation and restraining the extremists on both sides. He emphasised that the aim of the Agreement was not primarily to secure trade revival, but there was a deeper object, namely, restoring goodwill. He claimed that the Government had steadily pursued the path of peace. He dwelt on the magnitude of the achievement in persuading the delegates to attend the Round Table Conference and their achievement after returning to India in persuading others to come in.

He concluded as follows: "When the great Viceroy of our time persuaded the acknowledged leader of the great body of Indian opinion to come to an agreement which I am confident he intends to implement, it was a still greater achievement and if we are allowed to pursue the path of peace it will lead to the greatest achievement of all."

*Mr. Churchill* declared that Mr. Benn minimised part of the trouble and closed his eyes to the rest. He asked if it was the duty of the Parliament supinely to allow matters to drift till Lancashire was ruined. He maintained that the present policy was injurious to India and ruinous to Lancashire. He declared that whether boycott was economic or political, it should be proclaimed to be illegal. Boycott was the fruit of weakness and lack of confidence in British duty and British mission and poisoned the Hindu-Moslem relations. Government was heading to a deadlock.

*Mr. Winston Churchill* said that the Imperial Parliament was responsible for the welfare of the peoples both of India and Britain and until they parted with that responsibility they had power and lawful rights to act in the interests of both. There was scarcely any commodity whose exclusion from India would inflict more injury on the Indian people than cotton cloth. No class of capitalists in the world in this year of economic misfortune had made such profits as the Indian millowners. This, coupled with the fact that the conditions in Indian mills were lamentably below those of other countries, entitled them to say that it was in the interests of the Indian people that the monopoly should be prevented. The Indian millowners were financial supportees of Mr. Gandhi and provided the money behind the boycott.

The Labourite, *Mr. Brothors* declared that Lancashire had developed an inferiority complex and needed greater courage, initiative and vitality.

*Lord Stanley* described the boycott as an attempt to obtain by force what was unobtainable by reason.

Strong criticism of the "weak Viceroy and the weak Government" uttered by Conservative member, *Mr. Wayladd* evoked a protest from Mr. Isaac Foot, who declared that the suggestion about the Viceroy who has just returned from a period of office of exceptional difficulty would be entirely repudiated by the great majority of the people of Britain.

*Com. Kenworthy* urged the necessity of bringing home to India that the day had passed when she was regarded as a milch-cow and that boycott did not accord with the right atmosphere for the coming extremely difficult negotiations.

*Sir Samuel Hoare*, who declared that the goodwill which the Round Table Conference had endeavoured to create, tended to disappear in consequence of the "policy of drift" since adopted by Whitehall and warned India that it might be necessary to postpone the consideration of advance until an atmosphere of calmer commonsense, good faith and goodwill returned.

*Sir S. Hoare* urged the Government to enunciate their policy, practically whether the question of safeguards was to be treated as settled and whether it was intended to insist on the spirit as well as the letter of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement.

*Mr. Benn*, replying to the debate, reminded the House that since the Conference had ended, the Irwin-Gandhi conversations, the Karachi Congress and the change of Viceroy had occurred. He thought it could justifiably be said that events had moved rather rapidly. The charge of wilful and careless delay was unfounded.

*Mr. Benn* shared *Sir S. Hoare's* eagerness to continue the work but there was a good deal to be done. Government realised the unanimous desire to get on and would welcome suggestions to this end.

Replying to *Mr. Foot* who asked whether depressed classes would be represented on the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, *Mr. Benn* said that the personnel of that body was being very carefully considered and the point would not be overlooked.

The debate ended on a note of excitement occasioned by *Mr. Bracken's* demanding a reply to a "plain question" whether *Mr. Gandhi* accepted the safeguards laid down.

*Mr. Benn* did not attempt to reply.

*Mr. Churchill* jumped up and asked angrily, "Are we to have an answer?" The question was received with a storm of ironical Labour cheers.

*Mr. Churchill* was proceeding to complain that *Mr. Benn* carefully avoided the real issues but his voice was drowned in Labour cheers and laughter.

*Mr. Benn* intervened and said that the basis on which the Conference would reassemble was laid down in the White paper on the Irwin-Gandhi discussions.

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# INDIANS IN EAST AFRICA

## The Government of India Despatch

### On The Closer Union Of East Africa

On the 21st. April 1931, the Government of India published their despatch to the Secretary of State dated the 24th. November on the scheme of a closer union in East Africa in which they expressed opinion which was in substantial agreement with the views of His Majesty's Government, but suggested safeguards in the interest of the Indian community. The following is the text of the Despatch:—

"We have the honour to refer to your telegram No. 3301, dated 15th October 1930, inviting the views of the Government of India on the scheme of a closer union in East Africa as set out in the statement of conclusions of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom (Command Paper 3574) in so far as it affects the Indian population in that territory, and suggesting that these views should be expressed in a self-contained document which could be laid before the Joint Select Committee to be appointed by the two Houses of Parliament.

We consider it very desirable that the Select Committee should be acquainted with the opinion which is held in unofficial Indian circles on the general question of the establishment of a closer union between East Africa dependencies as distinct from the details of any particular scheme. There is a general feeling of apprehension that, in any scheme of closer union, the policy of the Central Authority in matters of common interest to all the three territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika is bound to be affected by the political ideals of the European settlers in Kenya on account of their number and influence, and that, as these ideals in the past can only be described as complete political domination by the European community, Indian interests must necessarily be endangered by a closer union. In this connection we would invite attention to the passage contained in the memorandum presented by the Indian Association, Dar-es-Salaam, which was printed as Appendix III to the report submitted to the Government of India by the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P. C., regarding his mission to East Africa in 1928. The passage reads as follows: "In whatever form closer union is introduced in East Africa, it is bound to prejudicially affect the status of Indians in Tanganyika in as much as the step, under the conditions prevailing in East Africa, will eventually develop into Kenyanization of all these countries directly affecting the secure position and equal status of the Indians with the rest of the population under the Mandate. It is felt that in the establishment of a central authority, even though at the outset it might be only for the purpose of economic development, there is a danger of eventual political unification and that, under the new constitutional machinery, safeguards provided under the Mandatory system far from being extended to Kenya and Uganda would be weakened in Tanganyika itself. The Indian community therefore views with alarm the prospect of any plan which has in its potentialities of developing into political coalescence territories to provinces of a United State, exercising both Executive and Legislative powers. There is however a school of thought which does not object to co-ordination in the administration of certain subjects of common economic interest. There is no danger that such co-ordination would form a prelude to political unification, and if the protection of Indian interests is ensured by means of necessary safeguards, for instance, adequate Indian representation on the Central Council.

Indian opinion has welcomed the reiteration by his Majesty's Government of the principle of the paramountcy of the interests of African natives, and only desires that this principle should not be interpreted and applied to discriminate against the immigrants of a particular race. Considerable uneasiness has however been caused recently by the reports in the Press that this principle has been attacked by important personages in speeches delivered on various occasions in which they have pressed for the supremacy of the Whiteman's rule both in East

Africa and in South Africa. Although these speeches refer to the position of White settlers vis-a-vis the Native inhabitants, there is a genuine fear that any change in policy adopted towards the Natives in East Africa may react on the policy adopted towards the Indian immigrant community. Apprehensions are entertained that the forces that are at work in an endeavour to secure the reversal of the Native policy announced by His Majesty's Government in the White Paper of 1930 (which itself is but a re-statement of the policy laid down in the earlier White papers) may influence, even though indirectly, the course of action in relation to Indian population.

As regards the Kenya Legislative Council, the question of the introduction of a common electoral roll is of primary and vital importance, as on it depends a satisfactory solution of the East African problem from the Indian stand-point. The conclusions of His Majesty's Government in this regard have been whole-heartedly welcomed by the Indian community, which is anxious that the change should be brought about with the least possible delay, if it is opposed by the local European opinion. That community is equally gratified to see that it is proposed to retain the official majority in the Council. It is its firm conviction that it is in the interests of the country that the Natives should continue to be represented by officials until they are fit to represent themselves, and that if the interests of the Natives are to be defended by a nominated non-official, there is no reason why the choice should be restricted to a European and why an Indian should not be appointed. It is believed, and the belief is strengthened by the present European agitation in and outside Kenya, that the desire of the non-official Europeans to represent the Natives emanates from a desire for power which, should there be a conflict of interests, they may not improbably use to the prejudice of those whom they are supposed to represent.

#### "NO OBJECTION TO CLOSER UNION SCHEME"

Having voiced the mingled feelings of satisfaction and apprehension which are entertained in non-official circles, we now proceed to express our own views on the conclusions of His Majesty's Government.

We have no objection to the scheme of Closer Union proposed in the White Paper. Although it is evident that the High Commissioner's sphere of influence will extend beyond the sphere of economic interests, inasmuch as one of his duties will be to act as Chief Adviser on Native and other policy to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, we have however felt that any misgivings on this point should be set at rest by the definite provision of certain safeguards.

#### HIGH COMMISSIONER'S COUNCIL

Under the proposals of His Majesty's Government, the Council which is to assist the High Commissioner in the discharge of his duties in relation to transferred services will consist of 7 members for Kenya, 7 for Uganda and for 7 Tanganyika, besides three officers from the High Commissioner's staff. Of the 7 members for each of the three territories, 4 are to be officials and 3 non-officials. It is further prescribed that in selecting members for nomination, the High Commissioner shall have regard, as far as possible, to the representation of each racial or other section of the community. We consider that the interests of the Indian community in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika are sufficiently extensive and important to warrant amplification of this provision and we would urge that it should be definitely provided in the constitution of the Central Council that at least one Indian should be appointed to it from each of the three territories to represent the interests of his community. We attach special importance to this point.

Although we are not directly concerned with the representation of Native interests, our view is that such interests should be represented by Natives as far as possible, but that if the present stage of the Natives' intellectual development does not permit of this, the selection of other than Natives for the purpose should not be confined to members of any one race, and Indians should be equally eligible with Europeans.

We welcome the safeguard in clause (14) of Part II of Paragraph 5 of the White Paper which requires the High Commissioner to refer any measures passed by the Council to the Secretary of State for Colonies, for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure, if a request is made to this effect by any three members. We trust that this provision will be retained unaltered as it will enable the three Indian members

acting in concert to protect the interests of their community against any measure which they might regard as detrimental or injurious to the interest of the Indian community.

#### NATIVE POLICY

We share the satisfaction of the Indian community at the re-affirmation by His Majesty's Government of the principles that the interests of the African Natives must be paramount, and that the ultimate responsibility for the exercise of the trusteeship for the native population must rest with His Majesty's Government alone. We support this policy wholeheartedly as the entire character of the administration will depend on it and its reactions are bound to be felt by non-Native communities including Indians.

#### FRANCHISE QUESTION

The Indian community of Kenya has never swerved from its adherence to the principle of a common electoral roll which it has always regarded as a sign of political equality. In this, it has had the strongest support of the leaders of public opinion in India. The extent of its anxiety to secure a common roll may be judged by the fact that it has refused, for several years, to participate in the legislative and municipal elections on the basis of communal electorates although it has fully realised that its continuance of this course has deprived it of the privilege of sending representatives of its own choice to protect its interests. The desire for a common role is not based merely on sentiment. Indeed it derives its strength from a firm belief that the general progress and welfare of the colony, as a whole, can be secured only by a system of representation based on common electorates. The demand has in no way suffered in keenness, with the lapse of time and has always received full support from the Government of India.

When Lord Milner decided in 1920 that two Indian members should be elected to the Legislative Council of Kenya on special franchise, the Government of Lord Chelmsford, in their Despatch No. 33 dated 21st October 1920, expressed their inability to accept this decision, and said: "We desire to reiterate our opinion that there should be a common electoral roll, and a common franchise on a reasonable property basis, plus an educational test, without racial discrimination for all British subjects. We believe that is the true solution of the East African Problem. We fear that separate representation for different communities will perpetuate and intensify racial antagonism. On the other hand, a common electorate whereby a member of one community would represent the constituents of another community would tend to moderate and compose racial differences. In no other way, we believe will the diverse races in East Africa become a united people." On receipt of these views, the matter was re-opened by His Majesty's Government and pending a final settlement of the question of franchise, the Governor of Kenya was authorised to announce that he would be prepared to nominate four Indians to the Legislative Council instead of the two provided for under the Constitution then existing. The Indian Community, at first, refused the offer, but subsequently accepted it on the advice of the Government of India. Negotiations were continued with a view to arranging a settlement that would meet the Indian demands and at the same time would be acceptable in Kenya itself.

#### THE WOOD-WINTERTON REPORT

When the substance of the Wood-Winterton report was telegraphed to India in the Summer of 1922, the Government of India considered the terms of the settlement far more favourable to Indian claims than those contained in the Lord Milner's despatch of 21st May, 1920. In particular, these terms conceded a common electoral roll subject to certain restrictions designed to secure a distribution of seats adapted to the then existing conditions between the European and Indian Communities. On the question of Electoral franchise, the Government of India adhered to the views they had previously expressed. As regards reservation of seats, they considered that, if that was unavoidable, they should prefer the second alternative proposed under which some constituencies would be created in which Europeans and Indians would be eligible as candidates. His Majesty's Government, however, decided that although a provision should be made for five Indian non-official members on the Council instead of four, these five members should be elected on a system of communal representation, which system, in their opinion, was designed best to serve the interests of all concerned in Kenya.

Before the decision was made public, the Government of India were given an opportunity to make a final representation. They adhered to the attitude they had previously adopted regarding the Wood-Winterton Report in respect of a common electoral roll. They urged that such franchise with provision of reserved seats would still enable Arab representation to be introduced forthwith and African representation in due course. They pointed out that the racial difference and tension in Kenya could be composed only if Europeans and Indians exercised their voting power on a common basis. They repeated their objection to communal system, that it had separated Indians from Europeans.

When the decision was announced, the Government of India issued a resolution on the 18th August 1923, saying that although they were under an obligation to accept the decision of his Majesty's Government and could not ask his Majesty's Government to reconsider and revise a decision just reached after protracted deliberations, they reserved to themselves the liberty of making such representations as might be necessary whenever in future a legitimate opportunity should present itself. In the circumstances, it is natural that we should note with great satisfaction that His Majesty's Government now regard the establishment of a common roll as an object to be aimed at and attained with equal franchise of a civilisation or education character open to all races. We give our warm support to this declaration which is in accordance with the opinions we expressed in 1920 and 1923. We would however urge that the enquiry proposed to be made by the High Commissioner as to what is the most practicable action to be taken in the immediate future in the direction of the establishment of a common roll should be undertaken as soon as possible in order that the fruition of the hopes which the declaration of His Majesty's Government has raised in the minds of the Indian community may not be delayed longer than is absolutely necessary.

#### COMPOSITION OF KENYA LEGISLATURE

We welcome the conclusion of His Majesty's Government that the constitution of the Kenya Legislative Council should be left substantially unchanged and that the official majority should be retained. The retention of the official majority was one of the recommendations in the Wood-Winterton Report. Again in the White paper on "Indians in Kenya" His Majesty's Government declared in 1923 that the substitution of an unofficial majority for the official majority could not yet be contemplated. The circumstances in regard to African representation still remain unchanged, and we agree with the conclusions of His Majesty's Government that the goal of constitutional evolution which is defined as Responsible Government by a ministry representing an electorate in which every section of the population finds an effective and adequate voice, cannot be reached at an early date. We are therefore of opinion that the retention of the official majority is in the best interests of the Colony as a whole. We would have preferred the present position, but have no great objection to the appointment of two non-official members instead of one as at present to represent the interests of African and others, as these members are to be nominated by the Governor with restriction of race.

