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# Administration of India 1937

Reigning Sovereign—George the VI

## INDIA OFFICE

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THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF  
ZETLAND, P. C., G. C. I. E.

Perm. Under-Sec. of State

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K. C. B.

Parliam. Under-Sec. of State

R. A. BUTLER, M. P.

Deputy Under-Secretary of State

SIR L. D. WAKELY, K. C. I. E., C. B.

Assistant Under-Secretary of State

SIR CECIL H. KICH, K. C. I. E., C. B.  
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SIR DENYS DE S. BRAY, K. C. S. I.  
SIR HENRY STRAKOSCH, G. B. E.  
SIR REGINALD I. R. GLANCY, K. C. I. E.  
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SIR ATUL C. CHATTERJI, G. C. I. E.  
SIR A. A. L. PARSONS, K. C. I. E.  
SIR ABDUL QADIR  
SARDAR BAHADUR MOHAN SINGH

High Commissioner for India

SIR FEROS KHAN NOON

## Govt. of India

HIS EXCELLENCY VICTOR ALEXANDER  
JOHN HOPE, MARQUESS OF LINLITH-  
GOW, K. T. G. M. S. I., G. M. I. E.,  
O. B. E., D. L., T. D., VICEROY AND  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

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G. C. B., C. S. I., D. S. O., (*Commander-  
in-Chief in India*).  
THE HON'BLE SIR FRANK NOYCE, K. C.  
S. I. (*Industries & Labour*)  
THE HON'BLE SIR N. N. SIRCAR, (*Law*)

THE HON'BLE SIR JAMES GRIGG, K. C. B.  
(*Finance*)

THE HON'BLE SIR HENRY CRAIK, BART,  
K. C. S. I. (*Home*)

THE HON'BLE KUNWAR SIR JAGADISH  
PRASAD, K. T. C. S. I., U. I. E., O.B.E.  
(*Education, Health & Lands*)

THE HON'BLE SIR ZAFRULLAH KHAN,  
(*Railway & Commerce*)

THE HON'BLE SIR THOMAS STEWART,  
(*Communication*)

## Govt. of Bengal

HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HON'BLE  
SIR JOHN ANDERSON, G. C. I. E. GOV-  
ERNOR OF BENGAL

## Ministers

*Chief Minister and Minister of Educa-  
tion*—A. K. FAZLUL HUQ

*Finance*—NALINI RANJAN SARKAR  
*Home*—NAWAB KHWAJA SIR NAZIM-UD-  
DIN

*Revenue*—SIR BIJOY P. SINGH ROY  
*Agriculture and Industry*—NAWAB  
KHWAJA HABIBULLAH BAHADAR OF  
DACCA

*Communications & Works*—MAHARAJA  
SRIS CHANDRA NANDY  
*Commerce and Labour*—H. S. SUHRA-  
WARDY

*Judicial and Legislature*—NAWAB  
MUSHARAFF HUSSAIN

*Local Self-Government*—M. NAUGER ALI  
*Excise and Forest*—P. DEB RAJKUT  
*Co-operative Credit and Rural indebted-  
ness*—M. B. MALLICK

## Govt of Bihar

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SIFTON, K. C. S. I., K. C. I. E., G. S. I.,  
C. I. E., I. C. S., GOVERNOR OF BIHAR

## Ministers

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(*Education and Local Self-Government*)  
ANUGRAHANARAIN SINGH, (*Land Revenue*,  
*Finance and Development*).  
DR. SYED MAHMUD, (*Law and Order*)  
JAGLAL CHOUDHURY, (*Agriculture, Labour  
and Unemployment*).



**Govt. of Bombay**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HON'BLE  
MICHAEL HERBERT  
RUDOLF KNATONBULL, LORD BRABOURNE,  
G. C. I. E., M. C., GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY

**Ministers**

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A. B. LATHE, *(Finance)*  
K. M. MUNSHI, *(Home and Legal)*  
M. D. GILDER, *(Health and Excise)*  
MORARJI R. DESAI, *(Revenue, Rural  
Development and Agriculture),*  
M. Y. NURI, *(Public Works)*  
L. M. PATEL, *(Local Self-Government &  
Miscellaneous),*

**Govt. of C. P.**

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR HYDE CLARENDON  
GOWAN, K. C. S. I., C. I. E., V. D., I. C. S.,  
GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL PROVINCES.

**Ministers**

DR. N. B. KHARE, *Chief Minister  
(Home Affairs).*  
P. B. GOLE, *(Revenue)*  
D. K. MEHTA, *(Finance)*  
PANDIT R. S. SHUKLA, *(Education)*  
M. Y. SHAREEF, *(Law and Justice)*  
R. M. DESHMUKH, *(Public Works)*  
PANDIT D. P. MISHRA, *(Local Self-  
Government)*

**Govt. of Madras**

HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN FRANCIS  
ASHLEY, LORD ERSKINE G. C. I. E.  
GOVERNOR OF MADRAS

**Ministers**

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, *Chief Minister  
(Home and Finance)*  
T. PRAKASAM *(Revenue).*  
DR. T. S. S. RAJAN *(Public Health)*  
DR. P. SUBBAROYAN *(Education and  
Law)*  
YAKUB HUSSAN, *(Public Works)*  
V. I. MUNUSWAMI PILLAI, *(Agriculture  
and Rural Development.)*  
S. RAMANATHAN, *(Public Information)*  
V. V. GIRI, *( Industries and Labour)*  
K. RAMAN MENON, *(Courts and Prisons)*  
B. GOPALA REDDY *(Local Administra-  
tion.)*

**Govt. of Orissa**

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JOHN AUSTEN  
HUBBACK K. C. S. I., I. C. S., M. A., GOV-  
ERNOR OF ORISSA.

**Ministers**

BISWANATH DAS, *Chief Minister, (Home  
& Finance & Education)*  
NITYANAND KANUNGO, *(Revenue, Local  
Self-Government, Public Works and  
Health)*  
BODHRAM DUBEY, *(Law and Commerce)*

**Govt. of the Punjab**

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR HERBERT  
WILLIAM EMERSON, K. C. S. I., C. I. E.  
GOVERNOR OF THE PUNJAB.

**Ministers**

*Chief Minister and Minister of Law  
and Order—*

KHAN BAHADUR MAJOR SARDAR SIR  
SIKANDER HYAT KHAN  
*Finance—*MANOHAR LAL  
*Revenue—*SIR SUNDAR SINGH  
*Development—*RAO BAHADUR CHAU-  
DHRI CHHOTU RAM  
*Public Works—*MAJOR KHIZAR HAYAT  
KHAN TIWANA  
*Education—*ABDUL HAVE

**Govt. of the U. P.**

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR HARRY GRAHAM  
HAIG, K. C. S. I., C. I. E., C. S. I., GOV-  
ERNOR OF THE U. P.

**Ministers**

PANDIT GOBIND BALLAV PANT, *Chief  
Minister, (Finance, Forest and Police)*  
RAFI AHMED KIDWAI, *(Revenue, Agri-  
culture, Publicity and Jails)*  
DR. KAILASHNATH KATJU, *(Justice,  
Industries and Co-operative)*  
MRS. VIJAILAKSHMI PANDIT, *(Local  
Self-Government)*  
PANDIT PEAREY LAL SHARMA, *(Education)*  
HAFIZ MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM, *(Communi-  
cation)*

**Govt. of Assam**

H. E. SIR MICHAEL KEANE, K. C. S. I.,  
C. I. E., I. C. S., GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

**Ministers**

*Chief Minister—*SIR SYED MOHAMMED  
SAADULLAH  
ROHINI KUMAR CHOWDHURY  
MAULANA ABU NASR M. WAHEED  
REV. J. J. M. NICHOLS ROY  
MAULVI MUHAMMAD ALI HAIDAR KHAN

**Govt. of N. W. F. Pr.**

H. E. LIEUT. COL. SIR RALPH GRIFFITH  
K. G. S. I., C. I. E., GOVERNOR OF N. W.  
F. PR.

*Ministers*

DR. KHAN SAHIB, *Chief Minister*  
KAZI ATAULLAH  
BHANJURAM GANDHI  
KHAN ABBAS KHAN

**Govt. of Sind**

HI EXCELLENCY SIR LANCELOT  
GRAHAM, K. C. S. I., K. C. I. E., I. C. S.,  
GOVERNOR OF SIND

*Ministers*

*Chief Minister and Minister of Home  
Affairs and Finance*—SIR GHULAM  
HUSSAIN  
*Irrigation*—MUKHI GOBIND RAM  
*Revenue*—MIR BANDEH ALI KHAN

**Presidents of Legislatures**

*Council of State*—SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY  
*Legislative Assembly*—SIR ABDUR RAHIM

*Assam*—

BASANTA KUMAR DAS (*Assembly*)  
MONOMOHAN LAHIRI (*Council*)  
N. W. F. P.—MALIK KHUDA BAKSH KHAN  
*Central Provinces*—GHANASHYAM SINGH  
GUPTA

*United Provinces*—

PURSHOTTAMDAS TANDON (*Assembly*)  
DR. SIR SITARAM (*Council*)

*Bengal*—

KUAN BAHADUR AZIZUL HUQ (*Assembly*)  
SATTENDRA N. MITRA (*Council*)

*Madras*—

B. SANBHAMURTI (*Assembly*)  
DR. U. RAMA RAO (*Council*)

*Bihar*—

SACHCHIDANANDA SINGH (*Assembly*)  
RAMDAYALU SINGH (*Council*)

*Bombay*—

GANESH VASUDEY MAVALANKER (*Assembly*)  
MANGALADAS MANCHARAM PAKVASA (*Council*)  
*Oriasa*—MUKUNDA PRASAD DAS  
*Punjab*—SIR SHAHAB-UD-DIN CHAUDHRY  
*Sind*—BHOJISING PAHLAJANI

**Federal Court of India**

*Chief Justice*—SIR MAURICE GWYER, K.C.S.I.  
*Judges*—SIR SHAH SULAIMAN, KT.  
MR. M. R. JAYAKAR  
SIR ALLADI KRISHNASWAMI IYER

**Chief Justices**

*Calcutta*—HON. SIR HAROLD DERBYSHIRE,  
KT., K. C.  
*Bombay*—HON. SIR J. W. F. BEAUMONT,  
KT., K. C.  
*Madras*—HON. SIR H. O. C. BEASLEY, KT.  
*Allahabad*—HON. SIR J. G. THOM, KT.  
*Lahore*—HON. SIR J. D. YOUNG, KT.  
*Nagpur*—HON. SIR GILBERT STONE, KT.  
*Patna*—HON. SIR COURTNEY TERRELL, KT.  
*Oudh (Chief Court)*—HON. MR. JUSTICE  
BISHESHWARNATH SHIVASTAVA

# CALENDAR FOR 1937

JANUARY		MAY		SEPTEMBER	
Sun.	... 3 10 17 24 31	Sun.	... 2 9 16 23 30	Sun.	... 5 12 19 26
Mon.	... 4 11 18 25 ...	Mon.	... 3 10 17 24 31	Mon.	... 6 13 20 27
Tues.	... 5 12 19 26 ...	Tues.	... 4 11 18 25 ...	Tues.	... 7 14 21 28
Wed.	... 6 13 20 27 ...	Wed.	... 5 12 19 26 ...	Wed.	1 8 15 22 29
Thurs.	... 7 14 21 28 ...	Thurs.	... 6 13 20 27 ...	Thurs.	2 9 16 23 30
Fri.	1 8 15 22 29 ...	Fri.	... 7 14 21 28 ...	Fri.	3 10 17 24 ...
Sat.	2 9 16 23 30 ...	Sat.	1 8 15 22 29 ...	Sat.	4 11 18 25 ...
FEBRUARY		JUNE		OCTOBER	
Sun.	... 7 14 21 28	Sun.	... 6 13 20 27	Sun.	... 3 10 17 24 31
Mon.	1 8 15 22 ...	Mon.	... 7 14 21 28	Mon.	... 4 11 18 25 ...
Tues.	2 9 16 23 ...	Tues.	1 8 15 22 29	Tues.	... 5 12 19 26 ...
Wed.	3 10 17 24 ...	Wed.	2 9 16 23 30	Wed.	... 6 13 20 27 ...
Thurs.	4 11 18 25 ...	Thurs.	3 10 17 24 ...	Thurs.	... 7 14 21 28 ...
Fri.	5 12 19 26 ...	Fri.	4 11 18 25 ...	Fri.	1 8 15 22 29 ...
Sat.	6 13 20 27 ...	Sat.	5 12 19 26 ...	Sat.	2 9 16 23 30 ...
MARCH		JULY		NOVEMBER	
Sun.	... 7 14 21 28	Sun.	... 4 11 18 25	Sun.	... 7 14 21 28
Mon.	1 8 15 22 29	Mon.	... 5 12 19 26	Mon.	1 8 15 22 29
Tues.	2 9 16 23 30	Tues.	... 6 13 20 27	Tues.	2 9 16 23 30
Wed.	3 10 17 24 31	Wed.	... 7 14 21 28	Wed.	3 10 17 24 ...
Thurs.	4 11 18 25 ...	Thurs.	1 8 15 22 29	Thurs.	4 11 18 25 ...
Fri.	5 12 19 26 ...	Fri.	2 9 16 23 30	Fri.	5 12 19 26 ...
Sat.	6 13 20 27 ...	Sat.	3 10 17 24 31	Sat.	6 13 20 27 ...
APRIL		AUGUST		DECEMBER	
Sun.	... 4 11 18 25	Sun.	1 8 15 22 29	Sun.	... 5 12 19 26
Mon.	... 5 12 19 26	Mon.	2 9 16 23 30	Mon.	... 6 13 20 27
Tues.	... 6 13 20 27	Tues.	3 10 17 24 31	Tues.	... 7 14 21 28
Wed.	... 7 14 21 28	Wed.	4 11 18 25 ...	Wed.	1 8 15 22 29
Thurs.	1 8 15 22 29	Thurs.	5 12 19 26 ...	Thurs.	2 9 16 23 30
Fri.	2 9 16 23 30	Fri.	6 13 20 27 ...	Fri.	3 10 17 24 31
Sat.	3 10 17 24 ...	Sat.	7 14 21 28 ...	Sat.	4 11 18 25 ...

# **CHRONICLE OF EVENTS**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**

# CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

JANUARY 1937

1st. Brilliant pageantry marked the celebration of the Proclamation Parade in important cities and towns in India.

2nd. A large number of Indian Princess and Ruling Chiefs discussed with the Viceroy's special representatives in Calcutta the question of their accession to the Indian Federation.

Problems relating to the Indian village formed the subject of the presidential address by Rao Bahadur T. B. Venkataram at the opening of the Indian Science Congress at Hyderabad.

Speaking at Nagpur Mr. Jinnah outlined the Moslem League's policy of communal unity and inter-communal amity.

3rd. At a meeting in Calcutta, Mr. M. A. Jinnah warned Congress not to interfere in Moslem affairs. Mr. Jinnah toured Bengal on behalf of Moslem League candidates for the Legislatures.

The future policy of the Y. M. C. A. was discussed at the world Y. M. C. A. Conference which opened at Mysore.

The strike situation of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway improved considerably.

Mr. W. D. West, addressing the Geology and Geography Section of the Indian Science Congress at Hyderabad, spoke on the origin of earthquakes.

4th. Some of the problems facing Indian students were dealt with by Dr. Dutta, President of the Indian Council of the Y. M. C. A., speaking at the World Y. M. C. A.'s Conference at Mysore.

5th. Several problems in connection with engineers and engineering in Bengal were discussed at the annual general meeting of the Institute of Engineers (India) Bengal Centre.

6th. The origin of the inhabitants of Coorg was dealt with by Dewan Bahadur L. K. Anantakrishna Iyer when he presided over the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress at Hyderabad.

7th. A proposal designed to put an end to the political dispute between Hindus and Moslems in Bengal by an equal division of executive power was accepted by a large number of leaders of the two communities.

8th. The policy and principle of the All-India Moslem League was explained by Mr. M. A. Jinnah in a speech at Dacca.

Replying to addresses at Ranchi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated that the solution to poverty lay in Swaraj.

12th. The management of the Model Mills, Nagpur, declared a lock-out and about 3,000 operatives were thrown out of work.

13th. The future of the European community under the Reforms was referred to by the Governor of Madras at the annual dinner of the South Indian branch of the European Association.

15th. Problems confronting Burma under the coming Reforms were considered by the Viceroy in a speech at Mandalay.

17th. The Calcutta University scheme for the training of some students in the different branches of trade and industry in co-operation with business houses, was outlined in a memorandum issued by the Vice-Chancellor.

About 1,000 boys and girls attended the annual rally of Cawnpore Scouts and Girl Guides.

Polling in Calcutta in connexion with the election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly commenced to-day.

18th. Enthusiasm engendered by the general elections to the new Bengal Assembly reached its height in Calcutta when polling took place for the general constituency seats.

19th. That the interest in ambulance work was growing in Bengal, was referred to with satisfaction by the Governor of Bengal when he gave away the trophies at the annual competition in Calcutta.

The need for greater efficiency in railway administration was stressed in a memorandum submitted by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Railway Inquiry Committee.

A White Paper presented to Parliament enumerating changes in the East India Loans Bill which were necessary to bring the Secretary of State's powers into conformity with the terms of the India Act.

21st. The elections in the Punjab were attended by numerous incidents. Police had to rescue Pandit Malaviya from rowdies in Amritsar.

23rd. Various bodies under the University of Calcutta were constituted at the annual meeting of the Senate.

The scheme for the training of selected students in different branches of trade, industry and commerce, proposed to be initiated by the Calcutta University, was approved by the Senate.

25th. Replying to questions in the Assembly Sir Henry Craik said that satisfactory reports were provided concerning the health of State prisoners.

The Assam Moneylenders' Act was stated to have resulted in a scarcity of credit among agriculturists in the province.

The Constitution Committee of the Chamber of Princes met in Delhi to consider matters affecting Indian States and the All-India Federation.

26th. Sir N. N. Sirkar, Law Member, introduced the Indian Insurance Bill in the Assembly.

The Assembly adopted two official resolutions rejecting certain draft Conventions of the International Labour Conference.

India's ratio policy was criticized at the annual meeting of the Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay.

"Independence Day" celebrated throughout India with flag hoisting, processions and meetings befitting the occasion.

27th. Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Member of the Bengal Executive Council, heavily defeated by the Proja Party leader Mr. Fazlul Haq. in the Bengal elections.

28th. The Assembly debated the Bill to validate inter-caste marriages among Hindus.

29th. The Dacca Sessions Judge held that Government are obliged to pay allowances to persons interned under Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and that an internee whose demand for an allowance failed to meet with response had "a reasonable grievance".

30th. Congress candidate were uniformly successful at the Bengal Assembly elections.

A report from Delhi suggested sharp conflict of opinion among the Princes on Federal plan outlined in the India Act and the States' Instrument of Accession.

There was a procession of 4,000 students in Calcutta on the occasion of the celebration of the foundation day of Calcutta University.

31st. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq declared at a reception given him by Molslem students of Bengal that the Proja Party would co-operate with the other Moslem groups in the Bengal Assembly.

On the ground that discussion of controversial items in the Assembly agenda would be unreal in their absence, Congressmen protested against discussion of amendments to Assembly rules concerning interpellations.

## FEBRUARY 1937

- 1st. The principal aim of the Scout Movement was the promotion of peace and prosperity, declared Lord Baden-Powell in an interview at Delhi.  
Sir James Grigg (Finance Member) introduced a Bill in the Assembly to amend the Indian Income-tax Act.
- 2nd. Lord Baden-Powell paid a surprise visit to the Jamboree camp at Delhi.  
The Assembly passed the Law Member's motion to refer the Insurance Bill to a Select Committee.  
Lady Baden-Powell addressed a Delhi audience on the romantic inception of the Scout and Guide movements.
- 3rd. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq, leader of the Proja Party in Bengal, outlined his party's programme at a meeting at Munshiganj.  
The Bhoopal Committee, in a note addressed to the Indian Princes, expressed their views on several federal finance problems.  
The official opening of the Scouts Jamboree at Delhi took place in the presence of the Viceroy and Lord Baden-Powell.  
The non-inclusion of an Indian in the Railway Inquiry Committee, was strongly resented by several members of the Assembly.
- 4th. The Assembly passed Dr. Deshmukh's Bill securing for Hindu widows the right to inherit property.
- ✓ 5th. Election results announced so far in the Punjab indicated a landslide for the Congress.
- 7th. The death occurred of Swami Akhandananda, president of the Ramkrishna mission.
- 8th. Negotiation between the Indian Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Iron and Steel Company for a steel merger broke down.  
The Assembly discussed the draft amendments to the legislative rules relating to questions.  
The King postponed the Delhi Durbar to a later date as he found it impossible to be absent from Britain in the first year of his reign.  
Sir James Taylor's address at the Reserve Bank's annual meeting in Bombay dealt with the grounds on which he confidently predicted a prosperous time ahead for the Indian agriculturist.
- 9th. The Assembly passed the Income-tax Amendment Bill.
- 10th. The Industries Member's resolution providing for the establishment of a Road Fund was passed by the Assembly after it had been strongly opposed by the European Group.
- 12th. Sir Liaquat Hayat Khan of Patiala and Sir Kailas Haskar of Gwalior hold the view that the Princes are definitely nearer Federation.  
The Governor of Burma addressed the first session of the province's first House of Representatives.
- 13th. The death occurred in Lahore of Lala Harkissen Lal, ex-Minister of the Punjab Government.

Following the breakdown of negotiations for a steel merger, the Tata Iron and Steel Co. decided to extend their plant at Jamshedpur.

- 15th. The executive committee of the Proja Party ratified the agreement reached between the leaders of this party and those of the Moslem League for the purpose of working the new Constitution.
- 16th. A surplus was forecast in the Railway Budget which was presented in the Legislative Assembly.
- 17th. The gigantic task of national reconstruction facing India's youth was pointed out by the Vice-Chancellor at the Calcutta Convocation.
- The only way to revive university education from its "chronic debility" was to make the vernacular the medium of instruction, said Dr. Tagore in his convocation address.
- Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, leader of the Punjab Unionist Party, accepted the invitation of the Punjab Governor to assist him in forming a ministry.
- The Constitution Committee appointed by the conference of Ruling Princes in Bombay to consider Federation questions, submitted its first recommendations.
- 18th. U. P. Co.-gress Socialists who hitherto had been opposed to acceptance of office, were now reported to have changed their attitude and were likely to join the Congress Cabinet.
- 19th. The need for a policy of reciprocity in the trade relations between Britain and India was emphasised at a meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta.
- 21st. Mr. J. H. Morgan, legal adviser to the Chamber of Princes, submitted his report to the Chancellor of the Chamber on the question of the entry of the Indian States into the Federation.
- Recent pronouncements in Britain that India has not followed a policy of economic reciprocity are characterized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, as propaganda by Lancashire in order to pre-judge the issue of the trade negotiations now in progress between the two countries.
- 22nd. The president of the Congress put a ban on premature moves by Congressmen to form ministries in the provinces.
- 23rd. The Council of State passed the Bill providing for the grading and marketing of farm produce.
- The President of the Assembly had to ask a member of the Congress Group not to lecture him on the duties of the Chair.
- 24th. The Assembly carried a cut motion under the Railway Board to discuss the exclusion of Indians from the Wedgwood Committee.
- 25th. In the Council of State the President dealt with an adjournment motion concerning a member who was being prosecuted for alleged sedition.
- The cut motion in the Assembly to censure the Government for not taking steps to manufacture locomotives in India was passed.
- A special demonstration of the Empire air mail scheme was given at the Delhi aerodrome.
- The death occurred in Calcutta of Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra.
- 26th. A cut motion to discuss "the paucity of Moslems in Railway Services" was carried in the Assembly.
- 27th. The Congress Working Committee issued a statement reiterating the Party's programme in the Legislatures.
- Congressmen staged a walk-out in the Assembly as a protest against a word used in the Finance Member's Budget speech.
- 28th. Following a note of no-confidence two Burmese Ministers tendered their resignations.