It will be observed that our opinions are in substantial agreement with those of His Majesty's Government and we trust it will be possible to provide safeguards which we have considered it necessary to suggest. In conclusion we would ask you to approach the Joint Select Committee when it is constituted with a request that we may be permitted to present the Indian case through a representative who would also be able to elucidate in the course of oral examinations, such questions as the committee may find it necessary to refer to him.

**BRITISH INDIA AND INDIAN STATES**

**January--June 1931**

# The Chamber of Princes

NEW DELHI—16th. MARCH 1931

There was a record attendance of Ruling Princes at the tenth annual session of the Chamber of Princes which was opened by the Viceroy at New Delhi on the 16th. March 1931. There was no less than ten new Ruling Princes who took their seats.

Before addressing the Chamber, the Viceroy announced that the Maharaja of Alwar had presented a clock to the Chamber whom he thanked on behalf of the members. His Excellency then pressed an electric button which lighted the clock. The Viceroy then addressed the Chamber as follows :—

## THE VICEROY'S SPEECH.

Your Highnesses: To-day for the fifth time I have the pleasure and privilege of welcoming Your Highnesses to this Chamber which now enters upon its tenth session. The completion of a decade in the history of an institution such as this is an occasion which naturally tempts us to look back along the road we have travelled, to count up the achievements that mark the miles behind us, and to take new thought and new hope for the journey that is still to come. For myself it means, I grieve to say, the end of what I shall always look back upon as a very happy partnership, a five years, partnership which I believe, as I think your Highnesses believe, has been a period as critical and important, as five years well could be. When the history of our time comes to be written, the last few years may indeed seem pregnant with great issues to the States; and the Round Table Conference in which members of this Chamber played so notable a part may prove to have been as vital to your interests as even the conclusion of your treaties or the proclamation of Queen Victoria. In addressing you, therefore, this morning, I am deeply conscious of the momentous issues which at present occupy our minds.

Before, however, I pass to other matters, it is my melancholy duty to recall that death has been busy since our last meeting, and has taken a heavy toll among the members of your Order. In two brief months last summer, five great Princes passed to their rest, and since then two more have been added to their number. His Highness the Maharaja of Udaipur, the Senior Rajput Prince had for many years been a famous and historic figure, revered for his blameless life and high conception of his duty, a model of Rajput chivalry and a great and courteous gentleman. He stood upon ancient ways, and cared not greatly for the modern world around him. Age and infirmity prevented his joining the Chamber. It was the poorer by his absence. In him the British Government has lost a faithful ally whose loyalty and friendship never wavered.

His Highness the Nawab of Tonk was another Prince who did not attend the Sessions of this Chamber. When he died he had ruled for over sixty years, thus linking us with the time which now seems so remote when John Lawrence was still Viceroy of India. It was perhaps not to be expected that he would move rapidly on the lines of modern progress, but his keenness of mind, sense of humour and vitality of body at a great age will long be remembered by those who knew him.

The Maharaja of Orchha too was of a generation that has now almost passed. The doyen of the Bundelkhand Princes, he had been prevented latterly by weight of years from regularly attending the Chamber, but those who knew him will not forget the stately figure, the keen intelligence and the dominating will.

His Highness the Nawab of Rampur was the personal friend and valued adviser of many of Your Highnesses. He was a Nestor among your Order, a sage of ripe experience and the most friendly of peace-makers, and though he never disguised his hesitancy in attending this Chamber, there were few who at the Council table were wiser or more shrewd.

Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal is another whose loss will be widely felt. She had for many years been in the forefront not only of the Princes of India, but of its great women and India's womanhood by her death is bereft of one of its

most devoted champions. She took a prominent part in the earlier sessions of this Chamber. After she retired in favour of her son her interest in its deliberations continued unabated.

We have also to mourn the deaths of their late Highnesses the Rana of Barwani and the Nawab of Sachin. Your Highnesses will, I know, wish to express your sorrow at these great and grievous losses, and to convey your sympathy to the bereaved families. You will also wish to join with me in welcoming cordially to your deliberations those on whose shoulders have fallen their duties and responsibilities. In that welcome I would desire to include those other young princes who are now joining this Chamber for the first time.

Let me now briefly claim Your Highnesses' attention to certain items of business which have recently come within the purview of the Members of this Chamber. Your Highnesses will remember, that last year, you passed a resolution recommending that an Indian Ruling Prince should lead the Indian delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations at least once in a cycle of three years. It fell to his Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner to be the Leader of the Delegation at the meeting of the League Assembly last September, and I am sure that the statement which he will present to the Chamber will be as instructive as any of those made by his distinguished predecessors. His Highness will also give you an account of his work as the representative of India at the Imperial Conference. We need no assurance that His Highness discharged these high responsibilities with dignity and judgment, and he deserves the deep gratitude of this Chamber for undertaking this onerous duty at a time when so many other pressing matters demanded his attention.

There are also certain questions which have recently been under examination by the Standing Committee and to which I would wish to make reference, for though changing conditions may involve a fresh examination of some of these problems, the valuable work which the Committee has done stands as a foundation for further instructive effort which has yet to be undertaken.

The important subject of air navigation in Indian States has now reached a compromise, thanks to friendly concessions by all the parties concerned and I understand that His Highness the Chancellor will lay a summary of this case before you.

The question of the future of the Chief's colleges has also been decided and the scheme which has recently received the approval of the Secretary of State will be brought into effect as early as possible. I trust that it will help to infuse fresh life into these institutions and in increasing measure to enlist among your Highnesses and your Nobles the sympathy upon which their future well-being must largely depend.

Another matter of no small concern to the States is the step which my Government have recently taken following the recommendation of the Road Development Committee in imposing an additional duty on motor spirit and allotting the proceeds for expenditure on roads. A share of the income will be devoted to the Indian States and to assure co-ordination of policy, periodic road conferences will be held at which the States will be represented. The amounts available for distribution may be limited for some years to come, but they are likely to grow with the gradual improvement of communications, and I feel sure that Your Highnesses will co-operate with my Government in this highly important work which means so much to the development of India's agriculture, industry and commerce and the general prosperity of the people.

The brunt of the work which it is the duty of the Chamber to perform naturally falls upon the members of the Standing Committee. Your Highnesses would no doubt wish me to offer our sincere thanks to His Highness the Chancellor and the members of the Standing Committee for the devoted labours undertaken by them on behalf of the Chamber during the past year. For reasons of which you are aware, the year has been a peculiarly exacting one, but Their Highnesses have given freely and ungrudgingly of their time and effort in the interests of your Order. His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala has held the post of Chancellor throughout the five years of my Viceroyalty, and during this critical and important period, a period in which he had personally had to meet and had successfully exposed much undeserved calumny, he has spared neither time nor money in performing the duties and upholding the dignity of his high office. Your Highnesses are, I know, deeply conscious of the service he has rendered on your behalf, and for my part I would wish to acknowledge personally and warmly the whole-hearted assistance he has given to me in all matters affecting the affairs of Your Highnesses and the Government.

I desire also to pay tribute, as I feel certain will Your Highnesses, to the work done by His Highness the Maharaja of Cutch during the time he carried on the duties of the Chancellor while His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala was absent in Europe. His Highness, at no small inconvenience to himself, remained for a considerable time in Delhi in order to maintain touch with myself and the States' representation in London.

#### ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CHAMBER

If time and Your Highnesses' patience permitted, I might have been tempted to survey in more complete manner the achievements of the Chamber since its birth ten years ago, but I may perhaps sum up briefly some of the useful purposes it has served. It has given us, for one thing, an arena for mutual and friendly discussions which have clarified our ideas on either side and assisted towards the settlement of many questions at issue between you and the Government of India and of many points of political practice and procedure. It has had valuable reactions moreover in ways more personal to Your Highnesses yourselves. Apart from training the younger members of your Order in public speaking and debate, it has brought about a unity and solidarity of feeling on matters of common interest that are of importance not only to yourselves but to all India. Even those who have taken no part in the debates of the Chamber must recognise the advantages it has obtained for their Order as a whole. Without trespassing on the individuality of States, the Chamber has shown and Your Highnesses have been quick to seize the value of common discussion.

The examination of your position and problems by the Butler Committee gave an impulse to this spirit of unity, and no one will ignore the strength it had attained under the stimulus of the recent deliberations in London. Whatever be the result of these, I have no doubt that the spirit which enabled the States' delegation to speak with so such authority on behalf of the Order, was born and nurtured in this Chamber. What part the Chamber is to play in the India of the future we can scarcely now foretell. It may be that it has already served its early purpose, and that it must now yield place to the new Chambers of a Federated India, but whatever be in store we can say with confidence that in its ten years' history, it has played no inconsiderable part, and that it has given those who brought it into being good cause to reflect with pride upon their handi-work.

#### A STATESMANLIKE DECISION

I now come to the topic of greatest importance to our session which is now engaging your anxious consideration. When your delegates sailed from India last autumn to attend the Round Table Conference, few of us, I imagine, had anticipated or foreseen the dramatic announcement made after their arrival in London. I had of course from time to time, and even as late as last July when I conferred with certain of your Highnesses in Simla, had the opportunity of discussing with some of you, the advantages which a Federal system in this country would clearly offer and the mutual benefits likely to accrue from some form of financial and economic union between the States and British India. But I had no certain indication that the States would as yet be willing, by surrender of the necessary powers, to make a system of Federation a reality and it is therefore with all the greater cordiality that I welcome the statesmanlike decision which your representatives took to join with British India in the constructive task of fashioning a constitution for the complete unity of this great country.

I have followed with the keenest interest the record of your discussions in the various committees, and I am glad to see that, while the most difficult problems still awaits solution, you are resolved to face them frankly in a genuine spirit of compromise and concession. Both these qualities will be much needed in the negotiations that still lie before you and the representatives of British India, but if they are freely given I am confident that your labours will be crowned by the achievements of a united, stable and prosperous India within the British Empire. I wish the delegation all success in commending the results of their work to their brother Princes and in enlisting their support in the further discussions that await them, for if counsels are divided the task of fashioning a cohesive scheme of Federation must be seriously handicapped, and it is therefore to be hoped that the co-operation of at least a great majority of the States may be assured without delay.



## PROBLEMS CONFRONTING PRINCES

It is a matter for personal regret to me that I shall not be with you to aid in the continuance and applaud the completion of your task, for before many days are passed the time will have come for me to bid farewell to Your Highnesses and this Chamber. When that time comes, and when I look back on the years I have spent in India, among my most pleasant recollections will be my associations with Your Highnesses and your States. They have ranked high among my most important duties, but their performance has been greatly lightened by the warm and universal friendship extended to me by Your Highnesses. The events of these years and the subjects we have discussed have been so many and diverse that agreement has, in the nature of things, not always been possible, but I think that you have believed that I have been actuated by what I considered best in the common interests of the Rulers and peoples of the States : and on this last formal occasion of addressing you, I would wish to acknowledge and thank you for that confidence. I must thank you also for the many happy memories of days spent as a guest in your States and for much generous hospitality. I am well aware that there are carping critics who are ready to accuse the Princes of India of wasting their substance in entertaining Viceroys and who believe that such visits are a compact of pomp and ceremonial in the midst of which moves a Viceroy blinded to the true conditions existing in the States. As you know, and I know, this picture is far from reality. The conditions, difficulties and problems of the States would mean little to a Viceroy who never left Simla or Delhi and did not see things for himself and with his own eyes. The picturesque ceremonial that represent the ancient traditions of the past, and the varied entertainment which is so hospitably provided for a few lighter hours form only the smaller part of the intimacy which is a feature of these occasions.

I personally can remember the long heart-to-heart talks in which every aspect of administrative problems and difficulties has been discussed. I have met your officials and seen your institutions and he would be unworthy of the post of Viceroy who could not derive some profit and form some judgments from such experiences. There have been cases, to which these visits have seen the settlement of serious and weighty problems at issue between my Government and the Rulers. And last but not least who can claim to know India and India's wonderful history who has not travelled widely in the States and seen the age-old monuments of ancient India, the Buddhist temples, the deserted cities of vanished kingdoms, the fortresses famous for stories of Rajput, Mughal and Maratha courage and chivalry and the ports and harbours whence from time immemorial the trade of India has set forth? It is indeed hard to name a State that has not added to my knowledge of and interest in all for which this great country stands. For this and much more I tender to Your Highnesses my thanks on the eve of my departure. If on rare occasions we have disagreed, we have disagreed as friends and I say in all sincerity your unswerving friendship has done much to lighten the inevitable burden of my high office.

The course of events has decided that I should sever my official association with Your Highnesses at a momentous period in your history. You stand at the parting of ways and the road to which your deliberations in London have guided you is, I believe, the road which will best promote your own interests of your subjects and of India. It means as we all recognise a departure from a tradition which has lasted for 100 years, which has taken it all in all serves you well and under which your State have been preserved and brought to their present point of advancement and progress. It means the passing of the old conditions in which you have been able to develop on your own lines affected but little by the movements around you. Your internal affairs have for the most part been excluded from the questioning of outsiders and you have had every opportunity of achieving the ancient Hindu ideal of kingship. Success in that achievement has varied with the individuality of different Rulers. But I am glad to testify, both from my own observation and from the evidence of those who are qualified to judge, that there has in the main been a steady improvement in the standards of administration in your States.

## REIGN OF LAW IN STATES

The spirit which inspires a Government and in which its functions are carried out is more important than its constitutional form, and whether it be autocracy, constitutional monarchy or democracy its success will be guided by the extent to which it provides certain essential conditions for the welfare of its subjects.

Your Highnesses will perhaps allow me to indicate briefly what in my view

these are. There must be a reign of law and order based either expressly or tacitly on the broad goodwill of the community. Individual liberty and rights must be protected and the equality of all the members of the State before the law be recognised. To secure this, an efficiently organised police force must be maintained and a strong and competent judiciary secured from the arbitrary interference by the Executive and irremovable so long as they do their duty. Taxation should be slight as circumstances permit easy of collection and certain and proportionate to the means of the taxpayer to pay. The personal expenditure of the rules should be as moderate as will suffice to maintain his position and dignity so that as large a proportion as possible of the State revenues may be available for the development of the community such as, communications, education, health and social services, agriculture, housing and other kindred matters. There should be some effective means of ascertaining the needs and desires of its subjects and of keeping close touch between the Government and the Governed. Religious toleration and conciliation in all disputes between the subjects are important and last but not least is the need to choose and trust good counsellors. By this perhaps more than ought else is a wise ruler known and the fulness of his trust in competent advisers will in great part be the measure of the confidence which his people repose in him.

I must not however allow my address to Your Highnesses to develop into a treatise of the theory of Government. Some may say that it is not always so easy to carry such precepts into practice but there are, I believe, few who would not readily admit these minimum requirements of good administration and you will remember that a resolution by H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner commending its essentials was passed not long ago with unanimity in this Chamber. There is no disguising from ourselves that the new order of things and the irresistible logic of events are lifting the veil from much that has hitherto been considered of private concern, and more and more factors are tending to bring your affairs into publicity." Where there is criticism on any of your administrations, be it based on reasonable grounds or scurrilous and misinformed, the best answer on the part of those who have nothing to hide is the issue of full and regular administration reports from which the public may learn how your Government is carried on. Such publication has always been desirable, but it will be essential when in these changing times you come to take your part in the Federal Constitution of All India. That constitution will not affect your internal autonomy in Non-Federal matters, but in common subjects you will have to bring to the common pool, information of which the Political Department and the Government of India have hitherto been the sole repositories. The time is ripe for the change and, believe me, I welcome it. I welcome the enlargement of vision which sees beyond territorial boundaries and embraces in one wide sweep the identity of interests and solidarity of British India and the Indian States.

But let us not forget that, as you acquire a share in the control of common subjects and as your internal affairs become of increasing interest to public opinion in India, there will come to you more and more responsibility for bringing your administrations to the level demanded of all modern Governments. I acknowledge gratefully that there are many States that have nothing to fear where within the compass of their resources all that is possible is done for the welfare and progress of their subjects. But there are still others to which this description cannot apply where personal extravagance has injured the financial stability on which sound administrations must rest, and where too little is spent on the welfare and advancement of the people. Where such conditions exist they cannot fail to be a danger to the whole body of your Order and I appeal to Your Highnesses to use all your influence as the Viceroy must use his, to secure improvement. There will then be little reason for apprehension.

Your personal and dynastic relations are likely to continue to lie through the Viceroy with the Crown, and your guarantees will remain under the same conditions as heretofore. Let it therefore be your endeavour so to rule your people that they will be as proud to be subjects of your States as they will be proud of Your States' partnership in a Federation of All-India.

Your Highnesses, you will require both courage and wisdom to deal with the many new problems with which you will be confronted. My last words in my last opening address in this Chamber, are to express the hope and belief that you will be found not unequal to the task and in all sincerity and with all goodwill to wish Your Highnesses God-speed in your efforts for the greater happiness and well-being of your States and of India within the orbit of the British Empire.

## Proceedings and Resolutions

### TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED PRINCES

After the Viceroy's speech the Maharaja of Patiala moved and the Maharaja of Bikaner seconded a resolution placing on record the loss sustained by the Chamber in the deaths of Rana Sahib of Barwani, the Begum Mother of Bhopal, the Maharana Sahib of Udaipur, the Nawab of Rampur, the Maharaja of Orchha, the Nawab of Sachin and the Nawab of Tonk.

The Nawab of Bhopal, thanking the Chamber, referred to the deep interest his mother took in the welfare of her subjects.

The Nawab of Rampur was profoundly touched by the reference to his father and said it would be his life long endeavour to serve his Order.

### CONGRATULATION ON ASCENSION TO GADI

By the second resolution, the Maharaja of Patiala congratulated their Highnesses of Cambay, Indore, Jaipur, Lunawada, Orchha, Rampur, Sachin, Tonk and Udaipur on their ascension to the gadi of their States and welcomed them to the Chamber. He also congratulated the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj on his entry into the Chamber.

### WORK OF PRINCES' DELEGATION TO R. T. C.

Thereafter, the *Maharaja of Patiala* made a statement regarding the work of the Indian States' delegation at the R. T. C.

The Maharaja of Patiala, in his statement of the work of the Indian delegation to the Round Table Conference, said that in selecting delegates to represent Indian States, the Viceroy took full counsel with the Standing Committee of the Chamber. The immediate task which confronted the Princes was to discover the best method of securing adequate recognition of the claims of the States at the Conference. In the meanwhile a special committee of Ministers examined all practical proposals with great care and submitted a unanimous report recommending a Federation with British India as the most satisfactory solution of the problem of Indian States. The Princes therefore readily accepted the invitation extended on behalf of British India by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to enter the Federation. This however was done on two conditions: (1) that each State should have the option of entering or remaining out of the Federation and (2) that acceptance was provisional and the delegation reserved to themselves full freedom of action in respect of the completed picture of the new constitution. The Princes also made it clear that the continued connection of India with the British Crown and a guarantee of their rights under the new constitution were essential conditions precedent to their acceptance of the scheme of Federation. These conditions were accepted by the conference.

Proceeding the Maharaja of Patiala said the main object of their representatives on the Federal Structure Sub-Committee was to secure (1) complete and absolute guarantees for the maintenance of their treaty rights; (2) an adequate voice in the determination of All-India policies and (3) constitutional safeguards for the continuance of such vested rights and interests as their States possessed in various matters. His Highness continued:

"How far these objects have been secured by our representatives, may be easily judged from the reports of the various committees which have now been published. The delegation themselves believe that they have secured safeguards for the maintenance of the treaty rights of States. This is evidenced by the list of Federal subjects to which only those have been assigned which were considered absolutely essential in the interests of the whole of India. Further some subjects are Federal only for the purpose of legislation and policy. The delegation were specially careful to reserve to the States administration of certain subjects proposed to be classed as federal in future and which are now being administered by the States Governments. They also secured an adequate voice in the determination of all India policies through representation in both the Houses. The claim of the States to weightage of a number of seats in the Legislature has been accepted in principle. It was also agreed that the Executive Government in future would be composed with representatives of the States. In order to protect vested interests and special

rights of the States the delegation also made it clear that there would have to be a convention with every State entering the Federation and it should be open to the State to reserve any special rights or interests which they now enjoy.

"In regard to representation of the States in the legislature, our representatives were able to secure the acceptance of two principles namely: (1) that the method by which our representatives are chosen should be left solely to us: (2) that the allotment of seats in the different States should also be settled by the States among themselves. I need not add that dynastic and personal matters are reserved to the Crown as hithertofore. They will continue to be decided by the Viceroy on behalf of the Crown. And it was made plain that the transfer of this power to the legislature was not contemplated. In the matter of defence the proposals contemplate no change in regard to the maintenance by the States of their force and our delegation insisted that when defence became a fully Federal subject, contributions already made by the States towards military expenditure should be taken into full consideration."

The Maharaja of Patiala continuing said that the Federal Assembly would have control over only such subjects as had been federalised. In regard to other subjects they would continue to be within the exclusive authority of the States' Government. In conclusion the Maharaja of Patiala said that the Prime Minister of England had accepted the conclusions of the conference and had declared that, so far as the States were concerned, their authority excepting in those matters which were by their consent assigned to the Federal Government, would continue to be unimpaired.

The *Viceroy*, before adjourning the Chamber till the next day, said that there would be no debate on the statement of the Maharaja of Patiala but a resolution would be moved at a later stage embodying the decisions of the Chamber, on the conclusions of the London conference. A group photograph of the Princes with the Viceroy was then taken and the Viceroy informally unveiled the statue of Lord Reading which was a gift of the Ruler of Datia.

#### SECOND DAY—17th. MARCH 1931

##### AIR NAVIGATION OVER STATES

The Chamber of Princes held a brief sitting of twelve minutes to discuss two resolutions which figured on the agenda paper to-day.

At the outset his Maharaja of Jaipur took his seat in the Chamber amidst the applause of his brother Princes.

The *Maharaja of Patiala*, the Chancellor, moving the resolution said that the question had been under discussion since 1923 when the approval of the Standing Committee of the Chamber was sought to the following statement of the position: "In virtue of the fact that by treaty and usage the control of the foreign relations of the States in India is vested in the British Government the right of the British Government to deal with international air navigation on behalf of the States is assured. It is further recognised that the British Government possesses the right to deal with internal air navigation within the limits of India for the purposes of the protection of the mutual interests of the States and the British Government and of the States among themselves. But the right of international sovereignty in the States should be recognised for such purposes as (1) prescribing of prohibited areas within their territories for the purpose of protecting the persons of the Princes and the palaces and residences of the Princes and their families and (2) exercise of the existing fiscal rights."

The Maharaja of Patiala said in the course of 1929-30 the Standing Committee held many prolonged sittings and finally reached compromise which ensured the sovereignty over air to the States concerned and acknowledged their fiscal and other interests involved, making provision simultaneously for the necessary co-operation with the Government of India to enable the discharge of international obligations on behalf of and for the security of India as a whole. These tentative conclusions were further examined by the Government of India and resulted in the form of an amended summary which was subsequently adopted by the Standing Committee and which the Maharaja of Patiala asked the Chamber to adopt to-day. In this connection His Highness made two remarks, and with regard to the word "emergency" in the preamble which word, he said, could not be foreseen. Secondly, provision was made to exclude from the British Indian soil foreign air craft. The

reason for the qualifying clause, said the Maharaja of Patiala, was that the possible necessity of excluding the aircraft of foreign nations from flying and establishing themselves in India could not be disregarded. His Highness, however, made it clear that the provision did not refer to the aircraft of Indian States.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner* supported the resolution which was adopted *nem con.*

The Chamber then considered a resolution that recognising the sovereignty of the Rulers over their territories, embraces the air space above those territories. As however the British Government is responsible for the defence and security of India as a whole, its service, aircraft naval and military, would be free to fly over land in the territories of the States, without restrictions, provided that in peace time, except in emergency they would (a) not fly over prohibited areas, (b) nor land anywhere else, but in places, fixed by an agreement with each State. As the foreign relations of the States are conducted by the British Government, the Government would regulate air navigation over States in the fulfilment of the international obligations, arising out of the Air Convention or otherwise, in respect of which the States have been previously consulted. Such previous consultations may be done away with in cases of emergency. The solution also provides that the States should urgently enact and enforce legislation on the lines of British India with regard to air navigation and the rules and regulations thereunder for the time being in force. Any changes of variation required by local conditions should be made after consultation with the British Government. The States would provide the landing grounds necessary for the development of air navigation in India. The States would be free to construct and establish landing grounds and aerodomes within their territories, provided the technical staff, employed by them is fully qualified. Indian States' air-craft and personnel would be licensed by arrangements with the British Government. Fiscal and National aircraft rights of the States have been reserved except in cases of emergency.

#### INTER—STATE TELEPHONE LINE.

The *Ruler of Maler Kotla* moved and the Ruler of Bhawalpur supported a resolution that the inter-linking of the telephone of one State to another State where no other territory intervened, should be permitted. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The Chamber was adjourned till the next day.

#### THIRD DAY— 18th. MARCH 1931.

#### WORK AT THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Chamber of Princes sat for forty minutes this morning, when the *Maharaja of Bikaner* made a joint statement regarding his work at the Assembly of the League of Nations and at the Imperial Conference in London.

Viewing the last session of the League in broad perspective, the Maharaja of Bikaner said its most important pre-occupations were disarmament and economic co-operation among the nations of the world. Connected with the subject of limitation of Armaments, but in a sense wider in scope, was the project of European Union foreshadowed by M. Briand. And although M. Briand had disclaimed all idea of organising Europe in a spirit of antagonism to the rest of the world, there was great need for avoiding anything that might give rise to the misapprehension outside Europe, that the machinery of the League, which stood, not for Europe nor for Asia but for the whole world, was being utilized merely to promote European aims. This aspect of the matter, the Maharaja of Bikaner said, he had brought out in his speech before the Assembly of the League, and a resolution was finally adopted in regard to it.

As regards the economic field, the main work was done in the Second Committee where the proposal of the Indian delegates for a continued and systematic study of the depression in industry and trade, which was really periodical in character was adopted. By calling for the treatment of agricultural problems on a level of equality with those of industry and commerce, provision was made for a study of matters which were of special interest to countries like India,

## WORK AT THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

Referring to the Imperial Conference, the *Maharaja of Bikaner* said the range of subjects covered by that conference was wide. The Imperial Conference of 1926 constituted a land-mark in inter-imperial relationship by attempting a definition of the attributes of Dominion Status. The implications of this definition had to be further studied, and stated in the form of constitutional propositions by another conference, and its report was the basis of the last Imperial Conference. As regards inter-imperial relations, the conference dealt with highly important but intricate constitutional problems, such as, legislative powers of Dominion Parliaments, provision of machinery for the adjustment of disputes between self-governing members of the Commonwealth, diplomatic representation abroad of the Dominions and so forth. This group of subjects formed one important part of the agenda. The other related to closer economic co-operation between the various units of the Empire with a view to the promotion of economic prosperity.

Proceeding, the *Maharaja of Bikaner* said the scheme devised for the institution of a Commonwealth Tribunal for the purpose of determining differences and adjusting disputes of a justifiable character which might arise between the Dominions *inter se* or between them and Great Britain might not be without a bearing upon the similar problem engaging the attention of the Princes in India.

Regarding the contemplated change in nationality and common status, the *Maharaja of Bikaner* said he made it plain at the Conference that nothing should be taken to imply any admission of any alteration in the status and nationality of Indian States and their rulers and their subjects, whatever they might be, by discussions of that or allied inter-imperial subjects before the conference. He subsequently received a communication from the Secretary of State telling him that the recommendations and conclusions reached at the Imperial Conference would in no way prejudice the position or status of the Princes of India or their subjects. In conclusion, the *Maharaja of Bikaner* said India's policy of discriminating protection was expounded with admirable lucidity by her delegates.

The *Maharaja of Kapurthala* proposed and the *Maharaja of Patiala* seconded a vote of thanks to the *Maharaja of Bikaner* for his meritorious work at the League and the Imperial Conference, and for his lucid statement before the Chamber.

The Viceroy, in associating himself with the remarks of the Rulers of Kapurthala and Patiala, said the reports of the work done at the League bore testimony to the close contact between the politics of India and the world.

The motion was adopted and the Chamber was adjourned.

## FOURTH DAY—19th. MARCH 1931

## FEDERATION SCHEME DEBATED

Speaking in the Chamber of Princes this morning on the motion of the *Maharaja of Sirmoor* supporting the Federation scheme, the *Maharaja of Rewa* said the States had agreed to some sort of fusion with British India but in what form this fusion was possible remained to be seen. Until this was known and until the details of the scheme of Federation were examined and understood it would be difficult to say what would happen to the huge experiment in political evolution.

The *Raja of Mandi* supported the resolution.

The Viceroy congratulated the mover and supporters, particularly the *Raja of Korea* and emphasised the desire in all quarters to welcome the work already done in the London Conference. This resolution would strengthen the hands of those who were working for a federation. The final picture was yet to be filled in and their Highnesses were entitled to claim that they should know the details before giving their final judgment. In taking up this attitude, they were doing exactly what the Conservative Party in England had done. At the same time Lord Irwin wanted every Prince to keep before themselves the vision of a wider India. The representatives of their Order and those associated with them had laid India under a debt of gratitude for bringing this ideal into the field of practical politics.

The resolution was put and carried.

## NEXT STAGE OF THE R. T. C.

The *Maharaja Rana of Dholpur* moved: "The Chamber authorises its representatives further to carry on discussions and negotiations with due regard to the interests of the States and subject to final confirmation and ratification by the

Chamber and each individual State." He emphasised the absolute necessity of closely scrutinising the events of advance in the direction of the evolution of a greater India so that the vital interests of the States were in no way irretrievably sacrificed. In order that there might be perfect understanding, it was necessary that the members of the Princes' Order, together with their nominees, should be associated with all committees and other bodies constituted to examine questions connected with the Round Table Conference discussions. His Highness advised his brother Princes to pledge themselves to help the scheme to the best of their ability. (Cheers.)

The *Maharaja of Kapurthala*, supporting the resolution, said the provisional acceptance of the principle of Federation by the Indian States' delegation need cause no alarm or perturbation, for it was officially adumbrated in the Montford Report and later envisaged by the Simon Commission. They must acknowledge the fact that the Indian States' delegation in assenting to the principle of Federation, made clear that it was subject to the provision of guarantees regarding the integrity of the States, treaty obligations and the rights and prerogatives of the members of their Order, the vesting of the power of decision in the Crown in personal dynastic affairs, and the discretionary right of each individual State to enter or to refuse to enter the proposed Federation. But it must be remembered that a Federation was the only possible and practical way of India occupying its destined place in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The *Raja of Sitamau* said that the Indian States' delegation should do its best to see that all the States, big and small, had fair representation in the future Federal Legislatures.