## MARCH 1937

2nd. About 35,000 workers of a jute mill in Howrah struck work.

Mon. Romain Rolland, the French writer and pacifist, in a message to the Parliament of the Religions in Calcutta urged the need for the promotion of social justice in the world.

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore in a Press statement said that the "devastating tide of International Fascism in Spain" should be checked.

Pitfalls in the way of various Faiths were referred to by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore in his presidential address at the Parliament of Religions in Calcutta.

The Finance Member's additional taxation plans were severely criticized during Assembly debate on the Budget.

The Burma House of Representatives carried three token cuts, including one criticizing the Government for incurring heavy expenditure on the police.

4th. The leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly had an interview with His Excellency the Governor in connexion with the formation of a Ministry.

5th. A strike in another jute mill in Howrah district was reported.

The Assembly began its five days' discussion on demands for grants. The European Group raised a debate on the Government's tariff policy.

"Terminological inexactitude" was the phrase selected by the Finance Member to describe some of the accusations made against him by the critics of the Budget in the Council of State.

The Contempt of Courts ( amendment ) Bill was passed by the Council of State.

6th. The scheme of Indianization of the Army was explained in the Assembly by the Defence Secretary.

Mr. Fazlul Huq, leader of the Proja Party agreed to form a Ministry in Bengal.

7th. Presiding at the conference of Indian insurance companies Mr. Walchand Hirachand urged for protection against competition by foreign companies.

The U. P. and Punjab committees of the Congress decided against office acceptance.

8th. Since, in response to an invitation from the Governor, Mr. Huq had undertaken to submit proposals for the personnel of the Ministry, he had been busy consulting the leaders of various groups in the Bengal Assembly and also political leaders of different communities outside the legislature.

The appeal of 41 persons who had been sentenced following a riot in a Garden Reach Jute mill was missed by the sessions court.

The Assembly held a long debate on the position of Indians abroad.

The Committee of the Burma Indian Chamber of Commerce addressed a letter to the Governor protesting against the enhanced postal and telegraph rates.

9th. Relations between European countries and the possibility of peace and war were discussed at a meeting held at the Chowringhee Y. M. C. A. in Calcutta.

Seven provinces were in favour of the Compulsory insurance of motor vehicles.

The Madras Congress considered it "highly desirable" that Congressmen should accept offices in the provinces where they were in a clear majority.

Sir James Grigg said in the Assembly that the Congress would choose wisely between service and barren opposition.

In a speech Mr. Fazlul Huq narrated some of the difficulties that faced him in the task of selecting the personnel of a Cabinet for Bengal.

- 10th. Differences arose between the delegates negotiating an Indo-Japanese trade agreement on four main points.
- 11th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, was not in favour of the proposal that Congressmen should be elected as Speakers of provincial legislatures in those provinces in which the Congress Party was in a majority.
- 12th. The significance of the life and teachings of Sri Ramkrishna in the light of present-day events, were discussed at a students' conference in Calcutta.  
A dagger attack was alleged to have been made on Sir J. P. Srivastava, U. P. Minister, at Cawapore.  
Questions relating to the enhanced postal rates to Burma were asked in the Assembly.  
Strong opposition to the Indian Finance Bill was voiced in the Assembly when Sir James Grigg moved that the measure be taken into consideration.  
Several non-official resolutions were dealt with by the Council of State.  
No decision was arrived at by Bengal Congressmen in regard to the office acceptance issue.
- 13th. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held decided against office acceptance.
- 14th. The Bengal jute mill strike situation were unchanged with 17 mills and 47,000 operatives reported to be idle.  
The Orissa committee was the latest Congress provincial organization to vote for offices.
- 15th. The U. P. Moslems arrived at an agreement which would enable them to take concerted action in the U. P. Assembly.  
The question of Indianization in the higher secretariat posts was raised by a non-official member in the Council of State.  
An optimistic speech in regard to the coming changes in India was made by the Viceroy at a dinner in New Delhi.
- 16th. After a debate lasting four days the Assembly accepted the motion for consideration of the Finance Bill.  
The Congress Working Committee passed resolution recommending conditional acceptance of offices.  
No conclusion was reached at the discussion between the Government of India and its non-official advisers on the new Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement.
- 17th. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, a prisoner under Regulation III of 1931 was released in Calcutta.  
A motion to reduce the duty on salt was defeated in the Assembly.
- 18th. A motion urging the abandonment of the additional sugar excise duty was carried in the Assembly.  
The more rapid Indianization of the Army was pleaded for in the Council of State.
- 19th. The debate on the Indian Finance Bill concluded in the Assembly.
- 20th. The Assembly rejected Sir James Grigg's motion for the restoration of the additional excise duty on sugar.  
His Excellency Sir John Anderson opened the Casualty Block of the Calcutta Medical College.  
The Congress Convention concluded its two-day's session at Delhi.  
The part he was to play in promoting the economic welfare of the Punjab under the new constitution was outlined by His Excellency Sir Herbert Emerson at the Northern India Chamber of Commerce meeting.  
Two Congress party leaders were reported to have received messages from the Governors of their respective provinces.

22nd. Further decisions arrived at by the Congress Working Committee at Delhi, following ratification of the office acceptance resolution.

A plea for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the conditions of the coal mining industry in India was put forward at the annual meeting of the Indian Mining Federation in Calcutta.

Burma's trade with India was referred to by Sir Archibald Cochran when he addressed the first joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives in Rangoon.

23rd. The enhanced India-Burma postal and telegraph rates were criticised by the Burma Chamber of Commerce.

A number of provincial Governors were in touch with Congress party leaders regarding the formation of Ministries.

The personnel of the Bengal Ministry was still incomplete and it was likely that Mr. Fazlul Huq might amend his list.

24th. The leaders of the Congress Parties in various provincial Assemblies had conversations with Governors regarding the formation of Ministries.

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal accepted Mr. Fazlul Huq's proposals for the formation of a Ministry of 11.

The progress made by the Punjab in recent years in the direction of industrial development, was referred to by the Governor when he laid the foundation of a new industrial concern.

25th. The leaders of the Congress Party in the Bombay and Orissa Legislative Assemblies declined to form Congress Ministries in their provinces.

Fourteen persons were reported to have been killed in Panipat, a small town in the Punjab when the police were forced to open fire to quell a Hindu-Moslem disturbance in connexion with a *Holi* procession.

Education problems in India were discussed by the Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University presiding over the All-Bengal Teachers' Conference at Jalpaiguri.

26th. The Moslem League leader in Bombay, Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi, declined to form a Ministry.

Congress leaders in Orissa and the Central Provinces refused to form Ministries in their respective provinces.

27th. An appeal for a united party to offer effective opposition to the Congress was made by Sir A. P. Fairo in Madras.

An agreement was said to have been reached in the Indo-Japanese trade talks. The decline in terrorist activities was referred to in the Government report on the administration of Bengal, for 1935-36.

Presiding at the annual general meeting of the Hoogly Land-holders' Association Maharaj Kumar Udyachand Mahatab of Bardwan appealed to them to undertake constructive work.

The question of fixing a maximum weight for motor vehicles using roads in rural areas was referred by the India Government to local Governments.

30th. Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement on Congress refusal to form Ministries.

An adjournment motion was tabled in the Assembly to discuss the "constitutional crisis" in the provinces.

A Bengal Government scheme for the establishment of the adult education centres in rural areas was outlined in a *communiqué*.

How Ministers appointed under the new Constitution could assist the development of India's trade, was outlined by Sir H. S. Paul at the annual meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

The President of the Assembly ruled out of order the adjournment motion regarding the ban imposed by the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, on processions.

Satisfaction at the composition of the new Bengal Cabinet was expressed by the Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan presiding at the annual meeting of the British Indian Association in Calcutta.

- 31st. In the Council of State, a member complained that by not being present when the Council was considering the Finance Bill, the Finance Member had shown "deliberate disrespect" to the House.

The Assembly carried an adjournment motion in connexion with the recently announced re-organisation of the Indian Medical Service.

## APRIL 1937

- 1st. The adjournment motion regarding reorganization of the I. M. S. was talked out in the Council of State.

Over 30 persons including the Secretary of the All India Socialist Party were arrested in connexion with the demonstration against the inauguration of the new Constitution.

- 2nd. The Assembly carried Mr. Asaf Ali's censure motion relating to a "deliberate insult" to the Congress flag at Delhi on April 1.

Questions were asked in the Assembly regarding the Italian Government's order to Indian firms in Abyssinia to close down their business in that country.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru held that the Congress refusal to hold office was tantamount to shrink its responsibilities.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai blamed the Government for the Congress decision on Ministries.

The Nawab of Ohhatarl succeeded in forming a cabinet in the U. P.

- 3rd. The death occurred at Lucknow of Raja Sir Rampal Singh (70), the well-known politician, educationist and business man.

The Assembly passed two official Bills and adjourned *sine die*.

Questions regarding the location of India's Federal Court were asked in the Council of State.

Further evidence was recorded in the case in which five men were being tried for an alleged attempt to bribe a Government official in order to obtain budget information.

A large number of Indian Rulers sailed from Bombay for England to attend the Coronation.

- 4th. Referring to the office impasse, Sir James Crerar, a former Home Member of the Government of India in a newspaper article stated that the Congress hitherto had been a party with a platform but no programme.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce urged the Government of India to restore the postal and telegraph rates between India and Burma to their former level.

The Working Committee of the Bihar Moslem Independent Party gave a mandate to Mr. M. Yunus to form a Ministry.

- 5th. A resolution moved in the Council of State urging that in future no non-Indian should be appointed on a committee set up by Government, was rejected without a division.

Bengal and Punjab M. L. A.s took the Oath of Allegiance.

- 6th. The Opposition in the Punjab Assembly staged a walk-out after the election of the Speaker.

The election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker to the Bengal Assembly took place to-day.

The Congress Party in the Punjab Assembly did not attend when the Governor delivered his inaugural address in the House.

A resolution in the Council of State recommended an increase in the number of Indian judges in the High Court in India.

7th. The Council of State rejected a resolution recommending the taking of practical steps to increase the purchasing power of the Indian masses.

Annual meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce commenced in Delhi.

Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque was elected Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly was addressed by the Governor of the province.

8th. The adjournment motion moved in the Bengal Assembly in connection with the jute mills strike situation was talked out.

In the Council of State, which was adjourned *sine die*, Sir Jagadish Prasad made a statement regarding India's attitude to one of the "racial" Bills in the S. African Legislative Assembly.

The death occurred suddenly in Calcutta of Sir A. Suhrawardy, a former Member of the Council of State.

The Ministers' Salaries Bill was passed by the Punjab Assembly and an adjournment motion to discuss the police handling of the riot at Panipat was disallowed.

9th. Assam's slender financial resources were referred to by Sir Robert Reid in a joint address to the Upper and Lower Houses of the province.

Mr. S. C. Mitra was elected President of the Bengal Legislative Council, defeating his rival by the narrow margin of one vote.

The India Government was seriously considering measures to protect Indian coastal trade from the increasing menace of Japanese shipping.

A wave of intense disappointment was the first reaction of Indian political leaders to the speech of Lord Zetland defining the British Government's attitude to the political impasse.

10th. Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement on the political impasse, suggested the appointment of a judicial tribunal to decide whether it was competent for Governors to give the assurance demanded by the Congress.

The Bihar Government decided to reduce the minimum price of sugarcane and were at present concerned over the problem of the heavy surplus of sugarcane in Bihar.

12th. An adjournment motion in the Punjab Assembly to discuss Lord Zetland's recent speech was talked out after a debate lasting two hours.

Indian Christians of South India urged for a compromise with a view to the establishment of a permanent Ministry.

The United Provinces Cabinet issued a statement on the Congress criticisms on the Ministry impasse.

15th. Mr. Fazal Huq described the Bengal Cabinet as a very happy family when he replied to an address presented to the Bengal Ministers by Calcutta students' federation.

Malik Khuda Bux, a Moslem Independent, was unanimously elected Speaker of the Frontier Assembly.

16th. Mr. George Morgan, President of the European Association, reviewed the present political impasse in India when he addressed the annual meeting of the Association in Calcutta.

17th. The Finance Minister of Bihar in a Press statement said that it was hardly necessary for the Congress to demand assurances from the Governors in the terms as they did and that in actual practice the Governor has given his Ministers unfettered freedom to carry out the business of Government.

The Director of Public Instruction exempted three Government schools for boys and two Government schools for girls in Calcutta, from the use of vernacular as a medium of instruction and examination.

In opening the annual meeting of the Bihar Chamber of Commerce, His Excellency Sir Maurice Hallett appealed for co-operation in solving the problems facing the province.

- 18th. India's Ministers were not puppets, said Mr. Fazlul Haq, the Bengal Premier, criticizing the Congress Party at a luncheon in Calcutta.
- 19th. An application for an injunction was made in the Calcutta High Court in which the legality of the election of the Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly was questioned.  
Criticism of the Congress effort to divide Moslem ranks was the burden of a statement to the Press by Mr. M. A. Jinnah.
- 20th. Mr. N. R. Sarker, in a letter to the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, explained why he resigned his membership of the Committee.
- 21st. Mr. F. E. James addressing a meeting of the European Association at Madras, referred to the fundamental uncertainty of the Congress policy.
- 22nd. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's move to make Moslems join the Congress in large numbers received warm reception.  
Mahatma Gandhi, in an interview at Poona, clarified the Congress point of view in the present political dead-lock.
- 23rd. Fourteen persons were killed and 42 wounded when police opened fire on rioters in a village in Alwar State.
- 24th. The Bihar Government decided to restore to popular control the administration of several municipalities that had been superseded for mis-management.  
The Madras Cabinet's programme of work included reduction of land tax, revision of the land revenue system, a five year plan in agriculture, and a drive against illiteracy.
- 25th. Twelve persons were arrested for disobeying the police ban on the playing of music in or near the Sonya Maruti temple in Poona.
- 26th. Pundit Nehru and Mr. M. A. Jinnah issued counter-statements on the Congress bid to capture Moslem support.  
Four persons were sentenced by an Allpore magistrate to various terms of rigorous imprisonment under the Arms Act.  
Nine more jute mills in the Barrackpore area closed down rendering 20,500 operatives idle.
- 27th. Seventeen persons charged with conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor were convicted and sentenced by a Special Tribunal at Alipore.
- 28th. Mr. Dhojislugh Pahajani was elected Speaker of the Sind Legislative Assembly.
- 29th. The Congress Working Committee resolution on the political deadlock was stated to be another triumph for Mahatma Gandhi.  
It was reported that a programme of action devised by Mahatma Gandhi was being considered by the Congress cabinet.  
The Calcutta High Court dismissed the application filed by Mr. T. C. Goswami asking for an injunction restraining Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque from acting as Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

## MAY 1937

- 1st. The communal tension at Madras continued and fifty persons were treated for injuries.  
"May Day" in Calcutta passed off peacefully. There was a meeting held on the maidan which was well attended.

2nd. Communal tension was reported to have eased in Madras where, however, stone throwing still continued.

3rd. 55 Jute Mill strikers were arrested in the Jute Mill area in the suburbs of Calcutta following an attempt to start the Mills by the authority.

A series of supplementary questions were evoked by a question by Mr. Morgan Jones requesting the Government to suggest a formula for agreement with Congress leaders by which the judges of the Federal Court would act as Arbitrators. Mr. Butler showed an adamant attitude and replied with a graceless, "No".

6th. Mr. Jinnah issued a statement regarding the controversy over the Congress bid to capture the support of Moslems.

Twenty-two Jute mills and 93,000 operatives were still idle in Bengal.

7th. Following assurances given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bengal the All-Bengal Jute Workers' Central Strike Committee decided to call off the Bengal Jute workers' strike on and from Monday, the 10th May. More than 2,000,000 jute workers and 40 mills were involved in the strike which continued for the last two months and a half.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in reply to a civic address in Rangoon urged for co-operation between Indians and Burmans.

Twenty persons were injured, including two municipal commissioners, as a result of lathi charges resorted to by the police for the first time in connection with the Sonya Maruti temple Satyagraha.

8th. Reaction in India to Lord Zetland's statement on the constitutional impasse were marked. Mahatma Gandhi in a press interview stated that the latest pronouncement of Lord Zetland was no contribution to the removal of the political deadlock in India.

The Government of Bengal offered facilities to labour leaders with a view to ending the Jute Mill strike.

10th. The Calcutta Corporation decided not to participate in the Coronation celebration.

The Mayor of Bombay informed the Corporation that he proposed sending Coronation greetings to Their Majesties.

11th. The policy of the All-India Moslem League was explained to a gathering at Lucknow by Mr. M. A. Jinnah.

Elaborate traffic arrangements were made in Calcutta to cope with the rush of Coronation illumination sight-seers.

The Government of Punjab took action against persons who were coming into the province with a view to fomenting Communist trouble among the masses.

The Viceroy sent a loyal message to His Majesty the King on behalf of the Princes and people of India.

12th. The Coronation was celebrated throughout India with great rejoicings. Brilliant illuminations and a successful traffic control scheme were features of the Coronation celebrations.

13th. The Sonya Maruti Temple Satyagraha concluded at midnight when the last batch of 7 worshippers led by Mr. Viswasrao Dewro, President of Varnasram Swarajya Sangha, defied the Magistrate's order by ringing the temple bell. The Satyagraha commenced on April 25 and lasted 19 days when over 1035 offered worship in defiance of the Magistrate's order. But about 700 were arrested including Hindu leaders of all sections. The order against music expired to-day.

An official statement issued on the withdrawal of the curfew and other restrictive orders in Midnapore.

14th. Some Madras Congressmen favoured acceptance of office in the light of Lord Zetland's recent statement.

15th. U. P. Muslims were unanimously of opinion that the only right and correct attitude for Muslims to act upon and adopt was to unconditionally join the Indian National Congress and participate in the struggle for freedom of the country.

Mr. Khor, leader of the Bombay Assembly Congress Party, in a statement, criticized the action of the Governor for having put a narrow and legalistic interpretation on the Constitution Act.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapra regarded Mr. Butler's and Lord Zetland's latest statements as constituting assurances.

The Bengal Premier hoped to remove the causes of friction between the employees following the recent mill strike in Calcutta.

16th. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, in a Press statement, explained the Congress viewpoint regarding the suggestion that there was no serious difference between a Ministry's resignation and dismissal.

17th. Extensive control over methods of coal mining and a cess on coal despatches were among the recommendations made in the report of the Coal Mining Committee appointed to examine India's resources of coal, the need for conservation, etc.

18th. Two men were seriously injured following an explosion which occurred at Mitan Ghat, in Patna City. It may be recalled that a bomb exploded in this particular locality in July last year. Five men were arrested in that connection and three of them, all accused, were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment each a few days ago.

19th. The Premier of the Punjab criticized the Congress demand in a speech and made a reference to the position of the minorities.

Certain observations were made at Coonoor by Mr. F. E. James on the Bengal Europeans' manifesto regarding the constitutional impasse.

20th. The Bengal Premier discussed the recent Jute Mill strike with the President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

The Congress secretary in a statement explained the Congress attitude to the minorities.

21st. Ten persons were killed and 120 injured in a Shia-Sunni clash in Lucknow.

22nd. Six thousand railway workshop workers went on a stay-in strike at Lahore.

The Bengal Government agreed to grant a five year subsidy to a company formed for salt manufacture in the province.

Sixty persons were arrested for defiance of a ban on a Madras institution.

23rd. The riot situation at Lucknow showed signs of improvement but stray assaults continued.

The "stay-in" strike in the Lahore Railway workshops fizzled out.

24th. Hindu Muslim riots occurred in C. P. and the Punjab and communal tension and panic prevailed at Shikarpur in Sind.

The Bengal Government issued statement on the desecration of some images in Sorajgang.

The Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, addressed the India Government's Foreign Department on the expulsion of the Indian firm of Mahomed Ali and Co. from Abyssinia.

25th. Tributes to the memory of Sir Asbutoosh Mookerjee were paid at the commemoration of his death anniversary.

The Madras Government issued a communique on the circumstances relating to the closing of a school at Kottapatam.

26th. The Bengal Labour Ministry issued a statement on the jute mills situation.

The U. P. Governor in a speech discussed the relationship between Governors and their Ministers under the new constitution.



- 28th. The unemployment problem was one of the subjects discussed at a meeting of the Assam Chamber of Commerce.
- 29th. The threat to Bengal cotton industry from unjustified strikes was referred to by the President of the Bengal Millowners' Association.

## JUNE 1937

- 1st. Charges were framed by the Special Tribunal at Chittagong in the case in which a number of youths were alleged to have attempted to murder an internee. Six persons were killed and 100 injured in a communal rioting in Bombay.
- 2nd. Discussing the political impasse with a Bombay newspaper's correspondent, Mahatma Gandhi said that the Congress were "awaiting a gesture from the Government".
- The U. P. Cabinet's plan for the reduction of land rents were criticized by landlords.
- The Premier of the O. P. declined to discuss his Government's programme at a political conference, saying that such discussion should be held on the floor of the legislature.
- The Premier of the U. P., referring in a Press interview to the latest statements of Lord Zetland and Mahatma Gandhi, said that the Congress should now accept office.
- 5th. Defence arguments began in the Chittagong case in which five youths were on trial on charges of conspiracy and attempted murder of an internee.
- 6th. Surprise was expressed by Burma's Minister for Education that Calcutta University threatened retaliation against the step making a knowledge of Barmese compulsory in Rangoon University.
- 7th. New taxation was the only method of finding money for the provinces' needs, said Mr. Jammadas Mehta, presiding at the Finance Members' Conference in Bombay.
- 8th. Speaking on the political deadlock, Sir K. V. Reddi characterised the present position of the Congress a "climb down".
- The various sources of additional taxation were considered by the Finance Ministers' Conference which concluded in Bombay.
- 10th. Rabindra Banerjee who was sentenced to life imprisonment for an attempt to shoot the Governor of Bengal at the Lobong race course was released.
- 12th. The hearing of a case in which 12 men were charged with conspiracy to assist the operations of the Communist Party in India opened in Calcutta.
- Four men were on trial at Faridpur in connexion with the find of a six-chambered revolver in a village.
- A Chittagong youth was awarded life sentence by a special tribunal for attempting to kill an internee.
- 13th. "The cult of terrorism has definitely impeded national progress," said Pt. Jawaharlal, the Congress President in a speech at Chittagong.
- Urging the Government and the Congress to appreciate the human side of the present Constitutional problem, Paudit Hriday Nath Kunzru, president of the Servants of India Society, speaking at Poona, said that in the interest of the country it was necessary that the interim Ministers should not be allowed to remain unduly long at office.
- 14th. The Government of India decided to suspend for three months operation of the new regulation prohibiting women from working in mines and to increase the raising from railway collieries.