The *Maharaja of Alwar*, in supporting the resolution, pointed out that, whatever the Indian States delegation might do at the second Conference, would be subject to confirmation by this Chamber, and what was more important subject to confirmation and ratification by each individual State. Thus, the Chamber and every State had its right to criticise what would be agreed upon in London. But the Chamber must make it clear that the Princes were prepared to join hands with British India, provided they were not made to forsake their traditional and hereditary interests. For the idea of a Federation, two factors were mainly responsible, one of the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin and the "Viceroy of India" the ship. While His Excellency by his despatch supported the principle of Federation, it was on the "Viceroy of India" that delegates proceeding to London were enabled to agree upon a Federation as the basis of future constitution. Whatever the rate of progress in Indian States or British India, there must be good government as a condition precedent to the growth of a Federal Constitution. (Applause.)

The resolution was put and carried.

#### TRIBUTE TO LORD IRWIN'S SERVICES

Lastly, the *Maharaja of Patiala* moved a resolution placing on record the Chamber's sense of a deep obligation which India owed to Lord Irwin for his vivid sympathy with the country's natural aspirations and for the statesman-like espousal of the country's cause in face of many difficulties, which at times seemed insuperable whereby in the opinion of the Chamber His Excellency had rendered signal service to India, England, and to the whole British Empire.

The Chancellor said: "Individually, each one of us grows angry when Your Excellency is attacked, when little minds, perhaps from envy of the greatness of your heart to which they never can aspire, misinterpret Your Excellency's motives, and assail your honesty of purpose. You are too big a man to need our championing. Yet, we Princes, each in our own way, cast the lies of your detractors in their teeth. Let us now do the same as a Chamber collectively. This resolution anticipates the verdict of history to-morrow, a verdict which the future generations can never question, be the historians as carpingly scientific as they like. We tender our collective good-bye with regrets, but we trust, as individuals, we may meet Your Excellency on many a future occasion. Whatever his creed there is none of us who does not pray to Providence that Your Excellency may live for many years, and may be granted the reward of seeing how each of those years vindicates increasingly the sagacity and humanity with which India's aspirations had been treated during this historic Viceroyalty now so soon to close."

The Nawab of Cambay and the Nawab of Malerkotla supported the resolution.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner* said: "Our uppermost feelings are if we can not have Lord Irwin with us for all time, we hope that Irwin after Irwin will follow as Viceroy of India."

Lord Irwin, thanking the Chamber, remarked that the five years had moved very quickly. Every one was open to criticism, for criticism was part of the daily bread of their existence. But His Excellency averred: "I have made fewer mistakes than those who criticise me would have made had they been in a similar position." But he never lost his faith in tiding over difficulties, and in this he was helped by their Highnesses. Concluding, Lord Irwin felt happy that he was being succeeded by Lord Willingdon in whom their Highnesses would find a wise and good counsellor and a true friend. (Applause).

The resolution was carried, and the Chamber adjourned.

#### FIFTH DAY—20th. MARCH 1930

##### ELECTIONS TO THE CHAMBER

The keenest contest for election to the Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes resulted to-day in the election of the Nawab of Bhopal who secured 28 votes. The Maharaja of Patiala secured 23 votes, and the Maharaja of Baroda and Alwar one each. Thus the Maharaja of Patiala vacated after five years' Chancellorship.

The Maharaja of Cutch polled 32 votes for Pro-Chancellorship against the Maharaja of Alwar who got 16. The Maharajas of Jodhpur, Panna, Rewa and Porbandar polled one vote each.

The following were elected to the Standing Committee:—

The Jam Sahib of Nawanagar (45 votes), the Maharaja of Alwar (37), the Maharaja of Bikaner (32) and the Maharaja of Dholpur (23). For the fifth place there was a tie between the Maharaja of Patiala and the Chief of Sangli with 22 votes each. After five minutes' conversation with the Maharaja of Patiala and the Political Secretary, Sir Charles Watson, a fresh ballot was ordered by the Viceroy. This resulted in the Maharaja of Patiala obtaining 33 votes for the Standing Committee as against 21 secured by the Chief of Sangli.

The following five were elected as substitute members to the Standing Committee:—

The Maharaja of Probandar (22 votes), the Chief of Sangli (23), the Maharaja of Dungarpur (22), the Nawab of Malerkotla (20) and the Maharaja of Rewa (19).

##### PATIALA'S REPLY TO THE VICEROY

The *Maharaja of Patiala*, Chancellor, replying on behalf of the Princes, on the Viceroy's opening address, referred to his Excellency's speech, in which His Excellency had said: "We shall witness the termination of our happy partnership of five years." The Chancellor said: "There will yet be occasions for us all to express our regret at the dissolution of that partnership, which has been characterised throughout by mutual trust and esteem. We assure your Excellency that our sorrow at parting with you is deep and sincere, and in saying this I am sure that we express not merely the feeling of our order but of the country at large.

He thanked the Viceroy for settling the question that, in a cycle of three years at least, once the Indian delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations should be led by a Ruling Prince. "We are also indebted to your Excellency for appreciating and agreeing with our basic contentions in regard to air navigation in Indian States. As regards the share of the States in the income derived from additional duty on motor spirit, we are glad that a decision consonant with our wishes has been reached, though it may still be necessary further to discuss the manner of giving that decision effect. So far as the conferences to be held is concerned, the matter is under our consideration and subject to an adequate recognition of our rights, we would be bound in the interests of the agriculture, industry and commerce of our own States to co-operate in any measure suggested by the Government of India with a view to the improvement of communications in the country."

The Maharaja of Patiala urged for an early establishment of direct political relations with the States which are still in relationship with the provincial Governments. He also pleaded that the arrangements governing the present system of direct relations should be simplified so as to bring the States and their Rulers into a closer contact with the Viceroy.

In regard to the Chamber itself, the Maharaja of Patiala said that it was a great satisfaction to reflect that the conception of Princes that such a chamber should exist, had been fully justified by the march of events. They had great faith in its potentialities and they strongly felt that it would never outlive its utility, even



after the constitutional changes which might occur at no distant date, although its constitution and functions might have been revised.

The Chamber was in general agreement, said the Maharaja proceeding, with the remarks of the Viceroy in regard to constitutional problems arising out of the discussions at the Round Table Conference. "Those decisions, so far merely tentative, do represent a departure from the old order of things. But with effective constitutional safeguards for our cherished rights, we have every reason to hope that the road which we have chosen will lead us to the goal of United India, in which all communities will have opportunities of unrestricted growth, and harmony will prevail and antagonisms will cease. At this stage, when the provisions of the constitution remain to be drafted, when many important details have still to be worked out, it is difficult to arrive at any final decision. We, however, assure your Excellency that the delicate and complex questions involved are receiving our incessant and most careful consideration. We realise that the difficult problems that await solution have to be faced frankly and in a genuine spirit of co-operation. The work of the Conference can be brought to fruition only if all parties interested in the future of India, bring to the discussion of those problems a spirit of mutual trust, genuine goodwill and healthy compromise. The Chamber may be relied upon to rise equal to the occasion and we are confident that its representatives in negotiations that still lie before us will without sacrifice of the inalienable rights of the States, face the problems with a sincere desire to make an equitable adjustment of the difficulties and to reaching solutions calculated to serve the interests of India as a whole."

Lastly the Maharaja of Patiala referred to the remarks of the Viceroy regarding the internal administration of the States and said the Princes' endeavour in recent years had been to work for their subjects in the wider field and to secure for their happiness in an increasing measure.

*H. E. Lord Irwin*, replying, said it would be ungracious if he did not acknowledge with thanks their kindness shown during the last five years. He promised not to forget their help even though he might be separated from them by 5,000 miles. Special words of thanks were due to the Maharaja of Patiala for the valuable assistance he gave during the last five years. From his experience of the working of the Standing Committee of which the Nawab of Bhopal was a member, his Excellency felt sure that their Highnesses could not have chosen as Chancellor a more suitable successor to one who was leaving a difficult task for his successor to discharge.

Concluding Lord Irwin took farewell of the Chamber with warm-hearted gratitude of their Highnesses.

*The session was then closed.*

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# THE INDIAN STATES' PEOPLES' CONFERENCE

BOMBAY—9th. JUNE 1931

The third session of the Indian States' Peoples' Conference commenced at Bombay on the 9th. June 1931 amidst scenes of great enthusiasm. Babu Ramananda Chatterjee, the renowned editor of the "Modern Review" presided.

Delegates from almost all Indian States participated in the Conference. Punjab States sent a contingent of 50 chosen delegates. Rajputana, Central India, Madras and Maratha States were represented by over 200 delegates.

The proceedings of the Conference opened with national songs and Mr. L. R. Tairsee delivered his welcome address. Mr. L. R. Tairsee, in welcoming the delegates, emphasised the necessity of co-operation among the States, subjects numbering about seven crores, congratulated the conference regarding its past achievements and suggested holding of the conference at Cutch next year. Referring to the proposed Federal constitution Mr. Tairsee said unless the States' people were given guarantee of freedom of speech, thought and association, safety of person and property and other fundamental rights incorporated in the Federal constitution with power to appeal to the supreme court, the right for election to the Indian legislature, their aspirations were not likely to be satisfied. He also appealed to the Rulers to recognise the spirit of times and respond by liberal gestures.

Over 50 messages wishing success to the Conference were read by Mr. Balwant Rai Mehta, the General Secretary. Messages were received from all parts of India and all schools of thought.

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

After the messages were read out, S. J. Ramananda Chatterjee, the President, delivered his learned address. In course of his address Sri J. Chatterjee said:—

By far the larger section, the autocratic section, of the Indian Princes depend on the British Power for the maintenance of their autocracy. And among the various motives which may have prompted British political officers in India to safeguard autocracy in the States, the principal ones were perhaps to use the States as a foil to set off the excellence of British Indian rule by contrast and also to use the States for fighting Indian Nationalism, if need be. But, if India, or at least British India, obtains self-rule by being rid of British domination, it would be not necessary to put the Indian States to either of the above uses.

But supposing things remain as they are, no earthly power is strong enough to resist the Time-spirit. It can and will make itself felt in India, as it has done in other parts of the world. Newspapers or no newspapers, thought waves will travel and knock against the bulwarks of medievalism, feudalism and autocracy with irresistible force.

The Indian Princes set much store by their Treaties. But they may rest assured that just as other peoples of the world have obtained their rights in spite of treaties, so will the Indian States' people.

Most Princes do not appear to bear in mind in practice that some of their treaties contain express provisions laying on them the obligation of continued good government of their States with a view to the promotion of the happiness and welfare of their people. Such provisions are to be found, for example, in the treaties with Patiala, Kolhapur, Pratabgarh, Rampur, Cooch Behar, Jhind, Kapurthala, Nabha, Ajajgarh Bejavar, Bilaspur, Chamba, Charkari, Chatarpur, Faridkot and Mandi. These provisions in the case of most States have hitherto remained useless, because the Paramount Power has not discharged its duties to the States' people, and there is no other sanction to compel the Princes to govern well except pressure exerted by that Power.

The urgency of the attainment of free citizenship by the people of the Indian States has become plainer than before owing to the recognition given to federalism in the Indian Round Table Conference. It is not necessary here to discuss the

comparative merits of federal and unitary systems of government. In the present condition of India, it is only by a federation of the provinces and States of India on a democratic basis that the whole of India can be made free.

It is to be regretted that every step, leading directly or indirectly to the deferral idea, the existence of the people of the Indian States has been almost entirely ignored. It is not necessary at this stage to criticise the personnel, terms of reference, conclusions and the like of the Butler Committee. But it must be stated that it was a wrong and an injustice to the people of the States that they were not allowed to give of the Princes and some of their officers were invited to attend the Round Table Conference, the people of the States were almost entirely ignored. This injustice can yet be remedied. Ten years ago the total population of the States was 72 millions in round numbers. Now perhaps the figure stands at 80 millions. This is twice the population of France, twice the population of Italy, almost twice the population of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and thirty per cent more than the population of Germany. Not to allow such a large population any voice in shaping its destinies is a very grave injustice of an unheard of character in this twentieth century of the Christian era.

Some Princes have put forward the claim that they are the representatives of their people. There may be and I believe there are a very few Princes who are entitled by their beneficence and their democratic temper to speak for their people. But even they cannot be taken to be representatives of their people. The coming of the Labour Party into power in Britain was a revolution. The royal house of Britain with His Majesty King George V at its head has thoroughly adapted itself to this radical change. But even such power of adaptation on the part of royalty would not reconcile the British people to any attempt to deprive them of the right of choosing their own representatives from among themselves, if such an attempt were made. The British King is British by birth; English is his mother-tongue like that of his subjects, like most of them he is a Christian, and he conforms to the popular will and makes the people's good the sole object of his public activities. Yet he does not arrogate to himself the position of the representative of his people. Let our Indian Princes, whose suzerain King George is, learn from his example.

Now, the Princes have demanded on behalf of their States a certain proportion of the seats in the Federal Legislature. They may not get all that they want. But it is probable that, on the combined basis of the area and the population of the States they will get not less than one-third of the seats—particularly if Burma be separated from India. And the Princes have also demanded that the members representing the States in the Legislature should be their (the Princes') nominees. Now the nominees of autocrats will naturally have a mandate to support the British bureaucracy on the tacit understanding that the bureaucracy will not interfere with the autocratic ways of the Princes. Thus a Ministry which is favoured by the bureaucracy and the Princes will be sure of the support of at least one-third of the members of the Federal Legislature. Out of the remaining two-thirds, the European group and some narrowly selfish Indian members also may be expected to support such a ministry. Hence, it would be difficult to drive such a ministry out of power.

Apart from the question of dismissing ministries, so many safeguards and reservations have been proposed and the Governor-General has been proposed to be invested with such special and emergency powers to carry on the work of government not only in the reserved but in non-reserved spheres also, that without the help of States' members elected by their people it would be extremely difficult to make the Federal Assembly anything but useless for the common weal or any thing but a tool in the hands of Indian autocrats and British bureaucrats. There is also the risk of the constitution retrogressing under combined bureaucratic and autocratic influence, instead of evolving along progressive lines.

I urge, therefore, that the constitution of the States should be like that of the Provinces, if not immediately, in any case in the course of a definite fixed short period. If by the constitution of Federated India the people of the Indian States are not given the same brand of citizenship as the people of British India, if the former are given an inferior political status, it would be the duty of the latter not to touch such a constitution.

The Governments of both the Provinces and the States must be responsible to their people through their elected representatives in council assembled. That is an implication of democracy. The constitution of Federated India, in order that it

may actively promote the welfare of united India, must be based on a democratic foundation. That requires, among other things, a declaration of fundamental rights. The constitutions of the more important among the independent countries, old and new, which have written constitutions, safeguard the rights and liberties of their citizens by such declaration of fundamental rights. The Indian National Congress has repeatedly asked for such a declaration as part of its scheme of reform. The authors of the Nehru Report included in it such a list of fundamental rights. Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, one of the members of the R. T. C., presented before it an able memorandum on the subject. Sir Mirza Muhammad Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, the representative of that State in the Conference, in his scheme of a federated India, admitted the desirability of including such a provision in the Indian Constitution. But nothing further was done in the Conference. It is of vital importance that when the Federal Structure Sub-Committee and the Round Table Conference as a whole meet next, the utmost attention should be given to this subject in order that the fundamental rights and liberties of the people of both the Provinces and the States may be safeguarded by including in the future the requisite provision. In the memorandum which was presented on behalf of the Indian States' Peoples' Conference to the Working Committee of the Congress three months ago, it was strongly urged,

(1) The paramountcy should not be divided, and that it should ultimately vest in the central federal government :

(2) That paramountcy may, if thought necessary, be included in the reserved subjects during the transition period :

(3) That during this transition period, the Princes should so adjust their governments as to establish responsible government in the States and undertake to bring about progressive realization of the same :

(4) That the States should be admitted into the Federation only on condition that the standard of government in them is of the same type as prevailing in those of British Indian units :

(5) That this condition alone will approximate the States to the British Indian Provinces and would accelerate the growth of united India : that this condition alone would enlarge the number of federal subjects and consequently diminish the number of provincial subjects and this process alone will conduce to the full development of a real All-India federation :

(6) That the States should be represented in the Federation only through the elected representatives of the people and that the nominees of the Princes should on no account be permitted to sit in any Houses of the Federal Legislature :

(7) That federal laws relating to federal subjects must directly be operative in the States and that administration of federal subjects must be entrusted to the federal executive and that any violation of federal laws or any vagaries in the administration of federal subjects committed within the limits of Indian States must be cognizable by the federal supreme court.

(8) That until responsible government is established in the States and until an independent judiciary come into existence and until the rule of law prevails in the State, the Judiciary states must be linked to the federal supreme court; and

(9) That the declaration of fundamental rights of the people must be embodied in the federal constitution and these rights must be guaranteed to the States' people and the infringement of the same must be cognizable by the federal supreme court ;

(10) That the people of the States must be enabled to send their representatives to participate in the future conferences convened for shaping the Indian constitution.

These demands are all worthy of support.

What the motives of the Princes are for maintaining that their treaties were entered into with the Crown of Great Britain and for insisting that even after a united India has got a federal constitution they must have direct relations with the British Crown through his Viceroy, I need not examine. Not being a lawyer myself, I cannot pronounce any opinion of my own on the matter. But I have read the opinions of some eminent Indian lawyers on the subject. Among them I quote the following from Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer's learned and thoughtful work on "Indian Constitutional Problems":

"As regards the question with whom the Indian Princes have entered into treaties, it is not correct to say that the treaties were entered into with the Crown irrespective of the sovereignty of British India.....the Crown acted not in a personal

capacity or in the capacity of sovereign of England but in the capacity of ruler of British India. The treaties.....impose obligations on the rulers for the time being of the Indian States in favour of the authorities for the time being in charge of the Government of India.....the(Government of India) Act contemplates the existence of political relations between the executive Government of India and the Indian States. The Executive Government of British India is fully empowered to transact business with the Indian States. One provision which clinches the matter beyond doubt is the provision in s.20, cl. 2, according to which the revenues of India include all tributes in respect of any territories which would have been receivable by, or in the name of, the East India Company, if the Government of India Act of 1853 had been passed. There is surely no clear proof of.....the nexus with the Government of India than the payment of tribute to the credit of the revenues of India.....The contention that the sovereign of a country who enters into a treaty does so in his personal capacity and not as the sovereign of that country is too absurd to be maintained in the twentieth century.....The matters governed by the treaty relate to persons and things in India and arise out of the relations of the princes with the sovereign of British India, and it would be an unthinkable constitutional absurdity that the right to enforce the treaties should vest not on the authorities for the time being charged with the administration of India, but in some other authority."

The opinion of the great Indian lawyer expressed in this passage appears to us, laymen, to be quite sound. The Indian States' tributes referred to by him continue to be paid to the Government of India.

Whatever the Princes think, we the common people of India feel a pride in saluting our motherland which we do not and cannot feel in being compelled to salute even the greatest of foreign countries because of its armed might.

One of the gravest complaints against the Indian Princes generally is that far too much of the revenues of their States is spent for the upkeep of their household and their personal pleasure. The States are not their personal property. Even private individuals who spend too much of their personal incomes for self-gratification and too little for the common good are blamed for falling below the ordinary human ideal of conduct. The Princes are, therefore, expected to cut down their personal expenditure and spend much more on what are known in the Provinces as nation-building departments, 'e. g.', education. There are States where the Prince spends more on his stable, his garage and his kennel than for the education of his subjects.

Freedom of speech and meeting and freedom of the press are necessary for material and intellectual progress. These are in modern times among the fundamental rights of civilised peoples. Unfortunately, generally speaking, these do not exist in our States. Moreover, there is nothing to prevent any State's subject being bundled out of it at any time without any trial or charge.

In civilized countries, the Press exist not merely for ventilating grievances and exposing acts of injustice and tyranny. It exists for remedying social abuse also, for the dissemination of useful information relating to all subjects. It is an educative agency. Hence its growth ought to be encouraged in all our States, but unhappily that is not the case. Most States have no newspapers at all.

Our States are ruled by persons who are Indians. But their Governments are not perfect. In fact, there is believed to be misrule in the great majority of them. Hence, there ought to be newspapers there in order that they may improve.

Not realizing this truth and certainly also being afraid of criticism and exposure, the rulers of the Indian States, speaking generally, have managed not only to prevent the growth of the Press in their territories, but have occasionally banned the entry into them of some Indian papers published in British India. They have not stopped there. They have got the Government of India to pass a Princes' Protection Act, which has made it rather risky to criticise the public conduct of a ruler or the administration of his State (which are often synonymous) effectively and in detail. The very idea that the Princes require protection from the people of British India must make the gods laugh.

As some Princes have insisted that "British India and Indian States are two entirely different titles," I wonder whether any criticism of the administration of any Indian State may not come under the operation of the recent law enacted to prevent the creation of hostile feeling between British India and any foreign State.

I shall perhaps be expected to say something on the recent speech of Sir Manubhai Mehta, Dewan of Bikaner. Sir Manubhai is not an ignorant man but a

well-informed statesman. I have not been, therefore, able to understand definitely why he spoke as he did.

As he is a member of the Round Table Conference, he had every opportunity to tell his colleagues what he now says, namely, that "the federation likely to be accepted by the Indian Princes would tend more towards confederation for specially defined subjects of joint interest than towards unity or union. Sir Manubhai need not have raised the bogey of unity or union. Nobody has suggested that the States should lose their identity or individual existence. As for confederation, Webster defines it as "A body of independent States more or less permanently joined together for joint action in matters, especially in foreign affairs, which affect them in common." Neither the Provinces of British India nor the Indian States being independent, their combination cannot be called a confederation. Americans consider federation and confederation to be things of such opposite character that the States forming the federation of U. S. A. are forbidden to enter into any confederation. In a confederation, the component parts do not form a new State. The States forming a confederation retain their sovereignties unimpaired. In a federation, on the other hand, the combination of the component parts results in the formation of a new State, in which the sovereignty is divided between the central State and its component parts. That is the kind of political organisation proposed at the Round Table Conference.

Sir Manubhai has further observed that "to suggest that the Supreme Federal Court of the future India ought to entertain appeals from decrees of the highest judicial tribunals of the Indian States was to import the incidence of complete union where only federation for a few scheduled subjects was contemplated." It were much to be wished that even an appreciable number of the Indian States had any properly constituted judicial tribunals at all. But that is by the by. Sir Manubhai undoubtedly knows that it can not be said that no federation in the world possesses a final court of appeal. The Federal Tribunal of Switzerland, for example, besides performing other duties acts as a Final Court of appeal. This is rightly not considered a breach of the sovereignty of the Swiss cantons which are the component parts of the Swiss federal system. The Supreme Court of the U. S. A. is in many respect a court of appeal. Moreover, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Great Britain has a jurisdiction which includes appeals from colonial courts of law. That is not held to be an interference with the sovereignty of the colonies. In Sir Manubhai's opinion, the Indian States are 'sui generis'; but surely that does not mean that everything relating to them must be such as never was or is on land or sea or sky.

There is a way in which the Princes' sovereignty such as it is, may be preserved and the demand of their people may also be met. On a recent occasion H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner said with reference to the demand, for a declaration of the fundamental rights of the Indian States' subjects :

"We shall know how and when to adjust our system to any changing conditions but we will do it in our own way, free from external interference".

Let His Highness and his brethren at once concede to their subjects the elementary rights of citizens voluntarily and generously thus destroying even the possibility of external interference in this respect.

What does the Dewan of Bikaner mean by the natural law of allegiance ? It is a curious phrase. Does he mean that there is an unalterable law giving to the Princes the exclusive right to the loyalty of their subjects like the physical law of gravitation ? In British India, after the birth of a Federated India, we shall be loyal both to our respective province, and to India as a whole—we shall obey the provincial laws as well as the federal laws. We shall be the respective citizens of Assam, Bihar, etc, as well as of Federated India. Would it be impossible for a particular State's people to be similarly loyal both to that State and to Federated India to obey both that State's laws and Federal laws, to be citizens of that State and of Federated India ? It is the essence of a Federation that its component parts part with some of their powers to the federated whole. If the Princes really want a federation for the whole of India, how can they have in their States "their internal sovereignty altogether left alone and intact." Perhaps it is this anxiety of Sir Manubhai's master and his brother Princes to continue to enjoy their undiminished autocracy which has led the Dewan, on second thoughts after his return from England, to speak of 'confederation' instead of federation. It should be the cherished hope of all Indians, whatever their station in life may be, that India would soon begin her pilgrimage to the goal of our aspirations. At such a time the utmost

harmony and co-operation should be the rule. Such being my conviction, criticism has been to me a painful duty. But I hope my criticism has not been merely destructive. And I hope that where it has been destructive, my object was to remove what was injurious, effete or rotten in order that something better, something more serviceable, may take its place.

#### SECOND DAY—10th. JUNE 1931

The second day's proceedings of the Conference commenced on the 10th. June when Mrs. Kamala Nehru and Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Frontier Gandhi (Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan) specially attended the conference. Attendance was even greater than that of first day. Both Mrs. Kamala Nehru and Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose addressed the conference.

Mrs. Kamala Nehru said the Princes should know that everywhere in India including the States there was a great awakening and if they did not show common-sense and patriotism they will go the way of other monarchs.

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose sounded a note of warning to the Princes and supported whole-heartedly the States' people in their struggle for rights.

The Frontier Gandhi addressing the conference said that he came from a place where no States existed but he knew the conditions in States. He held that the emancipation of the people of Indian States was surely coming.

#### Resolutions

The following six resolutions were passed by the Conference :—

"This Conference place on record high appreciation of the splendid part played, sacrifices made and sufferings borne by the people of States in country's recent great heroic struggle and offer them congratulations."

"This Conference repudiate the Princes' claims to speak for their people as in the opinion of this conference the system of the Government prevailing in the States was irresponsible and autocratic and the Princes have not cared to invite the people of the States to express their opinion in matters of policy in general and on proposed new constitution of this country in particular."

3. "This Conference demand that due provision be made for the representation of views of the people of the States at the Federal Structure Committee and Round Table Conference."

4. "This Conference draw the attention of the League of Nations to the system of forced labour and practices and customs analogous to slavery such as Khawas and Golas prevailing in States and demand the institution of inquiry and take necessary steps to get them abolished."

5. "This Conference condemn the growing habit of several Princes to send a considerable part of their time in European countries which resulted in great waste of money and the evils of absentee rulership."

6. "The Conference view with abhorrence the policy of repression followed in many States and express sympathy with the victims thereof."

#### THIRD DAY—11th. JUNE 1931

The Conference met again on the next day, the 11th June and passed fourteen resolutions, the chief among them defined the creed of the conference as the attainment of the States' people of a fully responsible and democratic government by all peaceful and legitimate means. Another resolution moved by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta condemning the British currency policy was passed. In another resolution an independent public inquiry by a judicial tribunal into the charges made against the Maharaja of Patiala was demanded.

Another resolution which was defeated formulated fifteen immediate demands of the States' people including a fully representative Government based upon functional electoral basis, abolition of land ownership by non-cultivators, reduction of rent by fifty per cent, Rupees fifty as the minimum wage for the industrial workers and eight hours a day.

The conference then adjourned *sine die* after a vote of thanks to the president.

## Memorandum of the Peoples' Conference

The following memorandum prepared on behalf of the Indian States' Peoples' Conference was submitted on the 27th February 1931 to the President and Members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress under the signatures of Messrs. G. R. Abhyankar, Amritlal V. Thakkar, Rangildas Kapadia and Kakalbbhai Kothari :—

Sirs,—We have the pleasure of placing before you on behalf of the Working Committee of the Indian States' Peoples' Conference, their views as to how the Indian States could be fitted, with full justice to the rights and aspirations of the seventy millions of the States' people, into the constitution of an All-India Federation, which is engaging the attention of all politically-minded people of India and which you are at present engaged in seriously considering on behalf of the Indian National Congress.

Before we proceed to state our case before you we should like to clear the ground by making some reference to the claims of the Indian States' Peoples' Conference to speak on behalf of the people of the Indian States. We need hardly say that the problems of the Indian States and the reforms required in the internal administration of the States have been agitating the minds of the States' people for a considerable period. They have been discussed by the people of the various States in their conference held from time to time. However, it was felt that a central organisation to represent the views of the people of the States generally and to speak on their behalf was urgently needed and a permanent organisation was created called the Indian States' Peoples' Conference four years ago. The Conference at which this All-India organisation was formed was attended by several hundred delegates from all the important States. These are then our credentials to speak on behalf of the Indian States' people and there would be no justification for suggesting—as has been done in some quarters—that our Conference has no representative character or that it has no claim whatever to speak on behalf of the dumb seventy millions of India's population. At any rate, we maintain that we have a greater claim to speak on their behalf than the Princes who have kept them under tutelage for over a century and who even now hesitate to concede to them their legitimate rights and privileges.

Mahatmaji has made it very plain that "the Congress would be untrue to itself if it did not seek the necessary protection for the States' people in a new constitution for India." And we feel sure that the Working Committee of the Congress will give serious consideration to our views as stated below.

### THE DECLARATION OF 1917 AND 1931

So far as the declaration of the Prime Minister Mr. MacDonald is concerned it is in no way encouraging to the people of the Indian States. The declaration of 1917 distinctly mentions the object of the British administration in India to be the realisation of responsible government in India. The expression "India" used in the declaration of 1917 and the restricted words "British India" used in the preamble of the Government of India Act of 1921 clearly show that the implications of the broad expression "India" were apparent to the minds of those who drafted the declaration of 1917 and this leads to the interference that the ultimate goal of British administration was that may be called the progressive realisation of responsible government not only in British India but in Indian India also. The present declaration of 1931 is studiously silent on this point and holds out absolutely no hope for the establishment of responsible government in the Indian States at any time in the future. Viewed in this light the present declaration fills the minds of the Indian States' people with utter disappointment.

The present declaration as was apprehended by us, brings about a permanent division of India into two parts : Indian India would be under a Viceroy exercising authority of Paramountcy over the Indian States at the representative of the Crown through the instrumentality of an alien and irresponsible bureaucracy of the Political Department. British India would be governed in the name of the Crown represented by the Governor-General and assisted by Ministers responsible to the Central Legis-



lature. This declaration, therefore, introduces a permanent dyarchy in India which was not in existence before and, therefore, deserves to be severely condemned.