- 15th. An important declaration regarding the present constitutional impasse was made by the Congress President at a meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall.
- 16th. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in a communication to the India Government, urged the reduction of postal and telegraph rates in Burma.
- 17th. The death occurred of the Maharaja of Venkatagiri, a supporter of the Justice Party.
- 18th. Despite Lord Baden-Powell's denial of having cast any aspersion on India and Indians, opposition to his scout movement continued in the Mysore State. British troops were called out to quell a Sik-Moslem clash in Amritsar.
- 19th. Presiding at the Proja-Conference at Bogra, Mr. N. R. Sarkar referred to the scope of the new Constitution for ameliorating the condition of ryots. Replying to an address at Bogra, Mr. Sarkar appealed for a change in the public attitude towards Government.
- 21st. The president of the Andhra Provincial Congress Conference declared that what Congress really wanted was an assurance of non-reference by Governors in the matter of fulfilling election pledges, but not in the matter of any programme calculated to wreck the Constitution.  
The Viceroy's message on the political situation in India was boardcast. Board-casting the Viceroy commended that message to the sympathy and consideration of the people.
- 22nd. The Governor of Bengal explained his position under the Constitution in a letter in reply to a telegram from the Hindu Sabha requesting his intervention in "anti-Hindu activities involving the desecration of temples and duties".
- 23rd. The Bengal Government issued a note in connexion with the training of selected detainees at the agricultural farm at Maslandpur.  
The extremely helpful attitude of the Governor was described by the Premier of the Punjab when he refuted certain allegations made by the Opposition in the Assembly.
- 24th. There were exciting scenes in the Punjab Assembly when the Premier referred to adjournment motions as amusing jokes.
- 25th. The death occurred of His Holiness Sri Sir Anand Swarup Swamiji Maharaj of Dayalbagh, Agra.
- 26th. The value of physical training for youths was pointed out by Major H. Armstrong at the closing of the Teachers' Physical Training Camp at Chittagong.  
A conference to stamp out communalism in the Punjab was convened and presided over by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier of the province.
- 27th. The conference of the Punjab leaders to stamp out communalism in the province decided on the programme of work.  
Presiding at a Harijan conference at Berhampore (Ganjam) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya criticized the attitude of caste Hindus towards harijans.
- 28th. Replying to addresses at Barisal, the Bengal Premier stated that there were weighty reasons which made it impossible for the Government to order a general release of detainees.  
Sir Maurice Hallett, Governor of Bihar, replying to addresses presented to him at Purnia, stressed the need for friendly co-operation.  
A programme of work for the improvement of ryots was outlined by the Assam Premier at a meeting in Shillong.
- 29th. There was another scene in the Punjab Assembly and members of the Opposition staged a walk-out.

**Notes on Indian History**

**and**

**India in Home Polity**

## Notes on Indian History

It has truly been said that a history of India that reveals the whole panorama of the vast millennia of her distinctive life and civilisation in its actual shape and colour and due proportion and perspective, still remains to be written. The materials for drawing such a vast outline and making such a comprehensive and connected sketch are not yet in hand. A fairly definite outline and connected sketch which gives the promise of being some day developed into what is called "scientific history" has, however, been steadily emerging out of the mist that veils the immensity of India's past—a mist which (thanks to the labours of the investigators) has perceptibly thinned without being as yet actually lifted as far as one can now make one's incursion into the age that saw the birth of Buddhism and Jainism in India in the sixth century B. C. Beyond that there is still only "cosmic nebulae" relieved here and there by a few stray constellations of lucidly distinct historical facts. These "nebulae" have, probably, a depth and density to be measured only in terms of millennia. But from the position where we can now make our historical prospecting, these vast remote dark spaces of Indian history recede and shrink and fold up and, at last, look like a far-away blank, black spherule beyond the galaxy of human remembrance.

Ancient Indian history is, apparently, "full" of such gaps and blanks. Beyond the time when Alexander the Great invaded the Punjab (326 B. C.), the galactical system of detailed and authentic Indian history does not far extend. There are too many unexplored blank spaces and unformed, chaotic nebulae beyond that time still. Beginning approximately with that period, we are furnished, sometimes in abundance, with fairly trustworthy material in the shape of contemporary Greek testimony bearing on Indian history, and also, as time rolls on, with inscriptions and other kinds of decipherable and dependable domestic evidence. Of course, an immense mass of "documentary" evidence and evidence in the more or less fluid, volatile state of tradition, hearsay and folk-lore (written or unwritten) have always lain by the side of the historian hitherto busy with his inscriptions, plates, coins, artefacts and any corroborative evidence that may be forthcoming from outside. And that mass of ancient Indian documentary evidence and tradition has, generally, lain neglected by his side. It has been, generally, of little help to him in reconstructing, "on scientific lines", the missing skeleton of ancient Indian history. It has been, however, of great use to the comparative mythologist, philologist and anthropologist.

But even the historian who seeks to reconstruct on scientific lines the missing skeleton of ancient history, whether of India or of any other country, should do well to remember that the dry bones of the skeleton he may have been able to put together will not be true, living history unless they can be made instinct with the touch of life which literature, art, tradition, 'myths', folk-lore, religious and social institutions in their earlier and later forms alone can give. From coins, tables etc. we can build a possible or even probable frame-work of chronology into which we can put our little bits of tested facts according to one possible plan or other. Such a mosaic of dates and facts (mainly relating to dynastic succession, war and conquests) is of course important as a necessary ground-plan of history. But it is not the completed structure of history. It is not history as an organic process of evolution. So we have to distinguish between structural or morphological history and organic, "physiological" history.

Now, India has been so far poor in comparison with some other ancient countries like Egypt, Babylonia and China in her "materials" for writing the first kind of history, and the available materials, as we saw, do not carry us much beyond the time of Budha and Mahavira in the sixth century B. C. Recently, however, a very old and, apparently, a high order of civilisation has been unearthed in the Indus Valley in the Punjab and in Sind, which, according to current official beliefs, is of the Sumerian pattern. The buried cities now discovered bring to light not only very interesting features of a civilisation thriving in the western part of India in so remote a past (when the Indo-Aryans had not, according to the common view, yet migrated into India), but they even put into our hands interesting clues that may eventually help us to unravel many of the riddles of our Vedic and post-Vedic history. The Tantrik cult, for instance, may have older and deeper roots in the soil of India than have so far been granted or suspected. Nothing contemporaneous with or earlier than the Indus Valley civilisation has yet been unearthed in other parts of the sub-continent. So the present trend of speculation is to regard the Indus Valley civilisation as a sort of wedge driven into western India—the whole of which was still at the low level of aboriginal darkness (with the possible exception of some parts that might have risen to the Dravidian 'light' level)—probably by the races and civilisation of Sumer.

We are still in the duskland of probabilities or even less than probabilities as to the dates, origins, early habitats and earlier forms not only of the Indus Valley but also of the Dravidians and Indo-Aryan people. We do not know for certainly when and from where the Indo-Aryans came into India. The fact of Aryan immigration into India itself, though generally accepted, is still disputed. And if immigration be admitted, we have, probably, to admit not one but several successive streams of immigration. Such a theory, apparently called for to account for some of the critical turnings and "sudden mutations" in our ancient historical evolution, will lead to many unexplored avenues of enquiry as to ages and dates, origins and characteristics.

#### THE RIGVEDA

The Rigveda—the earliest and the most informing and instructive "documentary-evidence that we possess—appears to set the stage amidst scenes which show the Aboriginal, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan factors fighting for supremacy first in the land of "Five Rivers" and in the Ganges Valley, and then gradually, beyond the Vindhya Range which with its impenetrable forest mantle, stood as a barrier between Northern Indian (Aryavatta) and Deccan. Gradually we find the aborigines cornered and driven to the hills and forest where their descendants, more or less Aryanised, still continue to live. In considerable parts, they were also absorbed into the fold of Aryan society and culture. And in being absorbed they did not fail to impart some little part of their own character to the Aryan complex. There was not so much of racial or even linguistic fusion as of cultural assimilation. This process of Aryanisation in language, culture etc. has been a process admitting, naturally, of different shades and degrees, leaving at the one end aboriginal races that have almost kept aloof from Aryan influence and having at the other others that have become part and parcel of the Aryan system. The Aryanisation of the Dravidian peoples, especially in religion, culture and civilisation, has been a much more perfected process. But, on the other hand, the Dravidian impress on the Aryan system is also, in many places, deep and unmistakable. The Dravidian is co-ordinated or even subordinated to the Aryan but not lost in the latter. This power of assimilation of alien races and cultures without losing the individuality of its own essential Type or Pattern and without at the same time making the diverse elements assimilated lose whatever is essential in them—has been a special characteristic of the Indo-Aryan race and culture-complex. This has meant organic unity or unity in diversity of a more fundamental and abiding nature than can, perhaps, be claimed for the political or national unity with which historians are commonly familiar. Historians, accordingly, commonly miss the unity which lies deep and sees only the diversity which lies on the surface. India to them is thus a veritable chaos of jarring elements of races, languages, religions, castes, sects and cultures which have never known unity before the days of the unitary political rule of the British. Of course the introduction, in later times, of the Semitic religions—Mahammedanism and Christianity—disturbed to some extent the ages-long unity and balance of the Aryo-Dravidian culture and social system in India. But even these elements were in the process of being slowly drawn into the sphere of influence of what we may call the Genius of India. In other words, a slow but sure process of cultural assimilation even of this "militant" factors was going apace. Buddhism, which had risen as a "revolt" against orthodox Hinduism—but yet as a revolt from within—and which dominated the situation in India for several centuries, ended in the land of its birth by being eventually absorbed and assimilated into the parent religion. Jainism and many other old or latter "revolts" have thus "squared their accounts" with the same parent religion, and have been for many centuries living peaceably side by side with one another and with the latter.

This power of assimilation and co-ordination in which all the components make their own contributions and are permitted to live side by side as members of a commonwealth of cultures, has been the secret of the wonderful resisting and staying power of the Indian culture-complex against such disintegrating forces as have smashed up many an old and glorious civilisation of the world. And it can be easily shown from facts that this staying power has been in evidence not only in the realm of cultural contacts and impacts but also in that of social and political ones. There have been many raids into India and invasions before and after Christ, but it is a travesty of facts to imagine that Indian resistance has always been weak and short-lived and that such invasions are typically like the raids of the Mahmud of Ghazni which ever swept away Indian armies and Kingdoms like cobweb or a house of cards. Before her final subjugation by the Mahammedan Power—and the final subjugation of the whole of India was anything like an accomplished fact only for a time

during the reign of the great Mogul Emperors—India had been, it should be borne in mind, a mighty Power and a Model of civilisation and culture for at least three thousand years. And it should be remembered further that, when the British in India turned from trade to conquest (always with native help and alliance) they had to settle their accounts not only with Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in the South, but mainly the Maharatta and Sikh Powers, which had risen on the ruins of the Muhammadan Power in India.

#### UNITARY INDIAN EMPIRE

But there were and still have been other factors which, to some extent, operated against India developing a compact and coherent political and military organisation, except occasionally, like, for instance, the great Roman Empire of old or the British Empire in modern times. We possess, apparently, no connected retrospect of the remote past of which the Vedas, Epics and Puranas speak. But as far as appearances go, an unitary, centralised Indian Empire was the exception and not the rule. In later times also, an Empire like that of Asoka was not a common achievement. As we said, India has possessed deep-laid cultural and institutional unity beneath all her diversities. India has fought, and fought bravely, for the integrity of her sacred Land, her sacred religion and tradition, and for their sacred visible Symbols and Embodiments. But she has rarely fought for the "State" as such or an Empire as such. The spirit of her culture did not favour the formation and consolidation of Nationalism in the sense it is commonly understood, and her basic institutions would hardly consist with many forms of centralised State control. The all-controlling and co-ordinating Principle was *Dharma* (the Principle of human Values and Conduct) rather than any State agency. Each village, for example, was a self-contained commune and autonomous unit owing permanent allegiance to the reign of *Dharma* and only temporary allegiance to any kingship that might function for the time being. So the village communities continued to live through kingdoms after kingdoms rose and fell. They were but little affected by the accidents and exigencies of politics.

Again, the spirit of *Dharma* (which should not be translated as religion) has definitely and systematically favoured all human or even all-living values and tendencies and a cosmopolitan outlook, and has opposed militant, aggressive "predatory" nationalism. The old Upanishads are clear and courageous in their conception of those higher values; and the Dharmashastras (or Codes laying down social and individual conduct) were bold and consistent in their execution of those ideas. Later, Buddhism and Jainism and other "reforming" movements have tended only to stress such values as non-violence and fellowship with all men and all living beings. These forces operating through the ages tended to produce in the Indian classes and masses a common disposition not quite favourable to the formation and consolidation of an unitary military state for purposes of offence and defence.

Of the immense back-ground of Indian History which is represented by the Vedas (Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads), the various Sutras (or Digests), Philosophies, Epics (the Ramayana and Mahabharata), Puranas and Tantras (our statement here is not anything like full), we possess (unless one is prepared to grant the claim of the Puranas recently put forth in their behalf that they do contain materials for reconstructing a fairly connected chronological history beginning with the very earliest times) very little precise and connected information for the purpose of writing a political history both copious and correct as to facts and their chronological order. But of the ideals and ideas, practices and institutions of the times we do possess a very full, informing and instructive presentation. And, after all, what is real history but this? Scholars have been busy with their sketches and drawings of the ancient orders and specimens of ideas, beliefs and practices that existed in India. But oftener than not their reviews and retrospects have been made from modern standpoints, with modern notions, criteria and standards of testing facts and appraising values. This has not enabled us, in any just measure, to understand much less appreciate a Civilisation (not confined to India but, possibly, reaching some of its greatest heights in this country) which was essentially of a different kind, and cannot, therefore, be represented as only the first uncertain and timid steps taken on the road which has, through a long, long march, at last brought us to our present advanced stage. The ideology, plan and methods of that ancient civilisation we have yet not seriously studied and rightly understood. Much of that civilisation we still regard, without understanding, as consisting of "savage" magic, meaningless ritualism, theological twaddle" and crude superstition. Side by side with all this we find, however, the highest philosophy, deepest mysticism and purest ethics. There is also

much that is of original and genuine value from the point of view of human material and mundane progress. This seems to us a curious medley of what is nearly the highest and what is about the lowest. But let us pass on.

Coming to "historical" times we find that the invasion by Alexander the Great of India proved in the result to be little more than a brilliant raid. His victorious armies could only cut off a small slice of North-Western India, and this little slice the Macedonian would ingest, but could not digest. His steam-roller of conquest speedily developed "war-weariness" on the plains of the Punjab, and he had to go back only adding a bit of India to his vast Empire. He had won some of his battles in India, but it had not been an "easy walk-over" with him.

#### CHANDRAGUPTA AND ASOKA

After his death shortly afterwards, the vast Macedonian Empire practically went to pieces. Chandragupta, who became the king of Magadha, proved himself too powerful for the Greek invaders who had violated the sanctity and integrity of the sacred Land of the Five Rivers. As the result of the formidable opposition by the armies of Chandragupta, a treaty was concluded between him and the Greek which made him the supreme, undisputed lord and sovereign of the Indian Empire. Megasthenes, who was sent by Seleucus as an ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, left a very valuable record of the times, of the customs and morals of the people, and of the administration, which, though unfortunately fragmentary, bears an eloquent and admiring testimony to the high order of material and moral civilisation attained by the Hindus centuries before the Christian era. And this high civilisation was evolved in India not in isolation but in commerce with other civilisations that flourished in ancient times such as the Babylonian, Greek, Persian and Chinese. Chandragupta's son was Bindusara who was succeeded by Asoka (369-231 B. C.), who was undoubtedly, one of the greatest rulers of men holding their sway for the material and spiritual good of mankind. Numerous edicts and inscriptions record the noble and glorious achievements of his reign which, in its later stages, left the bloody path of war and conquest and devoted itself to the much more noble and fruitful task of the moral and spiritual conquest and redemption of ourselves and our fellow-being. With commendable catholicity and tolerance, not seeking to impose it upon others by his great imperial authority and power, he exercised that authority and power for the purpose of transforming Buddhism, which had been more or less a local sect in the Ganges Valley, into one of the greatest and most potent living world religions. Asoka's reign is therefore rightly held to be an epoch in the history of the world. His edicts also show the man, his ideals and his methods. But all this had not allowed or favoured the cement of the great Maurya Empire setting into the requisite hardness. Independent kingdoms like Bactria and Parthia took their rise in the border land, and the Greeks renewed their incursions. New races (the Yuen-chi) came in a surge of migration which swept all before them, and in the first century A. D. a considerable portion of North-west India came under their influence.

#### GUPTA DYNASTY

Kanishka, who made Peshawar his capital, proved great as a ruler and as a patron and missionary of the Buddhist religion. Under him the Kushan branch of the Yuen-chi reached the zenith of its power. But this power fell as another power in middle India rose—the Andhra dynasty. A peak like Amaravati or Ujjain would, sometime, rise and shine in the midst of the moving vastness of Indian waters. In the beginning of the fourth century the centre of political influence in India was again shifted to Pataliputra in Magadha as the Gupta dynasty emerged into power. Samudragupta, who ruled for fifty years, and his son Chandragupta, greatly distinguished themselves not only in war but in the sphere of peaceful and fruitful administration, promoting general prosperity and giving liberal encouragement to art and literature, a glorious tribute to which was paid by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien. According to his testimony, their Empires were vast and their administration just, enlightened. Towards the end of the fifth century—when the White Huns from Central India began to pour themselves into India—the sun of the Gupta dynasty set (during whose regime, it should be noted, there had been a revival and reconstruction of ancient Brahmanism and Brahmanical culture as evidenced especially by the literature of the Puranas; but this reviving process was, very largely, a process of quiet adaption and peaceful assimilation). More than a century had elapsed after the fall of the Gupta dynasty before there rose another great and enlightened monarch who could emulate with no mean success the greatest of the Indian rulers in historical times—Asoka. Emperor

Harsha, who consolidated his authority practically over the whole of Northern India in the beginning of the seventh century, was famous equally for his great prowess, his high intellectual attainments and for the broad catholicity of his religious outlook. An account of his times has been left by a Chinese, Hsün Tsiang by name. In that, India is still painted in generally bright and even glowing colours.

#### MEDIAEVAL INDIA

After the death of Harsha, and gradually with the emergence of India into what may be called the mediaeval period, the conditions which had made the political unification of India sometimes possible in the past, nearly disappeared, and India was thrown into a state of political confusion and chaos in which petty kingdoms rose like mushrooms and constant internecine strife prevailed. Some outstanding figures like Vikramaditya would occasionally appear on the stage; but such events were few and far between. In the South of India was being enacted a very interesting but involved drama in which the Andhras, Pallavas, Chalukyas and Cholas were the principal actors. Kashmir in the north, Kanauj in the Doab and Bengal in the east were also alive with many vivid and vital scenes and events of political, cultural and social interest. But we shall not try to make a review of them here. One outstanding event in the confusion and complexity of the general Indian situation which deserves notice even in passing was the rise of the Rajput power upon which the mantle of the old caste of Kshatriyas (the warrior and ruling caste) fell, and which was the chief opposition that the waves of Mohammedan invasion coming one after another ever since the second quarter of the 7th century had to encounter and ultimately bear down. Guzarat, Malwa, Ajmer, Kanauj and Delhi were the principal scenes of the new drama of Rajput ascendancy—a drama so full of episodes of superhuman bravery, noble heroism and sacrifice for the sacred cause of religion and liberty that they have ever since lived in human memory as models which future generations of patriots in any country might well try to emulate. Though Rajput opposition was borne down in Northern India by the end of the twelfth century, Rajput bravery and the spirit that animated it survived the crash of the Hindu Empire of Delhi and Ajmer over which Prithvi Raj, the hero, the last of the Hindu emperors, though not the last of the Hindu rulers, had held sway. Rajput bravery and Rajput love of independence were still factors to reckon with in the days of the great Moghuls—Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzib. Col. Todd and some others have narrated the story, and it constitutes one of the proudest annals in the vast archives of the Hindu glory in India. As to the conquest of Northern India by the Mohammedans, it should be noted, the great prize was not very easily or quickly won; that the first Mohammedan impact was in the seventh century shortly after the passing away of the Prophet, and a Mohammedan kingdom in Northern India came into being towards the end of the 12th century. Even this did not mean either a complete or a final subjugation of India. And there is another thing to be noted. Hindu power fell not because its resistance was weak and its opposition timid, but because it did not possess sufficient compactness, and its bravery and heroism in the field was not backed by adequate tact, strategy and discipline in diplomacy, planning and preparation.

The centuries of the mediaeval age in India were marked by a conspicuous lack of political unity and solidarity. But they were by no means unimportant and barren. It was not a "dark" Age. In the Gupta period and in the centuries before and after marvellous processes of social, cultural and religious reconstruction were going apace. The old Vedic scheme of social economy (involving as it did the four Varnas or "castes" and the four Ashrams or "stages" of life) was being transformed through a process of adaptation, assimilation and multiplication which made society more comprehensive and at the same time more complex. The influence of Buddhism, Hellenism and that of the Mongoloid races also led to adaptations and assimilations, in many important directions in the older order of Indian customs and institutions. The gradual assimilation of Buddhism itself was a phenomenon of the greatest importance. The Vedic religion survived but it was transformed. The Puranas and Tantras renewed and gave a new expression to the Sanatana Dharma. In the domain of literature, art (both useful and fine), science and mathematics, philosophy and metaphysics, these centuries were also productive of fruits that were and still are of the greatest interest and value. Great poets like Kalidas and Bhavabhuti, and great philosophers like Shankaracharyya and Ramanuja and also other pioneers and masters in other fields formed a galaxy of men of genius and talents which showed that an age of political dis-equilibrium and confusion in India was yet not necessarily an age of cultural depression and darkness and social disruption. The soul of India could, apparently, function to its best advantage in spite of her troubled politics.