The Indian Princes have been agitating for over four years to be separated from the Government of British India, which they believed would be democratised in the near future and from which they apprehended danger to their autocratic powers and inroads on their internal autonomy. They started a theory of direct relations with the Crown which was shown to be thoroughly hollow and unsustainable by the Nehru Committee Report. As a corollary of this theory of direct relations, the Princes suggested that their relations should be with the Crown through the agency of the Viceroy and not through the Governor-General who would be the head of the British Indian administration. They suggested the creation of a dignity called the Viceroy under the constitution not till now so recognised. This theory of the Princes was upheld by the Butler Committee, was favoured by the Simon Commission and was supported by the despatch of the Government of India and the present declaration sets the seal of approval of His Majesty's Government on the demand of the Indian Princes. We thus find that Paramountcy stands divided under this new constitution.

The Governor-General under the present constitution exercises the authority of Paramountcy over the States with the assistance of an alien bureaucracy which is thoroughly irresponsible in character. The rule is carried on in secret and is not open to any criticism in the House of Legislature and produce demoralisation amongst the Indian Princes. The Paramount Power has also brought pressure to bear upon the Indian Princes and has violated their Treaty Right for the advancement of the interests of British India, of the interests of India as a whole, and of imperial interests. The Princes have bitterly complained against this abuse of the authority in the past and the voluminous evidence before the Butler Committee bears testimony to the same. But in spite of this grievance against the authority of the Paramount Power there was one compensating advantage which the Indian Princes enjoyed during all this period. The Paramount Power never as a rule interfered into the internal affairs of the State and gave full scope for the exercise of the autocratic power to the Indian Princes. The Paramount Power never insisted on autocratic Indian Princes to raise their administrations to the level of British India. The Paramount Power interfered only when the misrule was long, gross and flagrant, or when its own authority was flouted or imperial interests were in danger of being prejudiced. Indian Princes, therefore, have enjoyed internal autonomy and unrestricted exercise of autocratic powers over their subjects within the limits of their States, under the present constitution.

#### APPREHENSION OF THE PRINCES

If Paramountcy is transferred to the Central Federal Government of the future along with other powers, the Princes fear that the central democratic government in British India responsible in character, would not allow the autocracy of the Indian Princes to remain intact. It would bring pressure to bear upon the Indian Princes to reform their administrations and to raise them to the level of those in other federal units. The repercussions on the States of the central democratic responsible government, enjoying paramount authority over the States, would be so violent in character that the autocracy of the Indian Princes would gradually disappear and they would be reduced to the position of nominal rulers. Public opinion in the States, then, would receive enthusiastic support from the British Indian Democracy and the conjoint pressure of public opinion in Indian India and in British India would powerfully influence the central government in British India and would induce it to democratised the governments in the Indian States. The Nehru Report endorsed by the Calcutta Congress states *inter alia*,

"If the Indian States would be willing to join such a federation, after realising the full implications of the federal ideas, we shall heartily welcome their decision and do all that lies in our power to secure to them the full enjoyment of their rights and privileges. But it must be clearly borne in mind that it would necessitate perhaps in varying degrees, a modification of the system of government and administration prevailing within their territories. We hope and trust that in the light of experiences gained the Indian States may make up their mind to join formally the federation."

The Princes entertained these apprehensions and they thought that they should devise means by which the future democratic government would be divested of this power of Paramountcy over the States.

The present declaration states that the connection of the States with the federation will remain subject to the basic principle that with regard to all matters not ceded by them to the federation their relations will be with the Crown acting through the agency of the Viceroy. It has given the Princes what they desired. Paramountcy is not included in the reserved subjects and the Federal Government of the future, even after the transition period, would not be vested with this authority. After their internal autonomy was thus vouchsafed and their autocracy was entrenched completely, the Princes showed their willingness to join the federation. Such a federation has no terrors for the Princes. Attenuated Federation divested of the Paramount Power over the States would cause no injury to them. The present details of the federal structure invest them with new powers to influence the policies and the legislation and even the administration of matters of common concern, which are hereafter called federal subjects. These powers and privileges they did not possess till now. The position of the Indian Princes under the proposed federation would be materially advanced and they would be saved from the pressure of Paramountcy and the violation of their treaties with reference to matters of common concern in the future.

The Princes have, under the proposed scheme, scored the following points:—

(1) They have been saved from the possibility of any encroachment by the All India Federation on their internal autonomy. (2) Their autocratic powers have been kept intact. (3) They have been invested with additional powers of influencing policies, legislature and administration of matters of common concern or federal subjects in the future. In the face of these decided advantages it is no wonder that the Princes have showed their willingness to enter into the federation. They are not exposed to any risks or any loss; they stand to gain everything they coveted: and all this depends upon one pivot, namely, that Paramountcy is not to be transferred to the All-India Federation. If Paramountcy was ever to be transferred to the All-India Federation the Princes would have stoutly opposed the idea of joining it.

The British Imperialists were only too eager to support the Princes in their endeavour to divide Paramountcy. So long as the Viceroy and an alien bureaucracy were to exercise political control over the Indian States, it left a pretty vast field for them to occupy for all time to come. All the privileges, all the patronage, all the comforts and amenities of life which the alien bureaucrats enjoyed hitherto have thus been preserved in entirety for them in the future. Besides, under the pretext of treaty engagements and on the score of protecting the Indian Princes, the Viceroy would retain a dominating voice and control over the Indian army even after the transition period was over. Since the nominees of the Princes are to sit in the Houses of Legislature they would be under the influence of the Viceroy and the Political Department. They would serve the same purpose to advance the Imperial interests and to frustrate popular aspirations as is done by the official bloc in the present legislatures.

The British power has thus secured three advantages by supporting the demand of the Princes for the division of paramountcy, viz (1) They would retain their complete hold over Indian India. The Princes would remain under their powerful influence since their autocracy would remain intact only by the suffrage and support of the paramount power. (2) Through the medium of the Princes' nominees they would dominate the Federal Legislature and Executive. (3) Under the pretext of protecting the Princes they would command an effective voice in the control of the Indian army even after the transition period is over. These advantages would be enjoyed by the British power even when a full-fledged Federation is established in what is at present known as British India.

So far as the British Indian Delegates at the R. T. Conference were concerned when they perceived that no advance was possible unless the States were made to fit in the future constitution and since the Princes would not come in unless assured of this division of paramountcy, it appears, they have conceded this demand. It is not reported that any of the British Indian Delegates, except perhaps a solitary individual, protested against this division of paramountcy or against the declaration of the Prime Minister when he described this theory of direct relations as the basic principle. It is a sad irony of fate that those who were party to the Nehru Report should have acquiesced in this theory and kept silence and thus consented to this preposterous claim of the Princes for direct relations with the Crown, and the consequent division of paramountcy. Whatever the motive or whatever may be the understanding in surrendering their right of paramountcy over the Indian States

which naturally and legally must belong to the future Swarajya Government as the successor of the present Government, the interests of the country as a whole have suffered a set-back. If the benefits and the privileges which this division of paramountcy secure to the British Power as narrated above are taken into consideration it will be quite evident that under the overpowering shadow of a Viceregal Government carried on by an alien and irresponsible bureaucracy and supported by 600 Indian autocrats, it is extremely doubtful whether the parallel Government of Indian Federation would prosper and successfully function. The division of paramountcy would perpetuate autocracy in the Indian States and the British Indian people would not be true to their patriotic impulse if they acquiesce in a position where nearly seven crores of their brethren would be kept in perpetual bondage.

So far as the people in the Indian States are concerned, by reason of the untrammelled exercise of autocracy in the the States even after the direct assumption of Government of the Crown since 1858, i. e. for over nearly 70 years, they have been in the most helpless and abject position of servitude. The paramount Power does not take any initiative or bring any pressure on the rulers to democratise their administrations. If paramountcy will vest in the Federal government of the future, the people in the Indian States believe that their emancipation would follow soon. For the same reasons for which the Princes fought hard to bring about the division of paramountcy, i. e. for the reasons of self-preservation and self-betterment, the people of the Indian States have to protest against this division of paramountcy. At present all their hopes of advancement are shattered; the possibility of United India has become as remote as ever.

The Princes are putting forward a claim that by joining this attenuated federation divested of the power of Paramountcy, they have helped the cause of bringing about United India. This claim is not only untenable but simply audacious. The Princes have brought about a permanent division of India into two parts. And in this endeavour they are actuated by their sole anxiety to preserve their autocratic rule intact. But in this they would soon find themselves undeceived. The fears of Paramountcy exist only if the Princes persist in clinging to autocracy. If they determine to rule as constitutional monarchs, if they develop representative institutions in their States, associate their people with their administration, accept a fixed civil list, establish rule of law, independent judiciary, and independent audit, Paramountcy as observed by Sir William Barton would recede far into the background. It is therefore out of intensely selfish instincts of preserving their autocratic rule, that they are not prepared to trust the federal government of the future and consent to the delegation of the authority of paramountcy along with defence and foreign relation to this federal government which would be composed of their own countrymen—"men of same flesh and blood."

#### POWERS OF THE FEDERAL LEGISLATURE

From the details of the structure of this All India Federation so far adumbrated, it is clear that it will deal only with such subjects as are expressly ceded by the Indian States to the Federation. It shall also have to deal with subjects other than Federal called central subjects which will concern British India as a whole. It is not made clear whether the Federal laws are to be operative directly in the States, and whether the administration of these Federal subjects is to be handed over to the Federal Executive. Unless this is so it is not federation. The fundamental idea of a Federation is that the federating units must part with their sovereignty to the federal government so far as some subjects are concerned. And in all these matters the Federal Government must come directly in touch with all the citizens living in all the units of such a Federation. If the Indian Princes urge that they would re-enact in their States as their own laws the Federal laws, passed about federal subjects, it is no Federation. Similarly, if the Princes do not consent to hand over the administration of subjects expressly ceded by them to the Federal Executive this would not fulfil the essential condition of a federation. In the case of violation of these laws or in the case of any injury suffered in the administration of these federal laws, the redress can be sought only in Federal Supreme Court; and this is possible only if the laws are operative directly and the administration is entrusted to the Federal Government. If this is not to be so, it would not be a Federation. It will not come directly in touch with the citizens of the States and such a scheme would never bring about that real union and community of interests which the Federation is intended to develop amongst all its citizens,

The Indian States' People therefore insist that so far as federal subjects are concerned, the legislation and the administration must be made directly operative within the limits of the States.

#### REPRESENTATION ON THE FEDERAL LEGISLATURE

The most important and the crucial point in this connection is who are to represent the States in the Houses of Federal Legislature. Are they to be the representatives elected by the people of the States or are they to be the nominees of the Princes? One of the Princes' Delegation at R. T. C. is reported to have said that the States' representatives would not be merely nominees of the Princes but of the Governments of the States. But to talk of Government as anything distinct from the all-powerful will of an autocratic Ruler in an Indian State is sheer camouflage. The Government is made and unmade by the sweet will of a Prince and therefore, those designated as nominated by the governments of the States would be simply the nominees or agents of the Princes and in no sense representatives of the people. If, therefore, the States are to be represented by the nominees of the Princes, autocratic as they are, we strongly protest that it is a complete negation of the basic idea of a Federation viz., the direct contact of the federal government with all the citizens. Secondly, federal subjects mean the matters of common concern. The principal complaint during the last decade and more on the part of the States has been that policies pursued and legislation enacted by the British Indian government as regards matters of common concern have been prejudicially affecting the interests of the States' people. If it is so, are not the States' people the proper persons to represent their grievances and seek redress for the same in the Federal Legislature? The States' people are bearing a large share of British Indian taxation in an indirect manner which goes into the British Indian Exchequer. It is, therefore, those who pay the taxation must have representation on the Federal Legislature. If the nominees of the Princes are to represent the States, would not such a procedure be unjust and inequitable to the people of the States? It will violate the democratic canon of no taxation without representation. The States' people, therefore, strongly urge that if their elected representatives are not to sit in the Federal Houses of Legislature, it would be an unfair denial of their legitimate rights and it would be highly detrimental to their interests since the Princes under the form of autocracy do not and cannot pretend to represent their people. Such a course would be highly dangerous to British Indian interests also. The nominees of the Princes would vote under a mandate of their Rulers and all the evils which the solid Prussian vote brought into existence in the old German constitution of the Bundessarat would be visible in this constitution. By reason of the division of paramountcy these Princes would be entirely under the influence of the Viceroy and the irresponsible Bureaucracy. They would always vote as desired by the British Power to advance the British interests. They would be used to frustrate the national aspirations. With one third or with forty p.c. (in case Burma is separated) of the votes of the two Houses of the Legislature captured by the nominees of the Princes with the weightage claimed by them, with the nominees voting under the mandate of their Rulers, with the innumerable resources at the disposal of the Princes which may be used and with all the intrigue and diplomacy in which the autocratic administrations in the States are greatly adept, and which can be easily resorted to in the two Houses by the Princes, the influence of this group of the nominees of the Indian Princes would be so powerful and oppressive that it would completely dominate the federal legislature. The making and unmaking of the Federal Executive would be entirely under their virtual control and responsible government would be a meaning less farce. The ministry would be responsible not to the British Indian electors but practically to the Princes. This dangerous consequence will follow if the Princes' nominees are to represent the States in the Houses of the Federation. Under the circumstances this anomaly of peoples' representatives for one part and those of the rulers for another constituting the same legislature should not be sanctioned and this part of the scheme therefore would hardly commend itself to the British Indian people.

Many people are astonished to learn that the Princes insisted that they would federate only if responsibility is introduced in the centre. They said they would not federate with British India if it is to be under a unitary form of government and if there is to be no responsibility in the centre. If, however, the various limitations of the attenuated or mutilated federation agreed upon are taken into consideration, there is nothing surprising and it only shows that the Princes have fully

exploited the present situation of public opinion in England so far as the Indian problem of constitutional reform is concerned and have extorted a heavy price for joining this federation. As this central government is never to be vested with the authority of Paramountcy over the Indian States and as this division of Paramountcy gives the Princes the assurance that the federal government would never possess powers to interfere into their autonomy or to check their autocracy, what reason is there for the Princes to feel the slightest apprehension from the central responsible Federal Government? Added to this confidence, if the scheme opens possibilities to the Princes through the medium of their own nominees to effectively dominate the federal legislature and control the Executive and even claim a share in the Executive, why should the Princes be not enthusiastic to support the introduction of responsibility in the centre? They are placed decidedly in a most enviable position and invested with powers which they never possessed before and there is absolutely no risk to which they are exposed under this scheme.

Even Earl Winterton thinks that it is an anomaly. He says in an article contributed to the "Fortnightly Review":—

"In the case of the members from the States at first at any rate they would have to be selected or nominated by the Ruler acting in consultation no doubt, with such Executive Body as he possesses. That is at least true of the majority of States, though in the case of the most advanced, such as Mysore, it might be possible to arrange for indirect election through the agency of the Elected Council. This difficulty is not insurmountable if the Princes, as a whole, frankly realise the need of a gradual approach towards internal Self-Government for their States' Subjects' Autonomy—as it might be called. If they do not adopt this attitude I must frankly say that I think Parliament may show some hesitation in sanctioning a permanent anomaly. That is to say, the creation of a Legislative Body whose members have equal statutory powers and duties as to two-thirds by direct election from British India, and as to one-third through selection by the heads of Indian States and their Executive Councillors".

If the Princes have such a fascination for responsible government to British India, what is it that prevents them from introducing responsible government in their own States? Example is better than precept. Since the declaration of 1917 not a single ruler of an Indian State has ever declared his intention to bring about progressive realisation of responsible government in his own State, following the example of His Majesty's Government. The sudden development of this enthusiasm in the Princes' Delegation for responsible government excites suspicion about their motives and the explanation given above accounts for this dramatic change. As the scheme has improved their position so immensely, they skilfully and cleverly managed to win the approbation and goodwill of their British Indian brethren by supporting their demand for responsibility in the centre. They have thus risen in the estimation of British India delegates and their prestige is enhanced.

The Princes are aware that unless they make common cause with British Indian people in matters of joint concern they are bound to suffer material loss and serious inconveniences. If they had not joined now and if they had shown their willingness to join the Federation at any other subsequent time, they would have been required to come down on their knees, they would have suffered in their prestige, they could have demanded the inclusion of their nominees in the federal organisation. They however have got all these advantages and the saving grace of having come to the help of British Indian people and saved and promoted the cause of Swaraj in British India. Is there anything heroic in this and what reason there is, to indulge in fulsome adulation of the Princes because they have exploited the situation? The Princes who claim credit for their "patriotic sacrifices" in condescending to federate with the rest of India, owe it to themselves and their subjects and also to those on whom they are conferring the honour of federation to give a frank reply to the question of "internal self-government" before they claim any credit for bringing into being an United India.

The British Indian delegation was anxious for the introduction of responsibility at the centre. They must have been aware of the serious drawback which the admission of the Princes' nominees carried with it. And for a mess of pottage of the introduction of responsibility in the centre, they have consented to admit the nominees of the Princes and did not insist upon the elected representatives of the States' People coming into the federation to represent the States.

So far as the British delegates were concerned, they insisted on a stable element in the constitution of this federation. The State' representatives would prevent the

constitution from falling under the influence of the extreme wing of politicians in British India. Some regard the nominees of the Princes to give certain conservative weightage to the Federal Union. With paramountcy over the States in their grip the bureaucracy has the confidence that the Princes' nominees would serve the purpose of an official block and would be ever ready to advance and support British interests. Whatever be the motives of these groups, so far as the Indian States' people are concerned, they refuse to consent to the division of paramountcy and the inclusion of the nominees of the Princes instead of their own elected representatives in the federal legislature.

If the Princes demand that they could federate only with a self-governing British India, why should the British Indian people be willing to associate with units which are autocratic Indian States. The 'Modern Review' has pointedly remarked: "The Ruler of Patiala said they had made it clear that they could federate only with self-governing British India. The Maharaja ought to remember that British Indian opinion too is that the people of these regions are willing to federate only with self-governing Indian States. These States are not self-governing, where the will of the Rulers is practically the law and the people possess no citizen's right... Federated India should certainly be as supreme over the Indian States entering the Federation as it will be over British India." Would the British Indian people, therefore, insist that they will only federate with States which are prepared to raise the level of their administration to one prevailing in British India? Constitutional analogy also shows as is apparent in the constitutions of the United States of America and modern Mexico, that a uniform type of administration must prevail in all the units of the Federation. The necessary condition, therefore, of admitting the States into the Federation must be that they must adopt the form of government prevailing in the British Indian Provinces under the Federation, if they are anxious to join it. Admission into a Federation must be looked upon as a privilege by the Indian Princes and they must be willing to submit to the liability of introducing responsible government in their States similar to that prevailing in the British Indian Provinces under the Federation. Privileges have corresponding duties and *noblesse oblige* applies as much to the Indian Princes as to any other people. The people of Indian States, therefore, demand that the Princes must consent to introduce responsible government in their States before they are allowed to join the All-India Federation. We therefore appeal to the British Indian people to insist upon this condition being fulfilled so far as the Princes are concerned.

#### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The question of citizen rights was mooted in the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference. In the present state of autocratic rule, such a declaration of rights is indispensable and deserves to be incorporated in the Federal constitution. There seems to be a great misunderstanding about these citizen rights. They consist of liberty of person and property, liberty of conscience, freedom of discussion and association, liberty of the Press and freedom from high-handed executive actions or what is called "Royal lawlessness" by constitutional writers. These rights are included under what is called *rule of law* in constitutional law. These are rights which the State permits to be exercised against itself by the citizens and which it asserts to itself against the citizens. These fundamental rights of citizens will be protected and will be fully enjoyed only when there is sovereignty of the people. If there is responsible government in any State citizen rights can be enjoyed by the people without any molestation or without any hindrance. Under an autocratic rule, it is impossible to believe that citizen rights can be asserted against the autocratic ruler in his own State. These are elementary principles and we are extremely sorry to find that autocratic State delegates asserted in the Plenary Session, that such rights were enjoyed by their subjects in their States. This only shows intense ignorance of the implication of a declaration of rights. All these rights can be enforced against the executive government of every State and relief can be given only if there is independent judiciary in a State. Under autocratic rule it is impossible to believe that judiciary can be independent. The essence of the declaration of rights is that every humble citizen must have an opportunity to get redress against any wrong done to him by high-handed executive actions. The judiciary dependent on the sweet will of an autocrat would hardly muster courage to give proper redress against the Ruler. The State courts can give redress when one citizen claims right against another and this pertains to the domain of private law. The declaration of rights is concerned with

public law and without sovereignty of the public, rule of law (which means and includes declaration of rights) cannot be established and cannot prosper. Under a federal form of government or under responsible government judiciary is bound to be independent and these rights can be successfully enforced through the Federal Supreme Court. Federal government means Federal citizenship and unless all the citizens under the Federation enjoy the self-same guarantees of citizen-rights it cannot be called a Federation in any sense of the word. It is not a matter connected with the internal affairs of any State; it is related to Federal citizenship and if the Princes are anxious to join the Federation they must consent to embody the declaration of rights in the federal constitution and these citizen rights must be enjoyed by every citizen living in every unit of the Federation. The necessity of incorporating the declaration of rights in the Federal constitution is obvious by reason of the fact that violation of these rights in an unit can be redressed through a Federal Supreme Court. Unless this is done the people in Indian States would never be able to enjoy these rights and the Federal citizenship.

If the Princes assert that these rights are enjoyed by their subjects in their States, assuming, though not admitting this to be true, why should the Princes be unwilling to the insertion of this declaration of rights in the Federal constitution so as to make it applicable to all the citizens in the States. These are the rights which according to civilised and enlightened opinion have been regarded as legitimately belonging to citizens of every State. No question of interference is involved. There is no discretion left to a ruler so long as he poses to be enlightened and benevolent. Hesitation to consent to the declaration of fundamental rights on the part of any ruler would only prove his intense desire to cling to autocratic powers in the State and his unwillingness to raise the status of the people of the State to the position of citizens living under a democratic federal government.

#### JUDICIARY OF THE STATES

A suggestion has been made by an eminent British Indian delegate that the judiciary in the States should be linked to the Supreme Court and that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court should be extended to the judicial side of the administrations in the State. This was a very wise and sagacious suggestion. So long as autocracy prevails in the States and so long as responsible government is not introduced, this safeguard is absolutely necessary to protect the rights of the States' People. Revisionary powers conferred on the Supreme Federal Court over the judiciary in the States would be a blessing to the people in the States and would confer on them the benefits of independent judiciary which would never exist in any State under an autocratic form of government. It is amazing to find it being stated on behalf of the Princes that this proposal would be incompatible with the internal sovereignty of the States. We fail to see what earthly connection there is between the decisions of a Supreme Court or the sovereignty of the States. Even at present the highest courts in the States are dispensing justice between man and man in the State without impairing in the slightest degree the sovereignty of those States. In fact, as a matter of principle, sovereignty delegates its authority in this respect to the judiciary in every State. There can be similar delegation to the Supreme Court by agreement with every ruler if he has only the wish to ensure thorough justice to his people and has genuine and earnest desire to raise the efficiency of his judiciary. Nothing would prevent any ruler from consenting to such a delegation. Even as regards federal subjects the Princes have to surrender a part of their sovereignty to the federal government. In this respect they have only to delegate and not to surrender their sovereignty to the federal supreme court. Dominion practice also confirms the view that although there are supreme courts in the dominions, the jurisdiction of the Privy Council is acquiesced in by the self-governing Dominion governments. The Indian Princes can follow the same rule and practice as regards the Federal Supreme Court and this would in no way diminish their internal sovereignty.

In conclusion we have to state that ever since the idea of a Round Table Conference was announced by Government, the Indian States' people have been claiming that their representative should be invited to participate in the deliberations of that conference. If all parties and interests in British India were to be given the fullest opportunity to express their views, we fail to feel any justification why the seventy millions of the States' people were not permitted to express their views. Further more, there has been a radical change in the outlook of this constitutional problem. Since the sitting of the Round Table Conference the question of a Fede-

ration has become a live issue and the interests of the people in the Indian States are so intimately connected with the Federation, that they cannot be ignored in framing a constitution of an All-India Federation. It was therefore absolutely necessary in view of the changed conditions to invite representatives of the Indian States' People. By reason of their absence we find that the vital interests of the States' people are either ignored or rather given up and we seriously apprehend that the people of the States would be placed in a worst predicament. We, therefore, earnestly appeal that in future discussions of this problem of settling the constitution for India, the representatives of the States' people should be invited so as to ensure and safeguard the interests of the States' people and to make the constitution acceptable to them.

So far as the Premier's declaration and the Round Table proposals are concerned, the Indian States' people strongly urge :

(1) That paramountcy should not be divided, and that it should be ultimately vested in the central federal government.

(2) That paramountcy may, if thought necessary, be included in the reserved subjects during the transition period.

(3) That during the transition period, the Princes should so adjust their government in the States and undertake to bring about progressive realisation of the same.

(4) That the States should be admitted into the federation only on condition that the standard of government in them is of the same type as prevailing in those of British Indian units.

(5) That this condition alone will approximate the States to the British Indian Provinces and would accelerate the growth of united India ; that this condition alone would enlarge the number of federal subjects and consequently diminish the number of central subjects and this process alone will conduce to the full development of a real All-India federation.

(6) That the States should be represented in the federation only through the elected representatives of the people and that the nominees of the Princes should on no account be permitted to sit in any Houses of Federal Legislature.

(7) That federal laws relating to federal subjects must directly be operating in the States and that administration of federal subjects must be entrusted to the federal executive and that any violation of federal laws or any vagaries in the administration of federal subjects committed within the limits of Indian States must be cognisable by the Federal Supreme Court.

(8) That until responsible government is established in the States and until independent judiciary comes into existence and until rule of law prevails in the States, the judiciary in the States must be linked to the Federal Supreme Court.

(9) That the declaration of fundamental rights of the people must be embodied in the federal constitution and these rights must be guaranteed to the States' people and the infringement of the same must be cognisable by the Federal Supreme Court.

(10) That the People of the States must be enabled to send their representatives to participate in the future conferences convened for shaping Indian constitution.

It is only on these conditions that the scheme of an All-India federation will be acceptable to the people in the Indian States. We earnestly appeal to our brethren in British India to support these demands and to use their pressure to secure such modifications in the present scheme as are necessary to satisfy these demands. We believe that the demands of the Indian States' People are intended to bring about prosperous United India and to ensure a constitution which will embrace a real substance of independence both for Indian India and British India. We, therefore, hope, that the following most significant words of the late lamented and universally revered patriot Pandit Motilal Nehru will not be lost upon the members of the Working Committee while considering the Swaraj scheme, and that the inherent righteousness of the demands of the States' People would be appreciated and sympathetically supported by them :

"In the States, as they are at present constituted, the only rule of law is the will of the Princes.....Is it conceivable that the people of these States, fired by the same ambitions and aspirations as the people in British India, will quietly submit to such a rule for any length of time, or that the people in British India, having the closest ties of family, race and religion with them, will acquiesce in their brethren on the other side of an imaginary line being governed by little autocrats, while they themselves enjoy some kind of responsible Government?"



## Conference of Smaller States

AHMEDABAD—5 & 6 JUNE 1931

The Chief of Jambughoda convened a conference of the rulers of the smaller States of Rewa Kantha and Mahi Kantha agencies. They assembled at Ahmedabad on June 5 and 6. About a dozen chiefs attended in person while another dozen were represented by their officers. Rai Sahib S. P. Sanyal acted as Adviser.

They passed the following resolutions unanimously:—

That this Conference takes leave to record its sense of loyalty and devotion to the British Crown of the smaller Indian States living under its aegis in peaceful enjoyment of their possession ever since their coming into relationship with the British Government.

That the Conference ventures to express its gratitude to Lord Irwin for his tact, patience and judgment in bringing about a settlement with a large section of British Indian citizens whose dire discontent was bound to cause repurcussion in the Indian States.

That this Conference begs to convey its acknowledgments to H. H. the Chief of Sangli for his activities on behalf of the smaller Indian States which His Highness was asked by Lord Irwin to represent at the Round Table Conference.

That this Conference thanks the political agents of the two agencies of Rewa Kantha and Mahi Kantha for their expression of goodwill and sympathy with the objects of this Conference.

That in view of the political situation created by the deliberation of the Round Table Conference, the future constitution of the Government of India will, in the opinion of this Conference, be on an All-India Federal basis, the time has come to have the claims of the smaller Indian States recognized as a component part of the Federal State.

That in order to secure their object this Conference is of the opinion that the revision of the classification of the Indian States has become a necessity, and a re-examination of the qualifications of membership of the Narendra Mandal is urgently demanded.

That this Conference urges the British Government to secure for the smaller Indian States, which have so far been utterly neglected and ignored in all deliberations that affect Indian India, which the Indian States Committee did not bring within its purview, which in the establishment of the Chamber of Princes were severely let alone, adequate group representation at once in the Narendra Mandal and subsequently in the two Federal Chambers, by a re-consideration of the cases of all the smaller States which have for some reason or other ceased to exercise full internal powers of administration.

That this Conference prays to H. E. the Viceroy to select at least one representative from amongst the Rulers of the unsaluted smaller Indian States as a delegate to the second sitting of the Round Table Conference.

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# Federation and the Indian States

## Maharaja of Patiala's Scheme

The Maharaja of Patiala released on the 16th June 1931 for publication his note on Federation and the Indian States. The following is the text :—

By way of introduction the Maharaja says that ever since he returned from England he was repeatedly requested by his brother princes and their ministers that the federation scheme should be examined *de novo*. His Highness came to the conclusion that there was a good deal of force in the request that the scheme of federation as outlined by the Round Table Conference should be very carefully examined in London. He made it perfectly clear that his support to the main principle of federation was subject to two conditions, namely, (1) the States would only be prepared to federate with a British India which was self-governing and not with a British India as governed at present; and (2) the princes did not desire to dominate British India and they could not consent to British India dominating them.

After merely referring to the changes in the political situation in India necessitating a re-examination of the whole scheme and discussing in detail the accepted principles of federation and quoting a number of authors such as Dicey, Melvor, Merriam, Berthelmy and others, the Maharaja says :—

“One of the most important problems affecting Indian States relates to the so-called power of paramountcy claimed for and on behalf of the Crown, but heretofore there has been no satisfactory ascertainment of the nature and scope of the so-called prerogatives of the paramount power, whereas with change of time the problem has become a matter of vital importance to the progress and development of the States.”

Continuing the Maharaja says :—

“In so far as these powers of paramountcy are totally excluded from the purview of the federal scheme, the proposal of the Federal Structure Committee cannot afford the slightest satisfaction to the States, for they will under a federal constitution stand where they have stood all these years. A federal scheme, therefore, does not mark any improvement or progress in the legal and political position of the States. On the contrary, the proposal is fraught with the greatest danger. As these powers of paramountcy will lie outside the scope of the federal constitution they will continue to be exercised by the representative of the Crown in the same arbitrary and unreasonable manner as before. In other words, the States will continue to be controlled and ruled over by the agents of the Crown as they are today. But this is not the whole story. On the one side, there will be these representatives of the Crown, armed and invested with extraordinary powers. On the other, there will be inevitable interference by the federal legislature and the federal executive, not only in respect of federalised subjects but also in matters outside the scope of the federal constitution. One may, therefore, be pardoned if he finds the future of the States dark, uncertain and gloomy under a federal constitution.”