But whilst this was true for some time it could not be true for all time. Her politics at last began to toll on her constitution. We do not, however, propose to continue the story through the Mohammedan and British periods. The history of these periods is more settled and definite in features, and these are, generally, well-known. One special feature, which is not always clearly recognised and to which we should like to draw attention is this. From the twelfth century right up to the eighteenth, or even for some time later, the Hindu power of revival and regeneration, of initiation and execution, was never like dead or even dying. Independent and often powerful kingdoms like Vijayanagar in the South, those of Pratab, Shivaji and the Peshwas in the west (we do not mention some others e. g. those in Bengal) would, now and then, proudly lift their heads and challenge the authority of the great Moslem emperors. Under that authority, too, there flourished many great Hindu administrators, Ministers, governors, generals and financiers. In short, during the Mohammedan era the Hindu genius was not at its best but it was not quite decadent.

#### THE MOHAMMEDAN RULE

The Mohammedan conquerors, again, from Mahmood Ghori who wrested the sceptre of the kingdom of Delhi from Prithviraj after a first unsuccessful attempt, came to India as foreigners but they did not remain here as foreigners. India was the land of their adoption. Raids like those by Chengis Khan or Nadir Shah were rare and they did not represent the normal course of events. India suffered, and sometimes badly, no doubt, from the effects of the conquering ardour and proselytising zeal of some of the Mohammedan rulers. But the great Moghuls were as much "children of the soil" as the humblest of the Hindu "heathens". And this sharing together by the Hindus and Mussalmans of a common "hearth and home" naturally tended to breed a consciousness of community of interests in both as India's offspring. There was a steady assimilation of the semitic and Indo-Aryan cultures also and even a growing understanding and appreciation of one religion by the other. The religions touched and even blended with each other at their highest points—e. g. in Sufism and Vedantic mysticism. They also met and evolved a broad common "shrine" to which folk beliefs, practices and institutions would bring their united homage. Even a common dialect (Urdu or Hindusthani) was evolved between; the two in Northern India which gradually blossomed into a fine literature. The patronage extended by the Mohammedan emperors to Music, Architecture etc. was also faithful of very fine results. India's wealth attracted the trade and commerce of the whole civilised world. In fact, America or the West Indies was discovered in an attempt to discover an western route to the Indian market. British, French, Dutch and Portuguese traders all came and scrambled for market, and eventually, for political power in India. It is also worthy of note that even under the sway of such masterful monarchs as Sher Shah, Akbar or Aurangzeb, the government of the country was in the main, decentralised, allowing provincial and local autonomy—down to the autonomy of the village units—to adequately function. Even petty local chiefs—like the feudal lords of the mediaeval West—never unlearned the art of fighting and governing. So it was always possible for a man of ambition and ability, like Shivaji for example, to evolve sanctions whereby he could implement his high political aspirations. It was the very large measure of local autonomy and local initiative that existed that rendered possible the rise of the Marhatta and Sikh Powers and also of the kingdoms of Hyder Ali and the Nizam in the south. And British Power in India in its rise to paramountcy found its most formidable rivals or powerful allies in them.

In 1599, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, some merchants of London formed an association for the purpose of trade with India, and this association was granted a royal charter of incorporation. At first this Company was purely a trading concern establishing factories in the east and west coasts of India and in Bengal and administering its affairs in the three "presidencies" which were at first independent of the another but subordinate to the Board of Directors at home. In course of time, however, chiefly with a view to preserving and consolidating its growing and extensive trade in India, in the face of the French rivalry and intrigue and the prevailing political anarchy and unrest in the land, it established military garrison of defence which soon became involved in hostilities that saddled it with territorial responsibilities. It fought some decisive battles in Madras and in Bengal, which raised a trading company to the status of a political Power in India. French intrigue failed and French rivalry practically died down in India. One of the most decisive battle fought was the battle of Plassey in 1757. The battle was won with the aid of faithful native battalions, and with the active or passive support of the

generals and noblemen of the unfortunate young Nawab of Bengal. It is worthy of note that the path of British supremacy in India, and often, its influence and prestige abroad, has been paved, amongst other things, with the consent, alliance and willing co-operation of the Natives of India. It was so even during the critical period of the Sepoy Mutiny, one hundred years after the battle of Plassey. It was again so during the "ordal" of the last Great War. The machinery of administration by the East India Company was from time to time modified by acts of Parliament (1773, 1784; and the Charter Acts of 1793 and 1833). By these a Governor-General-in-Council was made the supreme administrative authority in India subject to a Board of Control at home. By the last Act, the Company ceased to be a commercial concern and became a political and administrative body only. After the Sepoy Mutiny another Act was passed by which the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown, and henceforth, the Governor-General was also the Viceroy of India. The functions of the Government of India are wide and its responsibilities heavy. But its responsibilities are to the Crown and the Parliament. It has not rested on an elective popular basis. There have been legislative bodies, but its motions, resolutions and votes have not, except as regards certain matters of secondary importance under the Act of 1919, a binding effect on the Government.

India's contributions and sacrifices in the Great War were great, but the "reward" that came in the shape of the Parliamentary Declaration promising her a "a progressive realisation of responsible government", the stages and times of which were to be determined by the Parliament alone, was not conforming to her nationalist aspirations. And the Government of India Act of 1919, which is still in actual function though it has been, apparently, broadened and amplified in some directions by a recent Parliamentary Statute, did not meet the wishes or expectations of India. By the Act dyarchy or a kind of dual responsibility was established in the provinces, where the "nation-building" subjects were "transferred" to Ministers (not responsible however to the legislatures), whilst the more important subjects were "reserved". In practice the transference of certain subjects to Ministers (who were appointed by, held office under the pleasure of, and were responsible to, the Governor) meant little more than a complication of the administrative machinery which became, in consequence, more cumbersome and expensive. The Central Government continued to remain unitary under the scheme. The legislative bodies, both provincial and central, were expanded with non-official majorities, but this placed little power, for construction or even for obstruction, in the hands of the popular parties. Whilst the liberals proceeded to work the scheme, the main body of nationalist forces, as represented by the Indian National Congress, would not first even look at it. But some time later, under the guidance of Mr C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, a Swaraj Party, analogous to the present Congress Parliamentary Party, was formed which entered the legislatures, both provincial and central, in telling numbers and by its obstructionist tactics caused not a little embarrassment to those entrusted with the work of day to day administration. In some provinces it was even able to "wreck" dyarchy for a time. Generally, however, the system has worked, though not satisfactorily even according to official appreciation. We need not in particular refer to the unwelcome labours of the All-White Statutory Simon Commission, to which even the habitually co-operating liberals refused to lend their co-operation. Meanwhile the Congress ideology was becoming bolder day by day, and the Lahore session adopted a resolution setting as the goal of India complete independence or Purna Swaraj. A campaign of civil disobedience followed to create "sanctions" under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who has been really at the helm of Congress affairs since the early twenties. The Round Table idea was broached rather too late; but Mahatma Gandhi, after concluding what is known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, joined the Conference subsequently. The result of the deliberations of that body fell short of the Congress demand. And the Congress again withdrew its offer of co-operation.

# India In Home Polity

## Introduction

The year 1936 ended with Indian Nationalism as represented by the Indian National Congress renewing the fight against the Imperialism that held it captive under new conditions. The Government of India Act of 1935 has been imposed upon a sullen people. The demoralisation seemed complete, evidenced by the failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement started in 1932 that had rocked the life of the people and of the Government, and unsettled many habits of thought and conduct. The Act bristled with all the safeguards that the ingenuity of human wit could devise; and the ruling classes of Britain felt that for at least a few decades to come they had so provided things that Indian men and women could be allowed to function within the frame-work of the new constitution with the steel-frame of the British bureaucracy intact, encased with the cement and lime, the brick and mortar of a new brand of constitutionalism upholding the structure of Anglo-Indian relations.

Electoral  
Fight

The facade was impressive. The electorate had been allowed to jump from seven millions to thirty six to thirty-seven millions, women for the first time participating; a Ministry of elected members, mostly if not exclusively Indian, responsible to an elected legislature, would hold charge of most of the activities of Government that touched the life of the average man and woman in his or her daily avocations and anxieties; it would be able to expand and extend the social services that the necessities of a foreign rule had kept starved; it would be able to bring health and education to the primary units of this continent of 7,00,000 villages; it would or could rescue the peasant from the clutches of the *Mahajan*, the *Sahukar*, and set him on his foot and start him on a new life of hope and equalised opportunity; it would or could humanize the conditions of the life of the industrial worker whom mechanized industrialism, its statistics and academic formulae, had been used to characterize as "hands"; it would teach the policemen to behave as the servants of the people, because "law and order" would be in charge of a minister answerable to the legislature and ultimately answerable to the sovereign people. But when one stepped a little inside this structure he found that over wide areas of legislative and executive power and practice, the writ of the Ministry would not run; that safeguards, special responsibilities, discretion, and individual judgment of irresponsible authority stood guard over these. All these the people were assured were set up there to help over the stile of transition, to train the people to an appreciation of their place in the scheme of Britain's imperial economy, and to train them to a sense of responsibility in a world where the rule of the people for the people by the people were in danger of attack from dictatorships

Impressive  
Facade

of the right and left. The observer and the Indian observer at that found no consolation at this imperial concern. The original injustice of the arrangement rankled in hearts that had lost faith, and that thought it an insult that a constitution for their country should be framed by men who by no standard of equity and justice could be accepted as competent to decide the pace of India's journey to autonomy in Government. Against this loss of faith the ruling authority has always protested; the suggestion of insult and affront has always been denied; the suspicion of bad faith was repudiated as causeless. Many of these contentions may be conceded, for it was no part of the English technique of government to often fustily or roughly assert the claims of prestige.

One of the best of these technicians, Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal, in his last speech as Chancellor of the University of Calcutta sought to assuage feelings by drawing attention to a contrast between the old and the new, between the old leadership that the British bureaucracy had supplied and the new leadership that the people will have to throw up from among themselves, and the conditions that had favoured or will favour that contrast. For more than a century and a half extraneous and outside influences have sometimes inspired, sometimes restrained, sometimes provoked leaders among the people to act as enthusiastic propagators, or interpreters or eastern adaptors of Western ideas, or as ardent reformers chafing at the slow progress of change, or "as rebels against the conception of external authority in any form". This external or extraneous influence that had been the stimulus or focus of contention or interest was under the new constitutional changes going to be withdrawn, and the people must from on now fend for themselves. And though the words seemed to be stating a historical fact, tendency, and development, there was in them a hint of challenge to the people.

"No doubt there will be a tendency to keep the stimulus alive, to search and scrutinise the activities of future governments, for some trace of the hidden hand of external authority; but such tendencies will not bring any nearer to solution the problems of health, education and economic well-being for which a remedy will be demanded by the people from the governments responsible to themselves. The things that matter are no longer to be had from a third party as a boon to be sought or a concession to be wrested; they are to be devised and constructed by those among the people who aspire to leadership. The days of leadership against something are passing and the call will be for leadership to something."

The men of vision and insight among the people understood and accepted this implied challenge and invitation to test the opportunities offered to Indian talent to build up the new India on foundations broad-based on the feelings, the interests and the understanding of the people. As representative of the self-respect of the nation the All-India National Convention declared its irreconcilable conflict with "external authority":

"The Convention declares that the Indian people do not recognise the right of any external authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India."

And as representative of the constructive genius of Indian Nationalism Mahatma Gandhi said, "The real need of India is to be free to assume the responsibility of its own government".

External  
authority  
retreating

Challenge  
Accepted

By participation in the elections for the Provincial Assemblies, the Indian National Congress came forward to test the possibilities said to have been secured to the people by the Government of India Act of 1935 by assuming responsibility for the government of the country. By its Election Manifesto adopted at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and sanctioned by it on the 22nd August 1936, it was made clear that the purpose of sending Congressmen to the legislatures was to combat it and seek to end it; to resist the attempt of British Imperialism to consolidate its position in the country by securing the more intimate co-operation of the "stake-holders" in Indian society to intercept the tendency of the "Communal" Award and other fissiparous arrangements to work their whole evil in disintegrating united efforts for national freedom.

The logic of these declarations and purposes would lead Congress men to accept ministerial responsibility under the hated Act with a view to keep out men of other ideas and swearing other ideologies from the seats of the mighty. At the Faizpur session of the Congress held in the last week of last year the recognition of this logic was postponed. The tactics underlying this policy has exercised the mind of observers of Indian political trends and tendencies. The plainest of interpretations suggested has been that a minority in the Congress who looked to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as leader of their thoughts and ideologies were for a flat refusal of office; for this was and could be the only logical conclusion of the Congress Election Manifesto. The constitution that stood rejected, that was to be combated and put an end to, could be done none of these things by acquiescing in its vetoes and its many named and unnamed limitations. A British publicist, Mr. Brailsford, put the origin and processes of this constitution in words that could not be bettered.

"From first to last Indian self-respect had been ignored by the Imperial Power. It prepared the mind of India to receive this constitution by two years of brutal coercion. It would discuss it only with hand-picked delegates of its own choosing. It persisted with its own Draft after the Moderates themselves had rejected it."

"The constitution was imposed on a nation that rejects it. Its sanction is merely our tanks and our bombing planes. Nothing is changed in a relationship that rests upon conquest".

The majority in the Indian National Congress while feeling all these, and more intensely, maintained that if the constitution be a sham the best way to show it up was by an attempt to work it; a section of these acted under the impulse of the unspoken thoughts that with all its defects the constitution could be worked to yield certain urgent improvement in the conditions of the material existence of the people that could no longer be delayed without permanent injury to the interests of the future generations. The conflict of these ideas rendered the tactics of the Indian National Congress during the election fight lacking in the directness that characterized the speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as he flew and ran against time and space from one end of the country to the other.

Thus when the battle for votes joined, the Indian National Con-

Indian  
Self-respect  
Trampled

Hands Forced  
by Material  
Debauch

gress sought the suffrages of the people on the programme that repudiated the competence of "external authority" to mould and direct India's political evolution; the "fundamental problem of poverty and unemployment"; the basic demands implied in the "Fundamental Rights Resolution" passed at the Karachi Congress (1931) and the Agrarian Programme accepted at the Lucknow Congress (April, 1936) were all incorporated in the Congress Election Manifesto. January, 1937 saw the mass mind of India stirred out of its pathetic contentment by the alarms and excursions of this great electoral fight. Facing the Congress Party stood varied interests, communal and class, that read in the emergence of the Congress Party strong with faith, and with strength tested by years of fight with the bureaucracy, a threat and a danger to their own safety; and they organized themselves under impromptu names and with radical programmes to canalise the rising temper and organised feeling of the country. The landlords in certain provinces and other "stake-holders" took the initiative in these activities. The National Agriculturist Party in the United Provinces, the Unionist and the United Parties in the Punjab, the Sindh Unionists and the United Party in Sindh, the Justice and the People's Parties in Madras may be regarded as representative of these efforts at organisation. One curious fact in this connection may be mentioned. In Bengal no landlord party as such emerged into public view, though individually many Zamindars stood on behalf of the Congress, the Muslim League and the Proja Parties.

Of these, the Justice Party in Madras founded by Dr. T. M. Nair and Thyagaraja Chetty had worked the Montagu constitution and consolidated its position in the interests of a section of the people. The party is an out-growth of the non-Brahmin movement in Madras which flashed out of the irritation and resentment against Brahmin supremacy, and of their monopoly of the professions and services. The leaders of the party, the majority of them, belonged to the hereditary landed aristocracy of the province, aristocracy not of birth but of wealth. Twenty years back when the party was inaugurated it leaned on the British bureaucracy and opposed the extension of responsible Government to the country; it was against the popular movement as and because it was led by the Brahmins; it feared that political power would naturally glide into the hands of the Brahmins, helping to further strengthen their position. The non-co-operation of the Congress with the Montagu constitution afforded the Justice party opportunity to capture the whip-hand of the administration. It was hoped and expected that the exercise of this power would wean away the party from flirtation with the British bureaucracy in whose hands were securely placed reins of power and patronage; it was believed that they would awaken to an appreciation of the fact that the real interests of the country lay in working out a reconciliation between the warring interests. We cannot say that that hope and that expectation have been fulfilled.

In Maharastra the Democratic Swaraj Party came forward to oppose

the Congress. It is an irony of politics that this party associated with the name of Lokamanya Balawantrao Tilak should have found itself ranged against the Congress. On the eve of the special Congress at Calcutta which sanctioned and ratified the Non-co-operation Movement in 1920, Lokamanya left the field of his mundane activities, leaving his policy of "responsive co-operation" as a legacy to his countrymen. His followers built on this theory the policy of working the Montagu constitution for all that it was its worth. And though they bowed to the decision of the special Congress, they could not put their heart in the Non-co-operation movement. And when Desbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Matilal Nehru organised the Swaraj Party with its programme of council entry with a view to fight the Government with instruments forged on the constitutional anvil, the members of the Democratic Swaraj Party threw its whole weight on its side. The Swaraj Party did not or could not accept and work out to the logical consummation of their policy,—acceptance of Ministry and capture of the seat of power. Public opinion was not prepared to tolerate this open repudiation of one of the basic principles and policies of the Non-co-operation programme. The Mahratta Nationalists were prepared to bide their time and work for the day when the Ministry will be accepted by and on behalf of the Congress. The decision of the Congress to enter the councils, enlarged by the Government of India Act of 1935, on its own account and not by proxy as in the case of the Swaraj Party was hailed by the Mahratta Nationalists as a long delayed return of the prodigal of political India to sanity and to the path of realistic politics. But the silence and indecision of the Congress with regard to acceptance of office in the Provincial Assemblies where it commanded a decisive majority seems to have been the main reason why the Democratic Swaraj Party formed itself ranged against the Congress in the election fight. The interpretation that tries to explain this difference between fellow-workers as due to any ideological or social conflict is no more than a facile refusal to face history and understand the forces that align political groupings.

The Liberal Party has had a life of twenty years only as a distinct entity, and even in its youth, as years count, it has been showing signs of old age. In its ranks are to be found some of the most outstanding men of India, men not all ripe of years as of experience; the days of its powers are gone, if there could be any power in the sense in which it is generally understood, tolerated in a country subject to alien domination; the days of its influence either in thought or in conduct is unfelt and unappreciated in India to-day. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on constitutional changes was presented to the Indian public there was no Liberal Party in the country. The Indian National Congress held the allegiance of the educated community who differed little in political principles and activities; an Anglo-Indian paper, the *Pioneer*, described the unity the "Moderate" and the "bomb-thrower"—a nexus ran through all the expressions of political discontent and resentment. It was the Montagu-Chelmsford Report

that divided the country on ideological lines. A special session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay in 1918 with Sayyid Hasan Imam of Bihar as president to discuss this Report and pass opinion on it, and lay down lines of policy to advance Indian political interest in the circumstances of the day when the adversity of the last great war seemed to have made the ruling authorities in all countries susceptible to appeals made on behalf of the self-determination of nations and all the idealisms that upheld the human spirit to live through that crisis of human history. The Congress declared that the Montagu constitution "was inadequate unsatisfactory and disappointing"; the implication to the majority being that it was unacceptable. The question whether with all its defects and drawbacks it should be worked was left hanging. The mood was one of denunciation best expressed in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant that the constitutional changes proposed by the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Samuel Montagu and Governor-General Lord Chelmsford, were "ungenerous for England to offer and unworthy for India to accept." This attitude was unacceptable to the "elders" of the Congress, elders most of them in years, some of them in service rendered to the cause. Of them the most prominent were Surendra Nath Banerjee, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, Bhupendra Nath Bose. Most of them had during interviews with Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford promised support to the scheme which was being built up in the inner circle of the British bureaucracy, helped by the Round Table Organisation of British imperialists. As soon as the Report appeared, these leaders hastened to give a "lead" to the people—the lead being a call for the acceptance of the scheme of Diarchy. The signatories to the "Memorandum of the 19" submitted to Lord Chelmsford by 19 members of the Imperial Legislative Council, with two or three honourable exceptions, lined themselves up behind the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, forgetful of the principles and policies that they had supported in that Memorandum. These developments were followed naturally by the emergence of the Liberal Party in India with a separate party organisation—the National Liberal Federation of India. The members of this party except in Madras supplied the principal Ministers to the major provincial governments under the Montagu dispensation. And when the call came to them to justify their political principles, they traced the descent of these to mid-19th century Liberalism as it had evolved in Britain and the West, and as it had spread into India with British methods of administration and enlightenment. Individualism, the right of individual to the fullest development of his personality in personal life, *laissez-faire* in economic life, and the reduction of the State to "evanescent"—these were the *credo*s of that time. As long as industrialism was able to swell wealth and expand empires there was none to question the validity and truth of this philosophy either in the West or in the East.

But as and when this source of plenty seemed to dry up, it failed its Social Philosophy to influence the thought or advance the interests of any large body of people. Doubts and hesitations appeared to assail men and women who mould social habits and



practices. This disillusionment is responsible for the decadence of Liberalism all the world over. Individualism and *laissez-faire* are to-day stigmatized as anarchy; and more rigid discipline and control over these are said to be the need of the hour. It is these developments in the region of intellect and of material life that have disrupted the foundations on which Liberalism was reared. It is difficult to say whether the Liberal Party in India has weakened as a result of such a re-orientation in our country. As a political party it refused to be compressed into the new mould of national organisation that has emerged since Mahatma Gandhi stepped into the leadership of the country. They stand to-day amid the evolving life of India as witnesses to the traditions that built up the Indian National Congress—traditions that have to-day touched deeper springs of life and interests. The Liberal Party in India have thus retired from active participation in activities that are remaking India: and they are content to act as monitors in our political life, if we are to trust to the words of the most eminent of the thought-leaders among them, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri:

"It may be that the days of our power are gone but the days of our influence by no means are gone. We are not without power of warning against danger, of advising in difficulties and of pointing out the way to safety. These things we can do always; and now that we are totally free of all temptations to consult the polling booth, now that we can look facts in the face, we can, more than any other person in the political life of India, speak the truth, as we see it without fear."

It is this feeling more than any other that was responsible for the Liberal Party as a party deliberately keeping themselves aloof from the last electoral fight.