### MENACE TO SMALLER STATES

“Another danger inherent in the proposed federal scheme is the certainty of a gradual disappearance of a vast number of smaller States and principalities. I have already indicated that in the presence of such a large number of component States it would be extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, to devise a suitable federal machinery. Even if the ingenious constitution-makers are able to produce a satisfactory federal constitution, it will be impossible to secure adequate representation of all the States, which is absolutely necessary in order to safeguard their existence and interests. In short, if the federal scheme is accepted, the smaller States of India are bound to suffer the fate of the smaller German principalities under the confederation in 1815 and disappear from the map of India.”

“The proposals of the Federal Structure Committee make no attempt to safeguard Indian States against the obvious dangers which are bound to arise from a strong federal executive. Several safeguards have been proposed in the report but

these are one and all limitations upon the authority of the federal legislature. The committee have not proposed a single safeguard against abuse of power and arbitrary extension of authority by the executive of the federation. Yet the evidence of history shows that in a federal constitution there is far more reason to dread executive rather than legislative encroachments on the rights of the component States. The advocates of federation claim that the rights and powers of the States cannot be whittled down by the federal executive because (1) the States themselves would be effectively represented in the executive and legislature of the federation; and (2) the Supreme Court would be given authority to prevent any encroachment, legislative or executive, by the federal Government over the States. The answer to the first contention is obvious. So long as the scheme stands as it is, there cannot be any adequate representation of the States either in the federal legislature or in the federal executive. As regards the second contention, it is the lesson of history that it is not always possible to secure a judiciary sufficiently strong and independent to maintain the balance of power in a federal constitution, and one may rightly express a doubt that at least for several years to come it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish a tribunal in India sufficiently powerful to maintain the equilibrium in a seething mass of conflicting powers and interests. Secondly, the history of federal constitutions shows conclusively that there may be a gradual extension of federal authority to matters outside the scope of the federal Government in the face of a just and independent tribunal. Several striking instances in point are furnished by the history of colonial federation. Further, even if we assume for the sake of argument that the federal executive will always act absolutely within the letter of the constitution, yet it cannot be denied that it will possess, under the constitution, extensive powers and authority, which may very often be utilized to prejudice the interests of the States.

There is yet another point which demands the closest attention. It is a well-known fact that serious conflicts of interests and power are inherent in a federal system. There is, in the first place, a conflict between the component States and the federal authority. Secondly, there is a clash of interest between one State and another. Then, again, there is a struggle for supremacy between the legislative executive and judicial organs of the State. In a country where there is community of interests and ideals, the disastrous consequences of such constitutional conflicts are greatly minimised. Exactly the reverse would be the case of India, where there is bound to arise a clash of political traditions and ideals between the States and British India. It would be well, indeed, judging from the lessons of history, if such serious conflicts do not lead to civil war and factions. Even if we take the rosiest view of the future, in our new federation as in every other, there will arise, contests between the federal powers and the State powers, between the authority of the federal Government and of the State Government. A whole crop of new difficulties and novel problems will appear in the field of governance and administration and demand the exercise of extraordinary wisdom and prudence on the part of the authorities. It is to be partitioned that no device has been suggested by the Federal Structure Committee to minimise the chances of such conflicts of interests and power.

From whatever aspect the problem be examined, it is evident that we arrive at the same conclusion. Federation is a radical innovation. It subverts the very bases of the well-tryed and time-honoured political institutions of the States. It attempts to destroy their individuality and political culture. It is a revolution as far-reaching as absorption of the States in British India. I, therefore feel, and feel very strongly, that it is the duty of every well-wisher of the States to scrutinise this new polity with the greatest care. It is his duty to consider what will be its precise effect according to the well-known laws of human nature, the lessons of history and the actual circumstances of the time. It is futile to contend that the sovereignty and treaty rights of the States would remain unchanged, for the introduction of innovations into a time-honoured political system is bound to revolutionise the whole.

As a result of a very careful and considered examination of the whole scheme, I have come to entertain a firm conviction that this new-found faith in a new-fangled federalism is at best an empty dream and a delusion, pregnant with the greatest dangers to the very existence of the States. I know the charge will be laid against me that I am a destructive critic. I know I will be attacked as a rank pessimist. My answer to the charge is that I am prepared to offer suggestions for the consideration of all who are interested in the making of a future constitution for India. It is my firm belief that federation is not the solution of our present difficulties. I still boldly maintain that it is possible, nay, it is within the range of practical

politics, to discover other ways and means. For instance, I would like the constitution-makers to consider the possibility of a union of the Indian States alone in direct relationship with the Crown. The germ of such a union already exists in the present Chamber of Princes, the scope of which will have to be extended in order to comprise the following :—(a) the present members of the Chamber in their own right, 106 in number ; (b) 127 States who are not at present members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right ; (c) 64 representative members of those States who have no representation at present. The standing committee will also have to be enlarged so as to consist of the Chancellor and 14 members. This standing committee, with a few selected advisers, will confer with a permanent standing committee of both Houses of the federal legislature of British India specially constituted for the purpose and settle all questions of common interest and policy. Thus, the difficulties of administration and policy will be solved. In case of any dispute or disagreement, all justiciable issues will be referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England and all non-justiciable issues to a permanent court of arbitration comprising representatives of the two parties and presided over by a representative of the Crown. I have deliberately not worked the scheme in detail as some other suggestions might be forthcoming from other quarters.

It is, I hope, needless for me to add that my criticism of the proposed federal scheme is based solely on my honest conviction that the scheme, always of a doubtful soundness, has now become positively perilous to the position of the States. I cannot sufficiently emphasise the fact that I am not opposed to the aspirations of British India. On the contrary, I am anxious to see that British India should obtain full and complete self-government. If I oppose the participation of the States in the federal scheme, it is merely to safeguard the interests of the rulers and subjects of the States.

I therefore consider it my sacred duty to sound a note of warning to my brother princes. The present is a most critical time for the States, and it is necessary that we should bring caution and statesmanship to our aid in solving our constitutional problems. Now is the time for us to consider these questions, for once the opportunity is lost the fate of the Indian States may be sealed for ever.

### Maharaja Bikaner's Reply to Patiala

In a statement to the press, issued on the 24th. June, the Maharaja of Bikaner vehemently criticised the Maharaja of Patiala's *volte face*. The Maharaja of Bikaner said :—“His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala's note of June 16 contains a curious and confusing conglomeration of contradictory criticisms and a collection of incorrect and forced arguments and pleadings based on fallacies, in a futile attempt to wreck the federation.” The Maharaja of Bikaner characterised the Maharaja of Patiala's criticism of his colleagues as unjust, unfair and ungracious. The Maharaja of Bikaner said :—

I will in inviting a careful perusal of all his speeches, confine myself to quoting some more important extracts therefrom in London and subsequently in the Chamber of Princes in March last. In these speeches His Highness repeatedly stressed—whilst so eloquently supporting Federation and “pledging “to the utmost.....our loyal and whole-hearted co-operation” and “our readiness to work for this ideal, and to facilitate its achievement. For federation I am prepared to work...”—that he spoke “in my capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes as well as in my capacity as a Ruling Prince” and “on behalf of the Indian States and...for myself.” He emphasised that “the main principle of federation stands accepted” and was good enough to add :—“I echo the confident hope expressed the other day by H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner that by far the larger proportion of States will come into the federal structure at once and that the remainder will soon follow”—though His Highness failed to mention a single word about the proviso expressly and clearly in this connection subject to which I made that observation at the Federal Committee, the Round Table Conference and in Bikaner on February 9, namely, “If the settlement was just and fair, if the rights of the States were safeguarded, and if they could feel secure in entering such a Federation” ; and that otherwise in the event of danger to the States' existence or sovereignty, not only I, but no other State would enter federation.

As regards the difficulties now magnified, His Highness expressly said that “we believe that they would be faced and overcome” “only by a spirit of mutual trust,

genuine goodwill and healthy compromise", when he also assured the Viceroy that the Princes' Chamber "may be relied upon to the problem with a sincere desire to the equitable adjustment of difficulties" and said: "Federation in India presented problems which were unique alike in their magnitude and in their complexity" emphasising, what we all pressed for all along that no known federations and constitutions would meet the peculiar position of the Indian States without parallel in history and in the world and that a special constitution must be evolved to meet the peculiar different circumstances of the States, which possessed sovereignty, and of British India. He claimed that "this Conference has now advanced to a stage where we have laid down the main outlines...along lines which it would be difficult to challenge..." Contrasted with what he now urges generally and particularly regarding the smaller States His Highness has himself admitted that "Federation provided for us the best guarantee for the continued enjoyment of our rights", that "the States Delegation was very strongly represented on this Committee by Their Highnesses of Bhopal and Bikaner and by Sir Akbar Hydari..." and expressed the belief that they had "secured all necessary guarantees for the maintenance of the treaty rights of the States. The Delegation was specially careful to reserve to the States, administration in certain subjects proposed to be federal in the future which are now being administered by the State Government...In order to protect the vested interests and special rights of the States the delegation also made it clear..." and "the Prime Minister of England accepted the conclusion of the Conference and declared that so far as the States were concerned, their authority, excepting in those matters which are by their consent assigned to the Federal Government, will continue unimpaired." His Highness added: "but with effective constitutional safeguards for our cherished rights we have every reason to hope that the road which we have chosen will lead us to the goal of a United India in which all communities will have opportunities for unrestricted growth; harmony will prevail and antagonisms will cease"; and stressed that "at this stage when the provisions of the constitution remain to be drafted in exact language, indeed, when many of the important details have still to be worked out it is difficult to arrive at any final decision.

What then has happened in the short space of barely three months? There is nothing I detest more than assigning motives; and I prefer to say as little in my own words as is unavoidable. But from all that I have read so far, if any responsible person in a high position—Prince, statesman or politician—ever got a thoroughly bad press from all sections of newspapers, English or Indian, moderate or extreme, it is His Highness of Patiala and his 'volte face,' which has been universally and unqualifiedly condemned in the most ruthless and uncomplimentary terms. In view of all the circumstances are the respectable press and informed responsible public opinion in the States and British India altogether unjustified in shrewdly connecting it with His Highness of Patiala's defeat in the Chancellor's elections last March, and in crediting him with a three-fold objective charges which His Highness in his turn has now to face—which unkind people insist on describing as—

(1) What in ordinary slang, is known as an electioneering 'stunt,' pure and simple, and a bold bid to regain the Chancellorship and 'leadership' of the Princes;

(2) personal jealousy, pique and impotent wrath at seeing others succeeding him and taking the lead, which he can never forgive, as also their being listened to and considered of some importance by his brother Princes and Ministers and elsewhere in India and England; and

(3) failing all this at least to pose as leader of the Opposition, in the Chamber, a role which no one—fortunately for the States—has so far happily aspired to fill, but which His Highness is apparently quite ready to assume—in order to gratify personal fancies and for the mere pleasure of opposing and hampering the Chancellor and the Standing Committee regardless of the best interests of the Princes and States, which he professes to have at heart. H. H. is also attempting by creating alarm in the minds of younger Princes and Rulers of smaller States, by slogans such as, "danger to smaller States" and their alleged threatened extinction, to rally them round his banner. His Highness, posing as their saviour, champion and protector, is pointing out to them the dire consequences and fatal results which would ensue if they had anything to do with His Highness of Bhopal and those, like myself, who in spite of His Highness' attempts to discredit us, have fought as strenuously as any one else, the battles of the States.

His very recent solicitude for the smaller States will no doubt be most touching and gratifying to them. We are aware of the propaganda that some of His Highnesses' friends at least have actively been carrying on for that last few years to cause totally

unfair impressions about some of us, in which we have been depicted as opposed to the smaller States. But although to-day many of my old brother Princes concerned are also no more, there are still some rulers alive, who will not have readily forgotten that it was His Highness of Patiala himself in particular, who opposed the other Princes and myself, and pressed for the exclusion even of some Princes who to-day are happily members in their own right of the Chamber; His Highness went to the extent of claiming that at least one or two such rulers were his feudatories. But I am happy to feel that I and my Princely colleagues gained our point and that the Viceroy accepted our advice. As is known, His Highness of Sangli was invited by the Viceroy to attend the R. T. C. especially to represent the interests of the smaller States though he is himself a member of the Chamber in his own right.

But it was only twelve months ago that His Highness of Patiala, acting autocratically, and quite unconstitutionally and expressly against the recommendations of the Princes Committee, attempted, as Chancellor, to get His Highness of Sangli excluded, when supported by my colleagues. I had, in my individual capacity, to take up the point.

His Highness's scheme to increase the number of members and representative members to such an extent is, I deeply regret to have to point out, also a part of electioneering tactics. In London I heard that the bait offered for additional membership was forty to gain the support of the smaller States. Now it appears to have multiplied with amazing rapidity. Instead of 109 States, at present members in their own right, His Highness proposes to include every one of the remaining 126 States who at present return 12 representative members: and although the telegraphic summary gave the number His Highness proposed as 65, additional representative members appear to have been proposed in the Note. Thus the Chamber membership is proposed by His Highness to be raised from 109 to 235 representing an increase of about 116 per cent and the total membership, including representative members, from 121 to 240 or an increase of about 100 per cent.

In view of the identity of interests, at least amongst the majority of States, big and small, no such contingency is, let us hope, likely; but statesmanship demands that dangers, from whatever cause, of the Chamber of Princes being flooded with new members, should be borne in mind, when the position would not be unsimilar to the well-known Asquithian threat to flood the House of Lords by creating some 400 additional Peers to gain support for the Liberal Party and its legislation.

Should, however, all the new members, plus representative members, proposed by His Highness choose to form a solid bloc and blindly follow wherever His Highness or others may wish to lead them, there should always be a clear majority of 22 against the entire body of 109 present day members. The proposal to raise the entire strength of the Princes' Standing Committee from 7, including the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor, to 15 is doubtless part of the same objective, and we should then have, with a vengeance, a party government, a Chancellor's Cabinet, and a really democratic party system with 'Leadership' and 'Opposition'.

During my ten years of Office, as Chancellor for five years from 1921, and during the preceding five years when I was elected Honorary General Secretary of the Princes' Conference, and discharged the same duties and responsibilities, I am proud to feel that no such state of affairs existed; and I always considered myself not as the Leader, but as the servant and the chief worker in the cause of my brother Princes and States. Whether such a system will be in keeping with the dignity of the Princes and their Chamber, or prove of real benefit to the States, I leave it to the judgment of my brother Princes and others.

As I have on previous occasions publicly stated, if there was any injustice to the smaller States as regards membership of representation in the Chamber the local Governments were to blame. For the Princes were unable to advise the Viceroy owing to unacquaintance with details of many such States and had to suggest that the matters could best be settled on the proposals of Local Governments, which was ultimately done. I have equally openly declared my sympathy and support for those States justly entitled to membership, or to have their interests safeguarded through representative members. But this is a question, as has been repeatedly pointed out, which relates to the revision and liberalisation of the constitution of the Chamber of Princes.

His Highness of Patiala says that, since his return from England, he has been "assailed by my brother Princes and their Ministers with repeated and peremptory requests to get examined *de novo*, the federal question" and that, in view of "powerful arguments and weighty reasons" (which have been carefully omitted in his Note)