In Bengal "Communal Award" stood in the way of all chances of organising coherent political parties. Communal alignment were easy to arrange, and this short-cut to political power afforded opportunities to political opportunists to exploit all the methods of detailed delusion for misleading an innocent electorate. Religion in danger was a handy cry to raise; the revival of "Muslim Raj" after wandering in the wilderness for near about a century and a half was a prospect that appealed to the most inflammable sentiments of the community. The Muslim electorate was approached by three groups—the Muslim League, the Krishak Proja (Peasant-Tenant) Party, and an unattached group of Independents. The Muslim League appealed on a programme of regeneration that talked of the "entire regeneration of seventy million Muslims," the foundation of the new structure being the special privilege and task of "the educated classes, the capitalists and landholders". The Krishak-Proja Party came out with a full-blooded radical programme of economic reconstruction of the province dominated by the Permanent Settlement of land revenue; it demanded the abolition of the Zaminders who as intermediaries, as "farmers" of revenue, had gained most from this arrangement associated with the name of Lord Cornwallis; it did profess lip service to measures for the removal of political discontents in the province, such as the release of detainees, internees and political prisoners. Its *Jehad* against the Zamindary system appealed in a special manner to the peasantry, most

of whom were Muslims, the majority of Zamindars being Hindus. When these two facts are placed side by side, the class-conscious programme of the Party could easily with a little manipulation be transformed into a communally conscious vendetta. The "Communal Award" did leave no chance to men who by inclination and training had transcended the prejudices and antipathies of caste and creed to stand before the electorate seeking its suffrage on principles and policies other than communal; no "local option" was allowed. Muslim Nationalists whose Nationalism was beyond cavil and beyond doubt had to append their names to programmes many of the items of which were repellant to their convictions, and antagonistic to the traditions of public life to which they had sworn allegiance, and for which they had suffered and sacrificed. The majority of the Muslim candidates belonged to what in modern political parlance would be called the "bourgeoisie"; and the fortunes of the electoral contest turned more on personal considerations than on political principles and policies, except in one or two constituencies where Zamindars and tenants clashed, the most outstanding example of it being the fight between Khawjah Sir Nazimuddin, leader of the Muslim League in Bengal and Moulavi Fazlul Huq, leader of the Krishak-Proja Party.

In the Punjab the Unionist Party, though predominantly Muslim, was something of a "Country Party" pitted against the "Town"—the rural magnates and "stake-holders" pitted against the professional men, the products of modern education and industrialism. The predominance of the Muslim electorate was secure and the Moslem *intelligentsia* were a wide awake and compact group, so that appeals to Muslim separatism were felt to be unnecessary and were not raised as loudly as in Bengal. Thus a programme of economic ideology contrasting with that of another had chance of a trial of strength in the Punjab. But this is a transitory phase in the development, and the interpretation seems to be right which suggested that parties like the Unionist and United parties in the Punjab were only a "convenient device to meet the united force of rising nationalism in defence of the new Act which effectively protects their own vested interests as well as the interests of Imperialism".

The "Communal Award" of the British Government has given legislative sanction to the claims for "separate consideration" that have been stressed by leaders of Muslim society for almost the last hundred years. In successive volumes of the "Indian Annual Register"—the two volumes dealing with affairs in 1936—attempts have been made to understand and explain the genesis of this separatist tendency that by the Government of India Act of 1935 has stereotyped the "organised segregation" of people in India in the name of religion. Religion has been given a "vote value" at a time when two contradictory trends have appeared in social life in India.

"On the one hand is the burning intensification of loyalties among the religious communities to which men belong, quickened by the Communal Award which gives political value to the numbers of heads to be counted as Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Christian. On the other, the sharp, rather harsh rise of antagonism to all organised religion".

Even foreign observers have been struck by the development indicated by the words quoted above. And the intensification of communal feeling has touched every department of life, poisoning social relations among the component communities of India. In the region of politics, the All-India Muslim League and the All-India Muslim Conference have been thrown out as representing Muslim feeling and protecting and advancing Muslim interests. In the terminology of modern politics the distinction between the two organisations may be that between Left and Right. The Muslim League is representative of the English educated Muslim middle class; while the All-India Muslim Conference represents the conservative element. Both swear by the "separate" interest of their community in the country, separate in religion, social life, and political interests. These "separate" interests are to be advanced by "separate consideration" to be accorded for their protection and advancement. Since the community ceased to supply rulers to the country, it has been nursing this feeling, and the British Government have not been able to do anything to restore balance to it; on occasions short-sighted administrators have thought it necessary to encourage the Muslim section of the population to nurse this separate conceit as a "native counterpoise to Hindu interests", as a drag on the too forward Hindu community that had taken the lead in developing those forces that wrest political power from unwilling hands.

And, as the British have been showing signs of retreating from the outward exercise of State power in India, ambitions and aspirations lying in the sub-conscious region of community life have struggled to public view each with their claims to a separate partnership in the division of the spoils. The theoretic rulership of India or parts of it had lain in Muslim hands when the British erupted into the country; it was from a Mughal Emperor at Delhi that Clive got the Dewany of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. So it was natural for dreamers in the Muslim community—and every community has its dreamers thinking more of ancient glories than of present duties, dreaming of restoring ancient privileges and powers—to think that "the heritage" of the British in India should fall naturally into hands from which it had slipped in "absence of mind". Muslim leadership supported and strengthened their claims to it by broadcasting their special position as the "gate-keeper" of India, as members of an invisible empire that stretched from the Punjab to the Atlantic. The conservatives among Indian Muslims may have feelings that they were "guests" in India who had overstayed their welcome. But that feeling was not nor could it be more than a passing fancy. The demoralisation following the failure of what British historians call the "Sepoy Mutiny" did not take long to be thrown out. Proof of which is illustrated in the life and work of the generation of Muslim leaders of whom Sir Sayyid Ahmad of Aligarh was the most representative figure. When the Indian National Congress started on its career, and men of insight and farsight both among the rulers and the ruled saw in the first stirrings of life generated by it, promises of developments that would help India to resume

unto herself the powers of the State from alien hands, Sir Sayyid Ahmad hastened to put in claims on behalf of his section of the Muslim Community—claims that are reminiscent of Muslim rule in India. In course of a speech delivered at a meeting of his co-religionists at the Kaisar Bagh at Lucknow in 1888 he uttered words that had a prophetic significance :

"We the Mohammedans are those who ruled India for six or seven hundred years. From our hands the government was taken by the English. Is the Indian Government so foolish as to suppose that in seventy years we have forgotten all our grandeur and all our Empire?"

The government of the day under Lord Dufferin encouraged this conceit and this pretension; as a publicist of those days said that "the key-note of this estrangement (between Hindus and Muslims) was struck by no less a personage than the late Viceroy of India (Lord Dufferin)". Replying to a farewell address presented by the Mahommedan Central National Association of Calcutta, his lordship said :

"In any event, be assured, Gentlemen, that I highly value those marks of sympathy and approbation which you have been pleased to express in regard to the general administration of the country. Descended as you are from those who formerly occupied such a commanding position in India, you are exceptionally able to understand the responsibility attaching to those who rule."

The traditions built up by Sir Sayyid Ahmad influence, conduct, and inspire thoughts and feelings even at the present day. The immediate fellow-workers and followers of the founder of the Muslim League Anglo-Oriental College occupied a dominant position and exercised a dominant influence on the evolution of socio-political life, on the cultural renaissance of the Muslim community even to the times of Lord Minto when the Minto-Morley constitutional changes put a coping stone to the structure of Muslim separatism in the country. And one among the Muslim public men of those days, the late Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk, Secretary of the Mohammedan Educational Conference, laid the lines of policy and activity on which Muslim polity in India move by the inertia of centuries-old habits. The agitation started in Bengal against the partition scheme of Lord Curzon developed out of a specific grievance into demand for "Swaraj", and Anglo-Indian state-craft could not think of erecting a better barrier against this onslaught than this recognition of the special needs and interests of the Muslim community in India, not easily reconcilable or almost irreconcilable with the common interests of the country. The outcome of these developments was the All-India Muslim League which held its first session in 1908 at Dacca in Bengal, the greatest Muslim populated province in India and the deputation to Lord Minto headed by His Highness the Aga Khan, a "command performance" the late Moulana Mohammed Ali called it, gave voice to separatist sentiments on behalf of the community. The most modern-educated Muslim leaders came forward to give a lead to this development fraught with danger to the unity and integrity of India, the logical consequence of which was the setting up of social and political enclaves in the heart of the country that refused to help towards the evolution of a common nationality in India. As President of the Amritsar session of the All-India Muslim League,

Sayyid Ali Imam of Behar elucidated the reasons why special consideration was claimed by and should be accorded to his community :

"As a community the Mohammedans contribute largely to the defence of the Empire, and have also the weight of Pan-Islamic relation to enhance the value of their position in India".

That mind still works ; particularistic demands have become more strident and insistent. "Loyally and faithfully" to use the words of the

The mind  
of a  
Minority

Muslim League Parliamentary Manifesto, "has the League been acting according to the original purposes and fundamental principles of Muslim polity as they were registered in 1906 and 1912". The Lucknow Pact 1916, to quote the same manifesto, "was not the last word on the question of adjustment of political differences between Hindus and Mussalmans" ; nor was it "even intended or could be so considered in the new circumstances that arose and developed since then." The statement with which the Chairman of the All-India Muslim Conference, the Aga Khan, opened the meeting of the Executive Board on the 16th February, 1936, contained words that declared their "Indianness", and at the same time harped on the fact of their being a minority—"a minority and at that, weak minority." The President of the 'Khilafat Conference held in Calcutta on the 4th January, 1936, Nawab Habib-ulla of Dacca discussed the fundamental political objective of Indian Muslims, in course of which he said :

"We have no use for a system of *Imperium in imperio*. But equally we cannot allow the freedom and unity of India to mean in practice the political subjection, economic exploitation and cultural submersion of 80 millions Indian Mussalmans who constitute what Sir Bijoy Chand Mahatab aptly terms a community and a race within a race, a sub-nation within a sub-continent'. The political individuality of Indian Muslims must be recognised in any scheme of national self-government or Swaraj.

Indian statesmanship, Hindu and Muslim, has not been able to reconcile the inner contradiction :that lies in the heart of Indian Muslim polity as expressed in the quotations given above from statements and speeches of leading Muslim public men. When Mr. Jinnah speaks of measures for the protection of "the integrity of Islam" in India and another leading Muslim of "a self-governing India in the Political polity of which Islam must have a place as a free community of culture", a conflict ensues between mediaeval and modern developments that can be resolved only by Muslim thought-leaders themselves ; any help offered by outsiders cannot have any chance of acceptance, and will be rejected as impertinence. The mind that can work this miracle must respond to the call of the time spirit by submitting itself to the discipline that can seek for a revaluation of the Islamic values in the light of the modern day. And so long as such a mind has not emerged to take charge of the destiny of the community's present and future, no political patch-work or pacts can hope to be able to lead the Muslims in India to pull their full weight in the evolution of a composite nationality in India. Men like Sir Mohammed Iqbal who are hailed as minstrels of a Muslim renaissance have to appeal to the past glories of Islam to put self-respect and self-confidence into their community. In the first flush of this awakening, for the realisation of

Change of Mind  
Needed

the true Self of the community a not-Self has to be imagined or created from out the experience of the past; and the Muslim community in India find it to their convenience to-day to imagine or recreate such a not-Self in and from their neighbouring community—the Hindus. As and when the awakening deepens, the understanding and the intellect, the mind and the reason of the community will be clarified, crudities and morbidities, sentimentalities and fanaticism will fall off as leaves do when their use in the economy of the life of trees ends. The inner necessities of the society will decide the prolongation of the present state of conflict. Any hasty step taken either by Muslims or by Hindus or by both can but prolong it. This is the lesson of the last thirty years of attempts at inter-communal understanding. This is the lesson of the unilateral repudiation of the Lucknow Pact by the leading members of the Muslim community.

In this view of the matter of the adjustment of Hindu-Muslim interests, all programmes and projects that make such a brave show in Election Manifestoes cannot but be regarded as temporary and a make-shift that cannot have any greater significance than records of psychological changes that every competent part of the Indian nation is seeking slowly to work out. This process in the ultimate analysis will appear to be a problem of re-education, of a fight between the past and the present for throwing out the heritage of particularistic ambitions. The Hindus have anticipated by fifty years their neighbours in preparing themselves for modern life, and so the ideas and ideals for modern life; and so the ideas and ideals that helped them to awaken to the needs of the present day are being repented by the Muslims fifty years later. Only when the communities in India understand the inwardness of the developments that have evolved during the life time of the last two generations can they realise the truth of the popular adage—more haste lead to more waste. Individual idiosyncracies and conceits may give a twist to natural evolution, but ultimately it is the purpose of history that asserts itself and dominates life and conduct. And the purpose of Indian history has been sought by leaders of Indian thought in unity amid diversity both in the realm of the spirit and in social life. And the men and women who find themselves in the Indian environment, whom complex impulses have placed in the Indian scene cannot escape the responsibility and the obligation imposed on them by this high destiny. And because the politician peddling in the market-place of affairs has no time to understand and evaluate the significance of the workings of Indian history that he can think of no better ways for the reconciliation of interests than demands for separate electorates, weightages and other devices born of suspicion, fear and ambitions of particularistic predominance. Or it may be, that these internal conflicts are a necessary process in the the birth of a new nation in India—a process, unavoidable and inescapable; these conflicts are necessary to strengthen the nerves of understanding of the men and women of India and to purify their hearts. It is in this faith that the present generation must learn to work amid many hopelessness and many disappointments, accepting these as so many milestones on the way.

Inescapable  
Process

So when Muslim politicians in their statements and manifestoes make unexceptionable declarations of cultural and spiritual links with the Muslims of other countries being no bar to their community "following considerably purely national programmes of self-government", and that common religion did not make Turkish rule tolerated and tolerable in the Arab countries, and that Hindus and Muslims in India, the vast and overwhelming majority of them, were of the same blood, and that those who came from outside have settled in India for many centuries, have "made India their home" and have "no home outside India"—these statements made by His Highness the Aga Khan are welcome as a recognition of historical facts the significance of which wait to be soaked into the consciousness of his community, and creating therein those sentiments and convictions that are the distinguishing marks of nationhood in every country. And it must also be recognized, however, that this recognition is fitful. One finds in the *Assari-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self) of Sheik Mohammed Iqbal :

"O Brahmin, thou art under the impression that God lies in the idols made of stone.

But to me every particle of my country's dust is God".

But the same poet, developed into a politician, can broadcast the *Pakistan* idea which would detach the Punjab from India for the formation of a purely Muslim country. He can sing of being "heirs of Moses and Aaron"; and he finds nothing to claim as heritage from the unrecorded past of India. There have been attempts at synthesis between Hindu and Muslim ideologies in the centuries when, in the words of a Hindu writer apostrophising the Ganges,

"the two streams of Semitic and Aryan culture mixed with each other in the days when on thy banks, ruled the Moslem Kings of India, and both the Hindus and the Mahomedans have a common inheritance in the art and civilisation that grew up on the banks of the Jamuna, resonant with the minstrelsy of two world cultures."

But these attempts have failed. The failure was in part responsible for the downfall of the Mughal emperors, for the conquest of the country by the British. And even after nearly two centuries of common subjection and humiliations, the communal conceits of the present day do not suggest any change for the better or brighter hopes for the future.

The so-called "Communal Award" of the Government of Britain has twisted natural developments in India, and stands in the way of men and women in the country being able to think of common action in solving the many common problems of life. The problems of ignorance, dirt, disease and death, the sickness of body and of soul that material poverty breeds—these await solution. A new sensitiveness has grown all the world over to these weaknesses in the body of humanity; men who call themselves "stake-holders", from among them have emerged leaders of thought to denounce existing conditions, and leaders of action to end the injustices and inequalities of social and economic life, and to build a new social life in which opportunities will be equalised, products of labour, intellectual and physical, will be more

equitably distributed, and men, women and children will be enabled to enjoy a fuller life. Men and women frustrated in their hopes of decent conditions of life in this world had been led to dream of a better and happier life in the world after death, to indifference, patience or resignation with things as they are; they dare not or care not to strive for bettering these, grasp this sorry scheme of things, shatter it to bits and "remould it nearer to the hearts' desire". This indifference, this patience are not born native to them but are the product of environment and of a culture

"the result of a racial adjustment to a condition where overpopulation and economic pressure leave very little elbow room for people to move about, and is, in particular, a result of the family system.....Indifference is largely due to the lack of legal protection and constitutional guarantee for personal liberty."

"There is a justification enough in a chaotic country for the popularity of a religion which declares the vanity of the world, and offers a refuge from the pains and vicissitudes of this earthly life."

These words of a Chinese writer fit in as a statement of Indian conditions of life as well. There are various other causes to explain the debacle in Indian life; for the sake of clearness, **Urge to Reform** however, one may assign one or more than one cause for the resulting quality that meets us to-day. But there has been a change in the spirit of their dreams, specially since the end of the last great war. The world-wide economic break-down precipitated by it, the stories of the reconstruction of life in Russia that floated through the air to the homes of the poor and the frustrated, awakened them to the possibilities of a better life; the political movement in India gained in momentum and widened in appeal lashed thereto by the Punjab atrocities culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Creeping Lane insult, and the Khilafat movement. National self-respect and religious zeal combined to give a new form to the Indian movement for liberation. This combination by its inchoate appeal to the two strongest sentiments of humanity—patriotism and religion—made possible an endeavour on the part of millions in India for freedom that was new to Indian history. The Non-co-operation movement through which this common endeavour expressed itself helped to create a mass awakening that opened out visions of a fundamental change in the Indian social structure. This awakening was not at first "class conscious" or "communal conscious". But the last fifteen years have worked towards both these developments, and thereby introduced complications and complexities in India's struggle for national freedom. In previous paragraphs, the communal complications with special reference to the Muslim community have been discussed, the precipitates of which will take years to settle down. Harassed by these complications, a section of Indian thinkers and politicians think and believe that a "class conscious" programme of work will disintegrate the communal consciousness that has been pushing its claims forward with irrational insistence; they believe that approach to the masses with the "Fundamental Rights" incorporated in the resolution passed at the session of the Indian National Congress at Karachi (1931) and the "Agrarian Programme" accepted by the Lucknow Session (1936) will be able to wean their allegiance from the narrow sectarianism behind which



vested interests are wont to take shelter. The President of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, is the leader of this school of thought, and under his inspiration the Congress Socialist Party have launched forth their campaign of "class conscious" labour and peasant renewal and renovation that would "solve the fundamental problems of Bread and Freedom."

Dr. Ashraff of the All-India Congress Committee office, Allahabad, in his study on the "Congress and the Elections" believe that the results of the last elections to the Provincial Assemblies constituted under the Government of India Act of 1935 amply justify the hopes expressed and the programmes sketched in the Congress Manifesto :

Feudal  
Reaction  
Overthrown

"Our experience of the election campaign proves once again that the peasantry, the industrial workers, the lower middle classes in general are the mainstay of our struggle in the country. We have uniformly won with big majorities wherever we clearly emphasized the economic demands of the exploited masses of our countrymen and asked them to prepare for mass struggle. Our decisive victories in the various provinces are almost entirely due to the overwhelming support of peasants and petty landholders on the basis of our Agrarian Programme, and the Fundamental Rights incorporated in the Karachi Congress Resolution. Our victories in those parts of the country where the official repression was the most severe gives a direct lie to those who usually talk of a state of defeatism and political backwardness among the masses. The big landlords and the feudal aristocracy invariably went against us and declared its hostility in no uncertain terms.

"All other social classes supported us in varying degrees. The small Zamindars were usually sympathetic to our cause. The pauperised middle class and the *intelligentsia* warmly supported the Congress, particularly in urban areas. The business interests gave a fair amount of support, expecting some return for their programmes of industrial expansion and in their fight against imperial preference and currency manipulations. The lower middle class in general uniformly assisted us in our work, and the industrial workers enthusiastically sided with us on the basis of our anti-imperialist programme.

"In terms of political tendencies, and programmes, feudal reaction has been effectively overthrown, and the policy of petty rural reforms as expressed in official programmes stands thoroughly discredited. Reformism, among the Muslims, has been thoroughly exposed. This is proved by the complete repudiation of Liberalism as a creed. Communalism and social reaction in general have been discomfited except in areas where we somehow failed to emphasise the economic programme."

The interpretation of the political facts and tendencies in India attempted in the extracts quoted above may appear rather too partisan and too sanguine to fit into our real life as we see it evolving before our very eyes. For instance, "communalism" has not been discomfited and is not likely to weaken as long as the "Communal Award" and its off-shoots afford short-cuts to the realisation of political ambitions. Neither does it appear that "social reaction" has been ousted from its vantage-grounds; it proposes to find new hunting-grounds the roads to which have been cleared by the skill of imperialist workmen. Muslim vested interests have entrenched themselves behind the "Communal Award"; and Hindu "Scheduled Castes" have done so behind the same, implemented by the Poona Pact. It may be, and we hope that it will be so, that this reaction is a temporary phase. Facts, and tendencies of which the facts are the embodiments, illustrate this development.

New Centres  
of  
Reaction

Experiences in Bengal help us to understand them. Men who be-

long to what is now known as the "Scheduled Castes" have been resenting, and very properly resenting, against the social disabilities imposed upon them by the obscurantism of higher caste Hindus. Modern education, the Brahma Samaj Movement, Christian missionary activities, and State policy have all been helping to release Hindu social conscience from many of the crudities that infested our life. Members of the higher castes broke away from parental society and ranged themselves by the side of those who had been left on the road-side without a step to pick them up or without any effort to enable them to pick themselves up or any attempt to assimilate them to the social body and transform them into self-respecting members of society. The example of these pioneers, native and foreign, have wrought a change in the habits and thoughts, the ideas and ideals of the "depressed classes", and created in them hopes of a better life where their material interests and aspirations will be respected and protected. The break-down of the economic foundations of the older social polity, of the scheme of joint family in the higher castes, were helping this process of intellectual affiliation leading to social assimilation. Hindu society was both consciously and unconsciously responding to the changed circumstances, to the working of modern influences, personal and impersonal. Political awakening was slowly but surely drawing ever-widening circles of men and women within the orbit of the national movement and helping to break the barriers between castes, communities and creeds. In Bengal, examples are not rare where "Scheduled Castes" boys and girls have married into higher castes, and passed imperceptibly into them, specially in urban society. The endeavour was towards a rise in the social scale, inspired, encouraged and strengthened by changes in the hearts of men, in their perception of the needs of modern life, in their recognition of the fact that political freedom cannot be grown into without a re-examination of social institutions which had failed to protect and defend the self-respect of the people. This development, intellectual, social and political is compendiously called the Renaissance Movement in India, the first stirrings of which in modern times appeared more than a century ago. The essence of this renaissance movement was, in the words of Mr. Manabendra Nath Roy :

"a critical outlook on history. The essence of the renaissance movement was to subject all our traditional ideas, all our past forms of thought, all the established human institutions to strict criticism with the object of finding out if anything good in them will serve our purpose or of human development, and find out if all of them—the whole equipment—was no longer useful, how much should be thrown aside as useless and thrown out as ballast, and how much could be accepted, and would help us to go further ahead".

All the communities in India were being subjected or subjecting themselves to this process, some more and some less consciously, but the cruel hand of criticism was sparing none. When these developments were liberalising Hindu society, Hindu life and conduct, came the "Communal Award" with certain references to the position of the "depressed classes" in the scheme of constitutional changes. Implemented by the Poona Pact it secured 30 seats to the "scheduled castes" in Bengal, recog-

"Vote-value"  
of Social  
Degradation

nising a social disability and giving it a political value. And it is this political value—this “vote-value” of social degradation—that has come to be recognised and accepted by educated members of the “Scheduled castes” as a stepping-stone to political ambitions. Men who resented, and rightly resented, the brand of inferiority indicated by the classification of “depressed classes” and inclusion in them, welcome to-day the “scheduled class” nomenclature because it secures them advantage in elections; men who by their wealth or influence could win general constituency fights run to these “Ghettoes”; for this is the easier path; appeals to communal conceits or references to communal grievances side-track issues that touch the life of all in their basic relations. These experiences in Bengal represent a problem that late or soon shall throw its shadow over the whole of India; it directs attention to a threat to reform in social institutions by creating a political vested interest in social inequality. The experience of the working of separate electorates for Muslim community does not encourage the hope and expectation that it would be accepted only as a temporary measure. From Legislature to local bodies the demand is for separate registers of voters; that demand will grow in volume, disintegrating social life and common activities.

The ideological tendencies of the elections to the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, as traced in the report issued from the head office of the Indian National Congress, have already been commented on. A study of the facts of the results throws interesting light on the mind of British Imperialism as it struggled to evolve a constitution for India. The number of seats for the eleven Assemblies in British India were or are 1,585; of these 808 only are what are called “general seats”; the rest, 777 in number, are “tied” seats to be filled up by communal or special representation. And when it is remembered that Muslims, Landlords, Europeans and Indians in commerce, are included in the latter, the purpose of the Government of India Act stands revealed as digging up trenches in the heart of the country and digging imperialist interests in them. Another curious fact emerges when it is remembered that in Bengal, in the Punjab, in Sindh, in the North Western Frontier Province, where the Muslims are a majority community, they do not come in, as they should, in the General seats. These facts made the Congress victory more than notable; it was startling. The Congress won 456 of the 808 “general seats” in all the Provinces; it secured absolute majorities in five provinces—Madras, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Behar, and Orissa; it was the single largest party in four provinces—Bombay, Bengal, Assam, and the North-Western Frontier Province; in the Punjab and in the Sindh Assemblies Congress members were in a minority—a negligible minority. A British publicist, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, in the British weekly, the *New Statesman & the Nation*, put the position thus:—

“The solid interior of the Peninsula belongs to it (the Congress) in an unbroken block from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin.....When the actual total votes are available, there is no doubt that the Congress will be able to claim an absolute majority in British India as a whole, and this without reckoning the groups that differed only by a nuance from its position. The result of this plebiscite is unambiguous.”

The percentage of voters who had thrown their votes on the side of the candidates standing in the name and on behalf of the Indian National Congress, as worked out in the report to which reference has already been made on more than one occasion, showed that this claim was more than justified. The following table is relevant to the whole discussion :

Province	Total No. of Seats	Seats won by the Congress	Percentage of total seats won by the Congress	Approximate percentage of total votes cast, secured by the Congress
Madras	215	159	74 p. c.	65 p. c.
Bihar	152	98	65 p. c.	75 p. c.
Bengal	250	56	22 p. c.	25 p. c.
Central Provinces and Berar	112	70	62.5 p. c.	61 p. c.
Bombay	175	86	49 p. c.	56 p. c.
United Provinces	228	134	59 p. c.	65 p. c.
Punjab	175	18	10.5 p. c.	13 p. c.
N. W. F. Province	50	19	38 p. c.	
Sind	60	7	11.5 p. c.	12 p. c.
Assam	108	33	31 p. c.	
Orissa	60	36	60 p. c.	

It is interesting to study the reaction of British imperialism, in Britain and India, to this success of the Indian National Congress in a fight the fields of which were laid by the skill of bureaucratic craftsmen with knowledge of the strength and weakness of the contending parties at their finger's ends, evidence of which was forthcoming in the meticulous fragmentation of the Indian people by the "Communal Award". The London *Times* revealed its mind and that of the classes it represented by concentrating its attention on the play of fissiparous tendencies sure to develop more intensely as the Government of India Act of 1935 worked. It foresaw how the Unionist Party in the Punjab with the fiction of its non-communal affiliation worn thin, because it has an overwhelmingly predominant Muslim membership, will work the constitution; that European groups will usually vote for Ministries prepared to support the new constitution; it thought it imprudent to venture upon any prediction as to the future attitude of many of the representatives of the "Scheduled castes"; and it wondered what would be the attitude of the numerous "Independents" in the various Provincial Assemblies; it hoped that many of these would no doubt cooperate with the Government in the sense that while they might criticise various features of the new Constitution and attempt to secure their removal by legislative processes, they would be making the utmost use of the Act for the furtherance of the principles and policies in which they were interested. The views of Anglo-Indian papers generally followed this lead. The Government of India has not yet cared to come out with a "study" of their own on the trends and tendencies of political and social evolution brought to view by the election. A Press report told the world that it had submitted a report

to the Secretary of State for India which, digested by that arbiter of India's destiny, would have simultaneous publication in India and Britain. It has not yet seen the light of day.

When the result of the elections were definitely known the leaders of the Indian National Congress were faced with a development in which they could not postpone any longer the decision which they had been postponing almost from day to day since the Bombay Session of the Congress (1935)—the decision of acceptance or denial of the office of Ministers

Logic of  
Rejection of  
Constitution

under the new constitutional changes. The electorate had given its mandate. And controversy in the country waxed eloquent and loud on the interpretation to be placed on this expression of the will of the "sovereign people." The logical consequence of the Congress Election Manifesto was not difficult to understand. As Mr. H. N. Brailsford put it :

"If one rejects a constitution one does not tamely acquiesce in its vetoes and limitations. One confronts the Imperial Power with the consequences of its conduct. It chose to impose this constitution; then let it face in crisis after crisis the resistance of the peoples' representatives. Let it nominate its tame ministers and carry its budgets by certification. This is an attitude natural in a revolutionary group which aims at re-shaping the social structure of India and is not deeply interested in changing the colour of the skins of the Ministers who preside over its sub-human poverty. This was the strategy of the younger generation; but it rallied only a third of the party".

The Faizpur session of the Congress held in December, 1936 on the eve of the election, by a majority vote of the proportion mentioned in Mr. Brailsford's article, rejected an attempt to declare for rejection of office. The results of the elections did not vary this balance for or against the policy of what is generally known as office accep-

Majority for  
Reformism

tance. There have been two interpretations of the mind of those who were for "office acceptance". The London *Times*, like a candid friend more eager to hurt than to help, is the protagonist of one of these :

"The Congress umbrella covers as great a diversity of opinions as many of its recent resolutions have done, and therein lies the chief obstacle to the non-cooperation which its chiefs preach. Reformist ideas have many supporters among their followers, and it is hard to believe that the realists will continue to refuse office on the off-chance that Pandit Nehru may some day arouse a revolutionary agitation among the rural masses that will bring the Government of India to its knees."

The other interpretation sought for the clue to the riddle of the uncertain mind of India in a deep-felt and instinctive resentment at the outrage of a constitution imposed by "the might of the sword", to use Gandhiji's words. This resentment was voiced by sensitive souls whose organ-

"Man with  
the Hoe"  
Decided

voice was Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. But this resentment was canalised by the feeling that the election had been won on a programme of economic and social reform which touched the life of the people more intimately than any constitutional issue; that the frustration of centuries had reduced the "Man with the Hoe", the majority in India, to the solitary figure in the country-side, mentally and spiritually, of whom the American poet E. Markham sings,—the

song that has been reproduced in Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's *Autobiography* :

"Rowed by the weight of centuries, he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages on his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.

... ..  
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look.  
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop,  
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,  
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited.  
Cries protest to the powers that made the world,  
A protest that is also prophecy.

... ..  
"Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
A thing that grieves not and never hopes,  
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox ?

It is concern for this man that led the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee, the executive of the Indian National Congress, to decide that "office" should be accepted under certain conditions. Mahatma Gandhi was eager for peace, and he sought the way of compromise both to test the possibilities of the new constitution and to

test the sincerity of the British bureaucracy. His suggestion was that in every province the leader of the Congress Party who may be called upon by the Governor to undertake the duties of administration should seek an assurance from the Governor before forming a Ministry, which he might publish, to the effect that the Governor would not use his veto and emergency powers, and that the advice of the Ministers would not be "set aside in regard to their constitutional activities". The bureaucracy reacted to this demand by a refusal. The Governors were not allowed to act in their individual judgment in this matter of an assurance, as the following words of the Secretary of State for India uttered in the British House of Lords prove :

"The Viceroy with my full approval reminded the Governors that while they were fully entitled to offer and while indeed I hope that they would offer to the Congress leaders in the Provinces the fullest possible support within the framework of the Constitution, Parliament has imposed upon them certain obligations of which without the authority of Parliament they could not divest themselves.

Observers, wise after these events, say that the deadlock that ensued was more a consequence of mutual distrust than of any rigid interpretation of the letter of the law ; that it was the result of psychological mal-adjustment. British observers felt that the phrasing of the assurance demand was "somewhat subtle" ; that Mahatmaji was not "an entirely guileless negotiator" ; on the one side were the Indian leaders under the influence of emotional resentment, on the other was "a Government.....stiff in the traditional aloof manner". The British Press, both in Britain and in India, was more patronising than helpful ; it sought to minimise the veto, and said that there was no intention to use it brutally or frequently ; that it was a precaution and that it would lie in reserve for grave emer-

**Demand for  
Assurance and  
Refusal**

**Break-down  
of Constitution  
Concealed**

gencies that might never arise ; that gradually, as the years went, the veto would lapse into oblivion ; that the Indians were ultra-sensitive, they suffered from "an inferiority complex". The retort from the Indian side came sharp. The Governors' veto was the embodiment of British sovereignty ; a century and a half of experience had taught the people how a "counterpart" sensitiveness was evident in the life and conduct of the bureaucracy, "it was ultra-sensitive over questions of prestige". And this ultra-sensitiveness decided the Governors' refusal of the Congress demand for assurance. And to keep up the pretence that the constitution had not broken down, "interim ministries" were set up in the provinces where the Congress members in the Assemblies were in a decided majority ; these ministers were unsupported by the legislatures ; the assemblies were not called to session depriving them of declaring by their votes their preference for or disapproved of the Governors' action. Constitutional Pundits began arguing on this matter. The appointments of "interim ministries" were not illegal acts, but these were unconstitutional ; in the words of Prof. Berriedale Keith, forms of responsible Government were "misused to conceal its breakdown."

But Mahatma Gandhi was ever conciliatory and hopeful. In a statement to the *London Times*, made on the 14th April, 1937, when Indian resentment was at its height, he could say :

"My function is that of mediator between the Congress and the Government which, unlike many Congressmen, I believe to be capable of being converted "under moral pressure as it is of being coerced under physical pressure".

Again, on the 27th April, in a joint statement intended for the *Times of India* and the *News Chronicle* (London) he said :

".....as I have read the Congress resolution, the aim of the Congress is not to create deadlocks, but undoubtedly its aim is to make the Congress position so irresistible as to replace the present Act which no body likes by an Act which will represent the will of the masses. This will be brought about by constitutional means permissible under the Act itself. And if the Congress by the force of its majority and by the skill of the Congress Ministers advances its own constitutional position to such a pitch that British Ministers cannot possibly resist it except by the force of arms, surely there can be nothing to grumble at."

So, for four months the controversy waxed and waned ; and the claim of Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal, made on behalf of the constitutional changes that "external authority" had all but retired from the field proved invalid, and Indian agitators had not to go much afield "to search and scrutinize the activities of future Governments for some trace of the hidden hand of external authority" ; the demand of assurance revealed its presence on the very threshold of the working of the new constitution. Mahatma Gandhi put all his cards on the table, and there was nothing more to say on behalf of the Indian National Congress. As the statutory period for the convening of the Assemblies drew nearer, as the discipline of the Congress party remained unbroken, and as the certainty of a humiliating ousting of the "interim ministers" grew clearer, attempts at compromise between the two standpoints, at rapprochement between popular sentiment and Government prestige, became more eager and constant. The coronation of

the new King of Britain and Emperor of India in London brought to the seat of the Empire "imperial statesmen" of Indian birth, safe and sober men, who used their influence to pave the way of peace; the absence of the "Real India" from the coronation left a vacuity that not all the show and glitter of Indian princes and rulers could fill up. Mr. Lloyd George who had negotiated the Anglo-Irish Treaty as Prime Minister of Britain felt this and felt the impossible position into which Britain had placed herself. Tersely did he put this :

"The India Act has conceded too little to win over the most powerful political organisation in India; on the other hand, it endowed the disaffected with too much power for mischief while they remained hostile. It was a case of negotiating a treaty and not for imposing a constitution. The result is that the trusted, chosen leaders of the Indian people will be absent from Westminster Abbey during the coronation.

"The success of the new reign from the imperial stand point will largely depend on the measures taken to reconcile to the Empire the whole of India from the Himalayas to Travancore. It can be done, but not by half measures; it certainly cannot be done in time for the coronation. Indians will be there at the coronation but not India.

The setting up of "interim ministries" demonstrated that even in India, the "real India" that had declared through its vote increasing awareness of what needs to be done and increasing determination to get it done had no place in the scheme of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. These two demonstrations, one in Britain and the other in India, revealed to the world

**Government  
Assurances &  
Explanations**

that the dragooning of India under the Willingdon regime has had no effect, and that the national resolve to resume unto itself the powers of the State that had slipped from its hands in a fit of absent-mindedness was as strong as ever. It took three months to realise the significance of these developments, during which efforts to bridge over the gulf was not relaxed. It is not possible to know and discuss the personal contributions of individual peace-makers; not till the inner history of the present times is published in memoirs, biographies and reminiscences. The spokesmen of the bureaucracy, the Under-Secretary of State for India, Mr. R. A. Butler, in the British House of Commons, suggested in course of a speech an assurance that it was certainly not the intention of the British people or the British Government that the Governors should trench, by narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities, upon the wide powers which it was the purpose of the British Parliament to place in the hands of the ministers under the Act, and "which it is our desire they should use in the furtherance of the programme which they advocated." The Marquis of Zetland, who as Lord Ronaldshay was Governor of Bengal, and was now Secretary of State for India, had been more than stiff, and had trotted out the interest of minorities, making special mention of Muslims in this connection, as requiring the need of the Governors' veto—which hint people in India regarded as playing on the theory of divide and rule. He went out of his way in a speech delivered at a meeting of Conservative members on the 1st of June 1937, to appeal to "the constructive genius of the Hindu people" who "in the face of much discouragement" had devoted their talents to the service of India. "Is it too much", said his lordship, to ask that :



"they should not spurn the collaboration that Great Britain in all sincerity is offering to them or that they on their parts should not withhold the co-operation which Great Britain is asking from them in a common task which is not only worthy of united efforts of the two peoples, but in the light of history is their obvious destiny. Let that be my appeal to them at this most fateful juncture in our common history".

On the 21st June, 1937, His Excellency the Governor-General of India, Lord Linlithgow, made a statement seeking to interpret the constitution, and its spirit and purpose, for which he had a special competence, as he had been Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee appointed to examine and report on what is popularly known as the "White Paper" on Indian constitutional reforms. His lordship explained that under "Provincial autonomy", in all matters falling within "the Ministerial field", including the position of the minorities, the Services, etc, the Governor will ordinarily be guided by the advice of his Ministers, and that those Ministers will be responsible not to the British Parliament but to the Provincial Legislatures, the Governor General and the Provincial Governors being responsible through the intermediary of the Secretary of State for India to the British Parliament and ultimately to the British people; the Ministers have the duty of advising the Governors over the whole range of the executive Government within the "ministerial field", including "the area of the special responsibilities", in all matters in which he is not specially required to exercise his individual judgment, "it is mandatory upon the Governor to accept the advice of his Ministers". Mahatma Gandhi as representative of the Congress had claimed that as and when Governors found themselves unable or felt themselves incompetent to accept the advice of their Ministers on any major issue of political principle or policy, a difference of opinion which with the utmost good-will on the part of both the sides refused to evolve a compromise, they should dismiss the Ministers, and not expect or call upon them to resign. The initiative in forcing a constitutional crisis would thus lay with and on the Governors which would require of them a long series of explanations; this effort, and the trouble of it, would keep the governors within constitutional proprieties. With regard to this contention and demand, Lord Linlithgow said that resignation was more consistent with the self-respect of a Ministry, and was an effective public indication of the attitude of the Ministry towards the action of a Governor; resignation was an act taken spontaneously by a Ministry. Dismissal, on the other hand, was unusual in constitutional practice, and seemed "to carry with it some suggestion of inferiority",—a suggestion which the government were "concerned at any price to eliminate from the new constitutional arrangement".

These interpretations, explanations and assurances helped to clear the atmosphere of many of the apprehensions and prejudices mutually felt and entertained. And the Working Committee, on behalf of the Indian National Congress, authorized "acceptance" of Ministry in the provinces in which members returned on its ticket commanded an absolute majority. Thus in six of the eleven provinces "Congress Ministries" were enabled to function, the "interim Ministries" fading out of the picture.

Lord Linlithgow's  
Interpretation

Congress  
Accepts  
Ministry

Their title to fame consisted in a loyal intention to help "carrying on the King's Government", filling a lacuna in a transition period, as also to the fact that there were men in India who were prepared to canalise national endeavour for the realisation of the national destiny. This demonstrated that our national cohesiveness of purpose and activity had not been attained.

In Bengal, in the Punjab, in Assam, in Sindh, and in the North-western Provinces coalition ministries of different groups—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian—had begun functioning; the corner-stone, or rather the cement and the lime and the greater number of the bricks in the whole structures being supplied by members of the Muslim community, elected to the Assemblies on the communal votes. The dominant party in the Punjab Assembly of 175 were the Unionist Party, the majority of the members of which came from the Muslim community; the same was the case with Sindh where the United Party dominated; in Assam 25 Muslim Members coalescing with 20 "others" of undefined political persuasion in which were Indian Christians, and 10, "Independent" Hindus, manned the Ministry upheld by 9 European members representing tea interests and commerce—a very unstable combination. In Bengal a combination of the Muslim League, Krishak-Praja and "Independent" Muslim members was effected as a response to the demand of the Muslim community in Bengal for a united Muslim Party which would be able to dominate the administration. Though 5 of the 11 ministers in Bengal were Hindus, and the facade of a non-communal Ministry was presented to the world, it was both in fact and theory a communal Ministry. So the Muslim community desired it and willed it; and they welcomed it as the re-establishment of Muslim Raj in Bengal lost one hundred and eighty years ago in the battle of Plassey, and regained in the hustings in the year of grace, 1937.

This quickened development of communal consciousness, this intensification of communal conceits and ambitions became possible, was made possible in Bengal and Assam, by the unawareness, to put it mildly, of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee of the situation in these provinces, of the influences, personal and impersonal, that were at work to foster strength and consolidate these feelings. If even the Faizpur Session of the Congress had decided on "office acceptance", if the National Convention held after the elections had allowed Coalition Ministries, the leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal and Assam Assemblies, the biggest single parties in them, would have been able to form a Ministry in Bengal, free from the communal virus, with the help and co-operation of Moulvi Faz-ul Huq, the leader of the Krishak-Praja Party, a predominantly Muslim Party with a programme predominantly economic. The short-sightedness of Congress men in Bengal, of the Working Committee, were responsible, more than any other factor, for the mischief of the communal bickerings in this province that have been poisoning community life and waiting this poison to the other provinces, until to-day the whole of northern India is a seething cauldron of inter-communal bitterness. The two Chief Ministers in the "interim Ministries" of Behar and the United Provinces respectively happened to be

Coalition  
Ministries in  
Provinces

Intensification  
of Communal  
Conceits &  
Ambitions

Muslims, Mr. Yunus and the Nawab of Chattari. The decision of the Congress to accept Ministries precipitated their resignation. And the interpretation was put that the Indian National Congress, "the instrument of Hindu Nationalism", accepted Ministry simply to spite the Muslim community, forgetting that in four other provinces the chief Ministers in the "interim" Ministries were three of them Hindus, and one Parsi. The Opposition Party in the Bengal Assembly has a membership predominantly of Congressmen, and their persistence and watchfulness as an Opposition—the reason for the existence of which was to oppose and discredit the principles, policies and activities of the Government—and in that process laying the foundation of an alternate government—the watchfulness and persistence of the Bengal Opposition have been interpreted as inspired by hatred of the "Muslim Raj" in the province. This was how Muslim public opinion was being formed in private talks which find expression in Muslim newspapers. The first six months of the year whose activities are chronicled and commented on in this volume of the "Indian Annual Register" sowed the seeds of that inter-communal political bitterness that threatens to disrupt Indian social life and keep it so for years to come. The first fruits of the constitutional changes in India are neither sweet to taste nor nourishing to body. With a note of pessimism the record of political evolution in India during these months must close.

Human life has been compared to rivers in their flow and in their flood in the course and sweep of which many things valuable are destroyed and submerged. But it is not all destruction that rivers stand for. While one bank may be sliding into the river bed, on the opposite bank may be rising from the same river bed lands holding in their bosom promises of fertility, of monuments rising on these of human power, beauty and glory. As we survey the Indian scene today many historical traditions and relics of many noble thoughts nobly incarnated in life are sliding out of view and recognition, and in the process causing pain and bitterness, loss and unhappiness. But across these have been appearing healing hands holding seeds of better life, of richer and fuller experience, of joy amongst the widest commonalty spread. These are the influences, personal and impersonal, that have been at work promising and fulfilling construction from out of the wrecks and debris of life. They were prophets and thinkers, warrior spirits, who saw visions and dreamt dreams of human fellowship, who sowed seeds of revolt and of reconciliation that have been seeking to cover the landscape of India with green verdure, blossoms and fruits. They are the makers of the India of today, men who are the product of the impact of two cultures, Asiatic and European. The European was dominant drawing its strength and inspiration from its kinship with the ruling power, rootless in the soil of India. The Asiatic seemed to be letting the legion of alien thoughts and activities thunder past, bowing in patient, deep disdain; in reality it was resisting, drawing its strength and inspiration from the memories of the past, rooted in their mother earth. Out of this conflict has emerged a new mind in India that would have the best of both the

worlds—Asiatic and European. The generation of Indians that have grown under these influences bear in their bodies and minds traces of the dual influence; and to-day they have a maturity that is not afraid of the foreigner, for, they have regained their self-confidence and regained their hold on their birth-right of the convictions on which are built up distinct national life. It is of such a development that Romain Rolland spoke when in his *Prophets of New India*, he wrote:

"The thought of the East is now independent and henceforth union can be effected between equal and free personalities, instead of..... one of the two being assassinated by the other."

This is one aspect of the recent history of India in which destruction and construction have marched side by side.

But beyond the tumult and shouting of these strivings and conflicts, seers and saints have been growing up in the old surroundings, nursed by old traditions, growing to goodness and cleansing by

A Modern  
Seer & Saint

their inner peace men, women and societies tossed in the discontents and disappointments of a twisted time, restoring balance to their life. One among these was

born in a Bengal village of poor Brahmin parents the centenary of whose birth was celebrated in countries far and near during the early months of 1937. That Brahmin boy was driven by family poverty to apprentice himself into service as a priest in a temple in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, erected by a lady-Zeminder, Rani Rashmani; the presiding deity of the temple is Kallee of whom Swami Vivekananda has sung,

"Come, Mother, come!  
For Terror is Thy name,  
Death is in Thy breath,  
And every shaking step,  
Destroys a world for ever.

... ..

Who dares misery love,  
And hug the form of death,  
Dance in Destruction's dance,  
To him the Mother comes."

Under the stress of what emotion or experience this terrible image was bodied forth in the imagination of the Hindu Seer, it is difficult to say. But to the Brahmin boy this terrible goddess appeared as the mother of all creation; and she guided his steps to the supreme realisation as the human mother does those of her baby. This Brahmin came to be known to the world as Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa, receiving the world's homage as a harmoniser of spiritual experiences and a reconciler of religions in whose name more blood had been shed and more lives lost than for the realisation of worldly ambitions and material glories. Wise men, thought-leaders from the East and West, who could not have any sympathy and respect for the idolatry of the worship of Kallee in and through which this Brahmin attained the highest beatitude and reached the heart of Ultimate Reality, have come forward to bear witness to the truth of his life and interpret the meaning and significance of it in the modern world. This Brahmin was almost unlettered even in his own mother tongue; the simple arithmetic of village folk gave him the headache; but to this man

came the proudest of modern-educated men to hear from his lips the deepest of truths in the simplest of words. This ignorant "God-intoxicated" man was recognised as "the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people."

Of the contribution of this ignorant Brahmin to the religious thought of the modern world, the *doyen* of Indian philosophers and *savants*, Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, spoke as the President of the World Congress of Religions held in connection of the Ram Krishna Centenary. And to bring out its inner message, Dr. Seal compared the method of Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa to that of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen :

**Ram Krishna Paramhansa** "The New Dispensation would select the distinctive central essence from each religion and make a collection of 'bouquet' of flowers as it were. Here it was that Ram Krishna differed from Keshab Chandra. Indeed, he differed from his predecessors in two essential respects. First, he maintained that the practices of each religion with its rituals and disciplines gave its essence more reality and vitality than its theoretical dogmas and creeds. Secondly, it was Ram Krishna's conviction that it is not by selective "eclecticism" but by syncretism and the whole-hearted acceptance of a religion that its full value and worth could be realised and experienced."

And this syncretism, and the methods which Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa was led to adopt and practise and work out in his own life as an exemplar to the world, are described by Dr. Seal in the following words :

"Ram Krishna held that selective extracts will kill the vital elements in each religion. He would be a Hindu with the Hindu, a Muslim with the Muslim, a Christian with Christian, in order to experience the whole truth and efficacy of each of these religions. But he would not practise different religious disciplines or hold different creeds at one and the same time. The observances, practices and rituals of each religion are organic to it .....In all these might be temptations and pitfalls but one must be as an innocent child or babe and pass unscathed through life. It was thus that Paramhansa passed successively through Christian and Muslim experiences. Such was the Paramhansa Syncretism."

**Rabindra Nath Tagore** spoke of the significance of Ram Krishna life in an age when ancient values seemed to be falling from their pedestal :

"I venerate Paramhansa Deva because he, in an age of religious Nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realising it; because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of *Sadhana*, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all times the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and popes."

This was the life of Ram Krishna Paramhansa, immersed in God-vision, another of the many witnesses to the spiritual life of India, of the East, quiescent and speculative, in which this world appears as unsubstantial, the product of *Maya*. But by the inexplicable tricks of evolution, this "God-intoxicated" man became the fountain of positive activities that have undertaken the re-making of India. And the man who released this fountain from the quietitude and high altitude of Hindu religious experiences, and brought its life-giving waters to the parched plains of our every-day life, was Swami Vivekananda. Romain Rolland in interpreting this phase of the life and teachings of Ram Krishna Paramhansa in the light of history recalls what the Emperor Julian, "Julian the

**Swami Vivekananda**

**His Largeness of Spirit**

Apostate" cried out as he lay dying, "after having fought in vain against Christ":

"The only God in whom I believe, is the sum-total of all souls; and above all I believe in my God, the wicked, my God, the miserable, My God, the poor of all races."

And Ram-Krishna Paramhansa whom tradition would have liked to keep in a niche as a God, heedless of the world, gave in a moment of inspiration, the greatest message to modern India when he declared: "Religion is not for empty bellies." Those words like lightning shafts illumined the Indian sky and pointed out to Swami Vivekananda the path of duty, the work which his Master wanted him to do to justify the ways of God to humanity; in these words he found summed up the need of the country of his birth; these words symbolised the striving of his life, strivings that have made him a prophet and maker of the India to be; and it is these words that inspired the foundation of the Ram Krishna Mission, wrote its charter and laid down the law of its being which Swami Vivekananda annotated for his people:

"So long as a single dog in my country is without food, my religion will be to feed it."

Thus was started the Ram-Krishna Mission that has been the pathfinder to many of the activities that seek to build up a race of better men and women in India, of which the modern prophet

Ram-Krishna Mission is Mahatma Gandhi with his programme of constructive nationalism. To the world the Ram Krishna Movement appears not only as a modern interpretation of Hindu mysticism but as "a purified form of Hindu philosophy and grafted on to it an active programme of social service." And in this service not only is the material appetite of Indian humanity being sought to be satisfied, but their spiritual hunger also by opening their minds through the key of the three R's to the beauty and the mystery of the environment in the midst of which they have been placed. These two needs have been expressed thus:

"Ages and ages have passed, dominated by the life of what we call self, which is intent upon seeking food and shelter and upon the perpetuation of the race. But there is a mysterious region waiting for its full recognition which does not entirely acknowledge loyalty to physical claims. Its mystery constantly troubles us and we are not yet fully at ease in this region. We call it 'spiritual.' The world is of value because we have not yet been able to realise its meaning completely."

The two modern needs of the human body and the human soul can be met only by a new modification, elaboration, regulation and idealisation of man's physical, mental and spiritual instincts. In

Initiating  
"a New Sort  
of Behaviour" this view of the matter the activities that seek to realise these purposes fall into the sphere of education. The Ram Krishna Mission anticipated the satisfaction of certain of these needs by starting its educational activities in the country-side. And today these are the current coin of the realm. The Government and the people in all countries speak and talk of giving a "rural bias" to education, making it "racy of the soil". The dense peasant masses of India make this cry both a necessity and a policy. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the significance of this development in our and other countries.

An American authoress in telling of education in Soviet Russia named her book—*Changing Man*. She has sensed the ultimate purpose of education, that of making man anew, utilising, modifying and controlling the environment in which he was placed, helping him to grow out of the weaknesses and frustrations of life. This purpose demands a change of the whole life, because men find themselves ill at ease and seek out for a way of escape. The scheme of things man is called upon to handle appears to be sorry; these have got into a dreadful state of disharmony, and a fresh start has to be given them. As H. G. Wells says: "Whatever the revelations, theories, the mysteries on which the new teaching professes to be based, a new sort of behaviour is its substantial aspect". Social legislators from Manu downwards have been educators in this sense of being, initiators of a "new sort of behavior." Statesmen, politicians, administrators, poets, writers, journalists have this urge to make men amenable to their idea of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Education as an instrument of State policy which has come to be consciously recognised as part of the duty of Governments has had an ancient lineage to claim, though people might have been unconscious of this hoary past. In the modern world it was Prussia under Bismarck that first acted on the logic of "Enlightened Despotism" which undertook the responsibility of regulating and controlling human life from birth to death. In Britain even when ministers spoke of "educating our masters"—the voters newly enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1867—the individualistic philosophy of which that country was a votary, stood in the way of giving this political slogan a shape and form in real life.

In our own country under British auspices the same policy ruled State conduct with reference to education. Macaulay when he decided in favour of Anglicising education hoped that the British-educated few would

"refine the vernacular dialects of the country, enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from Western nomenclature, and render them by degrees fit vehicle for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population."

That hope has not been fulfilled. The British Government had its own policy to subservise and its own interests to advance when Macaulay decided the direction of State Education in India. The higher classes of the people who avidly took advantage of the opportunities offered, could not envisage the consequences of the step, or felt themselves helpless in face of it. Warning voices were raised against this new direction given to education, one of the chief of which was that of Raja Rudha Kanta Dev, a contemporary of Raja Ram Mohun Ray's and an opponent of his. In course of a reply to a questionnaire issued as a result of a despatch from Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India in 1859, he wrote :

"As soon as the people will begin to reap the fruits of solid vernacular education, agricultural and industrial schools may be established in order to qualify the enlightened masses to become useful members of society. Nothing should be guarded against more carefully than the insensible introduction of a system whereby, with a smattering knowledge of English, youths are weaned from the plough, the axe, and the loom, to render them ambitious only for the clerkship for which hosts will besiege the Government and Mercantile offices, and the majority being disappointed (as they must be) would (with this little knowledge

Macaulay's  
Hopes

inspiring pride) be unable to return to their trade, and would necessarily turn vngabonds."

That prophecy and those consequences confront us to-day. The Government became aware as early as 1867 of the greatest of them—of absenteeism that sucked away the wealth of the villages into the growing towns—as the "Note of Education" published in their name and written by Howells shows. The apprehension was voiced through a few questions :

**Gulf between  
the Classes &  
Masses**

Do native gentlemen, like Englishmen, return to their Zemindarries from a University career, to spread around them the reflex of the enlightenment they have received themselves? Does the process of highly educating a few, and leaving the masses tend to increase or to diminish the gulf between class and class?"

What the replies to these questions have been and are we know to-day. We know that our social homogeneity is disintegrated to-day : one of the causes of which has been the spirit of education imparted to the country, the spirit of individualism. The gulf between the classes and the masses is wide enough to popularise the cry of class war and class-conscious activities. The standard of life adopted by the classes, the dress and other fashions aped by them, have created a "fifth caste", of men and women in the country, drawn from every strata of community life, who find it difficult to adjust themselves to rural society from which they or their immediate ancestors floated to the towns, and rural society also is ill at ease with this new caste. The members of this caste think and feel themselves to be a superior class of persons, and thus find themselves face to face with not very kindly feelings. H. G. Wells has an explanation for this feeling on the part of rural society dominated by what he calls the "peasant persona"—his "guiding and satisfying idea of himself":

His soul is equitarian. His hostility to exceptional display imposes a standard costume and decorum upon any countryside where his is the dominant ideology. Housing and furniture too are standardised there, and the slightest departures from the rigidities of usage provoke a bitter resentment and moral condemnation.

The interpretation here given of the growing estrangement between town and country or between the classes and the masses is an attempt

**Responsibility  
for  
Reconstruction**

at understanding the cause or causes of the new and clamant influences in the country. The fact of estrangement is there, and it is for the people to understand its causes and intercept its consequences. The Government in the country, that is the British Government, declares that it is no responsibility of theirs ; that the problems associated with and implicit in the developments indicated above will demand solution from the hands of Governments, the "provincial autonomy" governments, set up under the recent constitutional changes ; that no "third party" as the British Government in India has always been, can bring this relief either as a boon or as a concession. And the solution of the problem demands new principles of education and a new technique—education that changes human body and human mind, education that is the only instrument of human reconstruction. Our inherited tendencies are there ; ideas and ideals from outside have erupted into our country ; and both these combatants are having a fight in the battle fields of our



minds, the issue of which will decide the course of evolution in India. In this fight many regional or communal conceits or aspirations will claim priority of place ; in the course of this fight many ancient landmarks in thought and conduct will be pulled down ; many precious prejudices will be crushed out. The British Government that had so long sought to control and regulate the educational activities of the country propose to retire from the fight ; and regional and provincial authorities have it thrown upon them the responsibility of initiating steps for the re-education of the people. This is the position that has been reached during the months the activities of which are recorded and commented on in these pages. Many hopes are being raised ; many promises are being or have been made in Election Manifestoes to pioneer and extend the "educated quality" among the people that will enable them to face the problems of modern life in an old country, one of the oldest in world.

The inspiration of the process of re-education through which India is being proposed to be re-made into a modern nation, a free nation

Failure  
of Reason

among the free nations of the world, has been indicated above. From this history it may appear that the conflict is only in the region of ideas and ideals. But it cannot be gainsaid that the complacency of the

modern world would have remained intact and unshaken, but for the break-down of the frame-work which modern industrialism had built up and the philosophy of life which it incarnated. But modern humanity has struck up tent and started on a new journey, to work out a transformation in its life because imperceptibly there has occurred a profound transformation in its fundamental philosophy. How are these two circumstances, these two transformations, to be explained ? A German explanation has it :

"Reason promised to solve all man's problems.....yet it came to pass that after reason had solved every physical problem, it failed when it attempted to come to grips with purely human problems. This led to a state of affairs when reason and all its reputation no longer meant reason as a whole but only physical and naturalistic reason.

.....The physical, chemical and biological sciences sought to discover essence and nature in phenomena. Reason wanted to do the same thing with human beings, and therein it failed."

This failure is responsible for the emergence of that new unrest and new dogmatism in the region of material existence that

World-wide

are a characteristic feature of modern life. These

Reaction

have touched the mass mind, and created disturbances there out of which the need for a re-valuation of values, for a re-examination of social institutions has arisen

challenging human intellect and wisdom. The majority of mankind find themselves afflicted with a new helplessness. They find themselves starving in the midst of plenty, wheat and coffee are being burnt or left to rot in the fields for absence of "customers" or inadequacy of "price"; they go unclothed when cotton is burnt or left to rot in the fields. They do not understand the reason of this peculiar development. The rigid discipline of a mechanised civilisation sits as a nightmare on their breast ; they seek to throw it off like an evil dream, causing all the tumult of modern life.

In India these conditions of distress, mental and physical, prevail with an intensity that seem to baffle human endeavour for relief or correction. Dirt, disease and death—with these our people keep companionship through life's little day.

{ Indian Reaction The sight of these scenes has grown habitual to our eyes ; our sensitiveness to these has grown blunt. Our predominant village economy enabled the generality of our people to ignore or misunderstand the first signs of the break-down of the accustomed life, the ancient social polity. But before the last century was out, in 1899-1900, there was a devastating famine levying a toll of human lives counted by crores, demonstrating that the century and half of civilised Government had failed in its vocation, that State policy, directed and controlled by alien minds and alien interests, could not prove effective in face of such a catastrophe. William Digby dedicating his book to the memory of these 200 millions spoke of them as dying "in vain". For years previously, leaders of Indian public opinion, the pioneer of whom was Dadabhai Naoroji, through the Press, in books and pamphlets, on the platform of the Indian National Congress and other institutions, had been warning the authorities of this calamity. Foreigners, even casual visitors to India, recorded impressions that should have warned them betimes, impressions of a wretchedness that was the result of decades and centuries of misrule. One of these visitors was the late Sir Frederick Treves, Surgeon to the then King of England, the grand-father of the present King. In his book—*Other Side of the Lantern* published in 1905, Sir Frederick Treves spoke of what he had seen in India and of her people :

"Sadder than the country are the common people of it. They are lean and weary-looking,.....they all seem poor, and 'tolling for leave to live.' They talk little and laughless. Indeed, a smile, except on the face of a child, is uncommon. They tramp along in the dust with little apparent object other than to tramp. Whither they go, Heaven knows, for they look like men who have been wandering for a century."

Amid scenes like these, stereotyped in the face of the country, the "caravan" of British rule in India hobbles on. Extension of communication through modern roads and railways enables the administration to intercept the horrors of famine, of "shrivelled limbs, sunken eyes.....of mothers' shrieks and infants' moans.....of the wild confusion in which the dead and the dying lie"—the horrors of scenes that a British administrator of the earliest years of British rule in India, Sir John Shore, had depicted of another famine, that of 1769-70, less cruel in its devastation than that which caused William Digby's lamentation. And to-day, nearly forty years after, those wandering hosts that Sir Frederick Treves noticed, are still with us ; and the President of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, who has travelled over the length and breadth of India in motor, rail and through the air ; penetrating to all corners of life from Kohat to Dibrugarh, from Rawalpindi to Cape Comorin,—he has to say :

"I have seen again the throbbing agony of India's masses, the call of their eyes for relief from the terrible burdens they carry."

People and government are agreed that this agony cannot safely be prolonged, that the call for relief cannot go unheeded any longer. "External authority" which retains control over 80 per cent of the revenues of the State has declared that "the problems of health, education and economic well-being" must seek remedy from the governments responsible to the people, the "provincial autonomy" governments set up under the Government of India Act of 1935 ; that these remedies "are no longer to be had from a third party as a boon to be sought or a concession to be wrested." The raillery of this arrangement may well deserve criticism and condemnation. This also will not solve them. And the logic of these developments throws on the people the responsibility of their own well-being which no third party could or would undertake to shoulder, could or would only make a pretence of so doing.

The logic of these developments have forced on us the realisation that the man who is known as the "father of the Indian National Congress", Allan Octavian Hume, was right when he sang in his "Old Man's Hope"—

"Do ye suffer ? do ye feel  
 Degradation ? Undismayed  
 Face and grapple with your wrong !  
 By themselves are nations made !

... ..

Ask no help from Heaven or Hell !  
 In yourselves alone seek aid !  
 He that wills, and dares, has all ;  
 Nations by themselves are made !"

This exhortation developed in the first years of the present century into the principle and programme of self-help and self-assertion that divided the old and new schools of politics, Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjee, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale representing the former, Balwantrao Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal Upadhyaya Brahmabandav and Aurobindo Ghose the latter. The precursor of this "new departure" appealing to the feelings, sentiments and intellect of the people, and consolidating them into convictions for which people were prepared to do and dare, were Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar in Maharashtra, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sister Nivedita in Bengal, Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj and Sir Sayyid Ahmed in Northern India. The virile life in the country, the dynamic personalities, that have been remaking it to-day are the continuation and culmination of the stir of revolution in the region of invisible things started nearly seventy years ago. Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom, Jawahar Lal Nehru's passion, the call to the Muslim flung out by Mahommed Iqbal, nursed on the Koran and on the German philosophy of the Super man, the opportunism of Mohommed Ali Jinnah—all these personal and impersonal influences that have been seeking to remould India to their hearts' desire may be traced to those sources of light and inspiration.

\* By themselves  
 are Nations  
 made."

And to-day the call has gone forth that a physical amelioration of the country must precede the building of the city beautiful and the country beautiful of our dreams. Rural life is poor and stricken, physically and mentally. How poor it is census reports tell, tell the story of a progressive deterioration. In the 1931 census the numbers recorded of "earners" and "working dependents" were 16,38,85,890; the numbers of "non-working dependents" were returned as 19,66,43,667. In the census of 1911 are recorded the percentage of persons "gainfully employed" as 47; in 1921 as 46; and in the 1931 as 44 per cent. This is the testimony to wealth-production progressively diminishing. With regard to health, the words of Major-General Megaw, who retired from service as Director-General of Public Health and Sanitation with the Government of India, should be accepted as a warning. There is difference of opinion, said he, as to whether conditions of life have improved or deteriorated during the last 50 years; even conceding that some little improvement has taken place, "the existing state of things", said Dr. Megaw, "is so profoundly unsatisfactory that it demands investigation and redress." Those who have personal experience of the years, the beginning and end of the period, mentioned by Dr. Megaw, they can bear witness to this deterioration and may be tempted to use more vigorous language. Even at that, things cannot be allowed to worsen. Officials and non-officials have awakened to the gravity of the developments. Positive action for the reconstruction of rural life has been set in motion, both officially and non-officially; nutrition research, seeking for the nutritive value of food ordinarily available and enriching these with seeds and nuts and fruits within the means of the poorest—this has been engaging the attention of public workers and officials. Experiments with food, finding out the vitamin contents and mineral salts in the items that go to make up the food ordinarily taken—find their protagonists among the leaders of constructive nationalism in India; these have justified certain of the old habits of our people, and a recall to simpler and more natural ways of life and conduct. Health Exhibitions have been seeking to popularise these old but forgotten truths in their new garb. Up till now, these have been urban activities.

And the problem—who will restore health to rural India, return wealth to it, increase its productive potentialities, give knowledge to it?—this is the major problem in India's economic and social life. One foreign observer, Prof. Basil Mathews (Boston University) in a paper read at the East India Association (London) spoke of one conclusion of his:

"Treated without contradiction on every kind of mind, from the Left wing of the Congress to the stiffest bureaucrat, is that at this stage the mind of India is swinging from the contemplation of revolution on purely political lines to one that regards economic revolution on Socialist if not even Marxist principle as the main objective of thought and action."

The bureaucrat consulted, one of the most experienced who has not allowed flies to monopolise his heart and mind, saw no alternative save a swift and potent development of the co-operative movement, "a development of which he was not very optimistic owing to the weaknesses, produced through corruption and inertia." The elimination

of the hope of a peaceful evolution in the country leaves the British bureaucracy that stand guard over Imperial interests, service interests and foreign capital and trade interests, "face to face with a revolution, whether political or economic, that cannot but overturn these. How they propose to stave off these developments, and the other questions raised above, these are the two problems that has been testing statesmanship, Indian and British. The bureaucracy seem to be banking on the hope that "the thrust in of this new economic claim into the already established political organisations of India" will produce a serious controversy with them lining up Indian classes and masses into two or more warring groups. The possibility of such a development may encourage the more short-sighted members of the British bureaucracy in India. But the more far-sighted of them cannot fail to anticipate that such an alignment of forces but prolongs the trial of India, but cannot protect those interests of which they consider themselves to be guardians and trustees in India. It is difficult to fix on any individual British administrator as the representatives of the latter view who has been or can be trusted to work for reconciliation between Indian self-respect and Britain's material interests, built up in course of these two centuries' stay in India.

Students of social and political tendencies aver that the Congress acceptance of office after sixteen years of persistent conflict is a sign that such a development has been at work: Left-wing Indian politicians declare that their Right-wing fellow-workers have already succumbed to such a change; they assert that such an evolution fits in into the stages written in their interpretation of social and political transformations, and cannot be avoided with all the good-will in the world; in other countries this has been so, in this country it will be so. This drift towards safety in compromise with British Imperialism, they suggest, has sought for and found its exponent in Mahatma Gaudhi. These declarations, assertions and suggestions are coloured by a partisan spirit and ignore or brush aside the lessons of the work that have helped India in recent times to stand up for her rights. Mahatmaji's philosophy of conduct does not encourage class-conscious activity whether from the right or from the left; his ideas of the relation of India to Britain are a reflex of his respect for human nature and faith in it which enabled him to say—even during the recent controversy over the demand for assurances—that so far as he personally was concerned he would unhesitatingly accept "Dominion Status" in the terms of the Statute of Westminster, that is, "the right to secede." Temperamentally and ideologically, therefore, Mahatmaji must be working for the solution of India's problems, political and economic, on lines other than intense nationalist or class-conscious conflicts. Knowing all these, India has accepted his leadership, for he is the one man in India now who has his fingers ever feeling the pulse of the vast masses of the country and who has developed an uncanny skill in sensing their feelings. And it is in response to their necessities that he has persuaded the Congress to sanction the acceptance of Ministries so that they may have a respite from "the terrible burdens they carry"; it is considerations like these that must have persuaded Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to tolerate

Compromise  
with British  
Imperialism

the reversion of the political principles and policies with which his own political life has been bound up, growing and strengthening with their growth and strength. Imperialist interests or indigenous class interests may seek to exploit the present halcyon days; but this opportunism of theirs is unavoidable, and fight with it cannot be avoided.

Left-wing tactics seem to suggest that this conflict should be intensified, a running fight continued against all vested interests, alien or native. Grievances are there, have been there in modern industries, as jute and cotton, in rural life among peasants. The new constitutional changes bringing in "provincial autonomy" Governments coincided almost in time with a phenomenal wave of labour unrest, of strikes and lock-outs, in industrial centres as far apart as Calcutta in the east, Bombay in the west, Madras in the south and Cawnpore in the north. Interpreters of this unrest who say that acceptance of Ministerial responsibilities on behalf of the Congress has encouraged it, as also unrest in the countryside, miss the significance of the strike and lock-out among the Jute Mill workers in Bengal where a stable non-Congress Ministry has been in charge since April 1, 1937, the day on which these Governments were inaugurated. At the end of April, there was strike in about 40 mills and the number of operatives affected was 2,00,000. The Chief Minister of Bengal, Moulvi Fazl-ul-Huq at the beginning of the strike opined that "there has never been anything like a real economic basis for these strikes, and now, at any rate, they are admittedly being used by Communist leaders to pave the way for a revolution in India"; after a two months' struggle when the strike was called off on assurances given, the Bengal Chief Minister conceded—"Many of the grievances of the Labourers are such as can reasonably be admitted to be genuine." These two declarations can be regarded as interpreting the truths of labour unrest in India. It must also be recognised that there was a coherent and unified plan behind the apparently spontaneous and disconnected ebullitions of labour temper, responding to a common inspiration of common grievances. And judging by the results, hastened by the assumption of office by Congressmen in six provinces, the strategy cannot be said to have missed the aim. Something tangible has been gained to make the life of labour easier; some promises have yet to be redeemed. Grievances of Kisans—specially in the provinces, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and parts of the United Provinces where Permanent Settlement of land revenue has been dominating rural life—and the burden of debt that has been pressing all hope out of the men in the countryside—all these grievances demanded relief. One instance from a single province can be taken as representative of conditions throughout the whole of India. In Madras Sir John Nicholson found in 1895 the agriculturist debt to be Rs. 45 crores; in 1930, the Banking Enquiry Committee found it to be Rs. 150 crores; Mr. Sathianathan, I. C. S., specially deputed to inquire into the problem, found in 1935 this debt to be Rs. 200 crores; he estimated the average annual income per head of the rural population to be Rs. 11-12as. and the debt per head to be Rs. 42. The province consists mainly of

Ryotwari holdings. The history of these debts, as commented on in the Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee Majority Report, throws light on an aspect of Indian social life that was both its strength and weakness. The report found

"Children born in debt and making every feasible effort to pay the debt of fathers and forefathers. The social tradition and the custom of succeeding generations acknowledging and paying the debts of forefathers have been exalted into a legal doctrine of the "pious obligation," to pay an ancestor's debt, enforceable in courts of law. Even when no assets pass and debts are not legally inherited, the debt is generally treated by the son or the heir as a debt of honour by force of tradition."

Even before the new "autonomy" Governments began to work, Debt Redemption Acts had been passed; debts had been scaled down, and relief sought and given under the sanction or pressure of the law. The promises made in the Election Manifestoes by different groups of politicians, seeking the suffrages of people, the majority of them debtors, roused hopes that the new Governments would bring relief to them. Those hopes could not be brushed aside with safety. Those promises and those hopes are the seed-plots of the unrest that prevails in rural India to-day.

The stresses and strains under which India's internal economy has been working have been, in other forms and shapes, the common lot of every human society in every age and every clime. But, India's "Foreign Relations" India has her "foreign relations," not in the accepted sense of the terms, however, because India is not a free and independent country. The "foreign relations" that are the subject-matter of the discussion in these pages will be concerned with countries which Indian labour and Indian capital have helped to develop. The nearest of them which till 31st March, 1937, was a province of British India, bigger than any Indian province, was Burma. There are more than 10 lakhs of persons either domiciled in Burma or originating from some Indian province, the greater number of whom are labourers; more than 10 crores of Indian capital is engaged in Burma's industrial and agricultural finance. This capital, the major portion of it, is supplied by the Nattukottai Chetty community of South India. The Indian labouring population come mostly from Tamil Nad and the Andhra Desa. There is an agricultural colony that was established by a gentleman from Behar, the colonists being agriculturists from the same province; other agriculturists come from the district of Chittagong in Bengal. These non-Burman elements in Burma's social economy has not been, and perhaps never can be, assimilated therein; they have remained targets of attack by the indigenous population. The Chettys are money-lenders; and the Indian labourers compete in the labour market with the native Burman, though the statement is justified that Indian labour fills a place in the labour market which Burman labour has not up till now cared to supply. Indian educated men who have gone to Burma as lawyers and Government officers compete with the Burman *intelligentsia*. Thus all the factors of a keen economic competition are present there, and jealousy, hatred and fear of the Indian, urban and rural, are rampant in Burma. Discrimination against Indians are motivated by economic reasons, and this will

increase as the years pass, calling forth demand for reprisal from the Indian side, reprisal against Burma rice, Burma wood and Burma oil. In Ceylon, another neighbour of India, the factors of Indian capital and Indian educated men are absent; the competition of 6 lakhs of Tamilian labour is a sore point with the indigenous population; Indian labour emigration is restrained, and existing Indian labour is discriminated against in the matter of rural franchises for local bodies, calling forth from the Indian side reprisal against the import of Ceylonese copra and other products. This, in a nut-shell, is India's relation with her near neighbours.

In Africa, in those regions which belong to the British Empire, the Indian position is best expressed in the words of General Smuts, one of the makers of the Union of South Africa—"In South Africa we cannot afford to give coloured peoples the same footing as the white. Our equality is based fundamentally on the doctrine that in Church and State between white and coloured peoples there can be no equality." The population census of the Union throws on this stand-point a light not very pleasing. The whites in South Africa number 20 lakhs, mostly belonging to British and Dutch stock, the latter predominating; the Bantus, a Negro people, number 85 lakhs; other coloured peoples, including Indians, number 10 lakhs. In Kenya the stand-point of whitemanly is more crudely expressed—"British supremacy means not merely supremacy of the British Power, but supremacy of the British community over other communities." In Fiji, the Indian population is 79,000, the indigenous population is 60,000, the Europeans, 4,000 only, ruling and dominating. In Mauritius, in Trinidad, in British New Guinea where Indians have made good their success has made them a point of attack. And those among us who have crossed the seas and sought fortunes in other lands find their position growing increasingly untenable; and, to quote the words of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, as president of the annual conference of the Liberal Party, they "send us a pathetic cry for relief." And India looks helplessly on. She who has not regained her own self-respect in her own home-land, cannot maintain it abroad. So, every problem of Indian life, internal or external, revolves round the problem of Swaraj, the symbol of the "self-respect" of a people.

Whether it is in the internal or in the external concerns of India, the British Government, "the external authority" of Sir John Anderson, thus finds itself off and on stumbling on the new sensitiveness of the Indian people, on their national "self-respect." British statecraft would like to cover up the traces of the activities of this "authority" by seeking to throw on the so-called "provincial autonomy" Governments the responsibility for the activities that intimately touch on their daily life, for health, wealth and for education and enlightenment. This is a variant of the tactics that ruled Roman imperialism in the days of its decay—give the people a few crumbs of bread and keep their minds diverted by circuses. Let Indian thought be exclusively concerned with meliorative activities while the "self-respect" of the

**Boer-Briton  
Equality  
Idea**

**British State-  
craft & Its  
Weakness**



Indian people should be in the safe keeping of "external authority". This division of work has never appealed to the conscience of any people for any length of time and they have ever preferred their soul to wealth and happiness as the world generally understands and values these. This is one aspect of British policy in India. The other has reference to the developments in Europe and in the Mediterranean region confronting the Empire with problems that demand concentration and not dispersal of energies, setting the imperial household in order. Abyssinia and Spain have tested Britain's centuries-old experience as an imperialist State, and found it wanting; its flirtation with Nazi diplomacy has cooled friendship with France without compensating warmth from Germany. The Anglo-German naval understanding, an Anglo-German repudiation of the naval terms of the Versailles Treaty was arrived at without consultation with France or without adequate appreciation of her interests; as a reaction to which France winked at Italy's encroachments on the *status quo* in the Mediterranean region threatening Britain's hitherto undisputed supremacy—strategic and diplomatic—in what has been called her "life line." The world has learnt to accept the immutability of the fact—Britain has been insisting on its acceptance—that Britain's right of way to the East, to her Empire in India; and the near islands, to her economic strong-holds in China, to her kinsmen in Australia lay through this inland sea and the Suez Canal, and that this right of way must be secured against all chances of interference or apprehensions of attack. To this necessity of the British Empire Egypt for more than half a century has been a hostage and victim; to this necessity the Turkish Empire owes its disruption, and the Arab principalities and kingdoms owe their rise and fall; to this necessity Emir Hussain, Sheriff of Mecca, was sacrificed and Emir Ibn Saud of the central Arabian desert owed his development into the king of what is called Saudi Arabia to-day; to this necessity the British enthusiasm for the "National Home" of the Jews in Palestine owed not a little of its growth; to this necessity the bubble of a new "Middle Eastern Empire" owed its stirring in the ever fertile brain of Mr. Winston Churchill; and it was the inspiration of such a necessity that impelled His Highness the Aga Khan to sketch that scheme of a "South-Western Asiatic Federation" with India included in it under the hegemony of Britain. The rise and growth of Arab Nationalism, of Persia under Reza Khan Pelhavi, have pricked many of these bubbles, not before, however, British tax-payers with the frustrations of 20 lakhs of British men, women and youths in the bosom of their society, were forced, unknowingly, to contribute not less than a hundred crores of rupees towards financing these mad adventures. And Mussolini's bombast has pricked the rest. And the world is not far wrong when it interprets in these a retreat on the part of Britain's imperial pride.

India may understand the implications of this retreat, and its logic. But India would be wrong,—and India is not going to go wrong or  
 India's Strength can afford to go wrong—if it hoped to build its own  
 and Swaraj on the weakness of the Imperialist Power that  
 India's Hope has been holding her down these two centuries. And

that India was not building on any calculation of Britain's strength or weakness, but on the inner necessity of her own being, her history of the last century bears witness,—the history of destruction and construction, of her struggles and conflicts with her own weaknesses, and with the principles and policies of British administration in the country. Enlightened influences have been at work organising and consolidating the awakened feelings and sentiments of the people and hardening these into convictions and activities that have ever been the support of national strength, the cement of national cohesiveness, the shield and bulwark of national interests amid the conflicts and competitions of life. Individuals and institutions have been striving this century and more to awaken the people to a sense of their own responsibility for the building up of a better life for themselves, to rouse in them the consciousness of their own strength and the assurance of their success; constructive nationalism has been taking the people through the crucible of sufferings and sacrifices to test this strength and to transmute it into the required mettle so that when trial comes the possessors of this strength may stand their ground and hold their own. The last fifteen years have been years of training and trial. Taking them all in all, the people have come out of these, purified and strengthened, disciplined and wide-shouldered. Hopes and disappointments have taught them lessons of life, and lessons that can be learnt only in the school of failure. And they face the future impelled by hopes, hopes unquenchable by failures. These have been put by Rabindra Nath Tagore—the teachings of these hopes and disappointments in the prayer :

“Let honour come to me from Thee  
 Through a call to some desperate task ;  
 In the pride of poignant suffering,  
 Lull me not to languid dreams;  
 Shake me out of this cringing in the dust,  
 Out of the fetters that shackle our mind ;  
 Make futile our destiny,  
 Out of the unreason that bends our dignity down  
 Under the indiscriminate feet of dictators,  
 Shatter this age-long shame of ours,  
 And raise our head  
 Into the boundless  
 Into the generous light,  
 Into the air of freedom !

—Specially contributed by Srijut Suresh Chandra Dev.

**Proceedings of**  
**The Legislative Assembly**  
**The Council of State**  
**and**  
**Provincial Councils**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**

# The Council of State

## LIST OF MEMBERS

*President* :—THE HONOURABLE SIR  
MANECKJI BYRAMJI DADABHOY

### (a) Officials (10)

HIS EXCELLENCY GÉNÉRAL SIR  
ROBERT A. CASSELS  
THE HONOURABLE KUNWAR SIR  
JAGADISH PRASAD  
THE HONOURABLE MR. R. M. MAX-  
WELL  
THE HONOURABLE MR. A. G. CLOW  
THE HONOURABLE MR. H. DOW  
THE HONOURABLE SIR GUTHRIE  
RUSSELL  
THE HONOURABLE MR. A. J. RAISMAN  
THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEO  
WILLIAMS  
THE HONOURABLE MR. S. A.  
HYDARI  
THE HON'BLE MR. D. N. MITRA

### (b) Non-officials—(16)

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVA-  
DOSS  
THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR  
K. RAMUNNI MENON  
THE HONOURABLE RAO BAHADUR  
SIR A. P. PATRO  
THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR G.  
NARAYANASWAMI CHETTI  
THE HONOURABLE SIR RAHIMTOOLA CHINYOY  
THE HONOURABLE SIR JOSNA GHOSAL  
THE HONOURABLE PRINCE AFSAR-UL-  
MULE MIRZA MUHAMMAD AKRAM  
HUSAIN BAHADUR  
THE HONOURABLE MAHARAJA JAGADISH  
NATH RAY  
THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SIR  
SATYA CHARAN MUKHERJEE  
THE HONOURABLE KUNWAR HAJEE  
ISMAIL ALIKHAN  
THE HONOURABLE SIRDAR NIHAL SINGH  
THE HONOURABLE RAJA CHARANJIT SINGH  
THE HON'BLE NAWAZZADA KHURSHID ALI  
KHAN  
THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR SHAMS-UD-  
DIN HAIDAR  
THE HON'BLE SIR MANECKJI BYRAMJI  
DADABHOY  
THE HON'BLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR S.  
HISSAM-UD-DIN BAHADUR

### ELECTED—Non-officials—(32)

THE HON'BLE RAO BAHADUR K. GOVINDA-  
CHARI  
THE HON'BLE MR. M. Ct. M. CHIDAM-  
BARAM CHETTIYAR  
THE HON'BLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDEHAR-  
DAS  
THE HON'BLE MR. V. RAMDAS PANTULU  
THE HON'BLE SAYYAD MUHAMMED PADSHAH  
SHAIB BAHADUR  
THE HON'BLE MR. GOVINDLAL SHIVLAL  
MOTILAL  
THE HON'BLE SIR PRADHASHANKER D.  
PATTANI  
THE HON'BLE SIR PIROOZE C. SETHNA  
THE HON'BLE SIRDAR SAHEB SIR SULEMAN  
CASSUM HAJI MITHA  
THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR ALLI  
BUKSH MOHAMED HUSSAIN  
THE HON'BLE MR. R. H. PARKER  
THE HON'BLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY  
CHAUDHURY  
THE HON'BLE KUMAR NARENDRA NARAYAN  
SINHA OF NASHIPUR  
THE HON'BLE MR. SUSHIL KUMAR ROY  
CHOWDHURY  
THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR SYED  
INTISHAM HYDER CHAUDHURY  
THE HON'BLE MR. ABDUL RAZAK HAJEE  
ABDOOL SUTTAR  
THE HON'BLE MR. J. REID KAR  
THE HON'BLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH  
THE HON'BLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH  
KUNZRU  
THE HON'BLE PANDIT PRAKASH NARAIN  
SAPRU  
THE HON'BLE HAJI SYED MOHAMED  
HUSAIN  
THE HON'BLE SHAIKH MUSHIR HOSAIN  
KIDWAI  
THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM-  
SARAN DAS  
THE HON'BLE SARDAR BUTA SINGH  
THE HON'BLE CHODHRI ATAULLAH KHAN  
TARAR  
THE HON'BLE MAHARAJADHIRAJA SIR  
KAMESHWAR SINGH  
THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR SRI  
NARAIN MAITHA  
THE HON'BLE MR. SITAKANTA MAHAPATRA  
THE HON'BLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM  
THE HON'BLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR  
THE HON'BLE MR. BRIJLAL NANDAL  
BRYANT  
THE HON'BLE MAULVI ALI ASGAR KHAN

# Proceedings of the Council

**Budget Session—New Delhi—16th. February to 8th. April 1937**

The new session of the Council of State commenced its Budget session at New Delhi on the 16th. February 1937. The lobby bustled with activity and there was happy reunion of old members who were introduced to each other. In pursuance of the previous practice, the Secretary to the Council read a notification issued by the Governor-General appointing Sir *Masceeki Dadabhoi* as President. Thereafter members, who numbered about 40 headed by Sir Masceeki, took the oath of allegiance which took an hour. The Secretary then placed on the table of the Council bills passed by the Assembly.

Sir *Guthrie Russell*, Chief Commissioner of Railways, read Budget estimates in respect of the Railways. The Council then adjourned till the 20th. February.

## DISCUSSION ON RAILWAY BUDGET

**20th. FEBRUARY:**—The Council of State held general discussion on the Railway Budget to-day.

Mr. *Ramdas Pantulu* opening the debate insisted on the need for genuine measure of reform whereby the level of earnings would be raised and the scale of working costs reduced, in other words, greater efficiency and less waste. But, he said, there was not much evidence of any such measures being in contemplation. On the other hand, the demand for a change in the system had been met by provision for setting up a Statutory Board, or Federal authority, which would be free from control of the Federal Executive as well as of the Federal Legislature. So the march towards bringing the Railway administration under national control was taking the opposite direction.

As regards the Rail-Road competition, Mr. Pantulu said that the case of Railways could not command much sympathy unless and until they made the transport system and freights and fares more elastic and better suited to the changing economic needs of the people.

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsaran Das* entered an emphatic protest against inclusion of Mr. Chodla, representative of the South-African Railway in the Wedgwood Committee. The South-African Railway system was much smaller and more efficient than the Indian system and the Government action injured Indian feelings considerably, and it was indeed a reflection on the most efficient engineering and other services on Indian Railways. He asked if South Africa, which persecuted Indians, would consent to have an Indian on a similar committee of enquiry into the working of South African Railway. Referring to the loss of strategic lines, he stressed that correct accounting demanded that it should be debited to defence budget.

Mr. *R. H. Parker* dealt in detail with what he described as inaccuracies resulting from the present method of calculating depreciation, and proceeded to urge a revision of the separation convention. He did not think it sufficient to deal with debt due to the depreciation fund and arrears of contributions to general revenues by themselves, without reviewing completely the terms of that convention, and he hoped that Government would indicate their intention on that matter in issue.

Mr. *N. N. Sinha* expressed himself strongly against Railway's liabilities to the depreciation fund and to general revenues being wiped off.

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* emphasised the necessity of Railways beginning, as early as possible, their contribution to general revenues for, according to Sir Otto Niemeyer, on this depended the hope of the provinces getting their income-tax.

Referring to recent B. N. R. strike, Mr. Saprú complained that the strike was unduly prolonged and little effort was done to terminate it by the application of the Trades Disputes Act, with the result that the industry, particularly in Northern India, considerably suffered owing to coal shortage.

Mr. *Kaikkar* dealing with the road-rail problem said that in a vast country like India there was full scope for all means of transport.

Referring to foreign committee of the Railway enquiry, he inferred that its personnel was decided by White Hall completely disregarding the claims of Indian exports.

Pandit *Hirdaynath Kunzru* said that trade depression which started in 1929 was not only the cause for the deplorable state of Railway finance and indeed there were several factors in the internal working of railways which reduced railway finance to its present perilous situation.

Continuing *Pandit Kunzru* referred to the proposal to hand over 1 and two-third crores to Burma at the time of separation as its share in the depreciation fund. He, on the other hand, asserted that India owed nothing to Burma and this burden was being unnecessarily saddled on India and it was entirely inequitable.

*Pandit Kunzru* then dealt with the road-rail competition and urged that railways should treat customers civilly and make travel more comfortable to attract passengers. He himself had seen third class trains running without lights and it had been alleged that goods wagons were used for carrying passengers.

*Mr. Hussain Imami* strongly objected to the proposal to pay 1 and two-third crores to Burma and declared that the amount would really be paid from an imaginary non-existent fund. Burma railways had run at a loss of 430 lakhs during the past seven years and he asked who was going to pay it back.

*Mr. Nixon*, replying to the criticism of the proposal to pay 1 and two-third crores to Burma, pointed out that Burma railways cost 35 crores and the present proposal meant that the Government of India were selling it at 35 minus 1 and two-third crores, or practically at the cost price. There were one or two other lines in India which they would like to get rid of on the same basis.

#### QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF MEMBERS

**25th. FEBRUARY :—**When the Council of State met this morning the President, *Sir Manockji Dadabhoj* announced that *Mr. Ramdas Pantulu* had given notice of an adjournment motion for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely preventing an honourable member of the house, *Mr. B. N. Biyani*, from discharging his duties here by refusing to give him adjournment of trial by the city Magistrate of Akola, even for a short time in the case pending against him in connection with prosecution for sedition launched against him for an election speech.

*Mr. R. N. Maxwell*, Secretary, Home Department, took objection to the motion under the legislative rules, as the subject matter was under adjudication in a court of law.

The President said that he could not accept *Mr. Maxwell's* suggestion, as the rule quoted related to civil suits and not criminal prosecution, and held the motion perfectly in order. *Sir Dadabhoj* quoted a precedent to support his view namely on the 30th January 1935, the President of the Assembly took the same view when a similar motion was brought forward regarding the detention of *Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose*. However, as objection was taken by the Government he would like to know if there were the requisite fifteen members, provided under the rules, in favour of the motion being admitted. As only eight members stood up, the motion was dropped, the President remarking "I am sorry, I cannot allow it."

The Council quickly passed three official bills sent from the Assembly namely, the Bills amending the Electricity Act and the Boilers Act and the Criminal Procedure Code.

#### DISCUSSION ON DRAFT CONVENTION

There was keen discussion on the resolution moved by *Mr. A. G. Clow*, Secretary, Industries and Labour Department, recommending non-ratification of the draft convention concerning annual holidays with pay for industrial workers, adopted at the twentieth session of the International Labour Conference. Personally, said *Mr. Clow*, he was profoundly convinced that the workers should have holidays with pay. Officers and other class of Government employees needed such rest, and similar holidays in the case of industrial workers would be to their well-being. The Government therefore, had no criticism to make on the general underlying principle but there were many practical difficulties in the way given effect to the convention which embraced a cumbrous list of industries. The Government were of the opinion that there should be no reservation in the matter. Either they should ratify the Convention wholly or they should not ratify it at all. Enforcement of convention of this kind throughout India would, firstly involve immense difficulties

in its administration and, secondly entail an enormous expenditure. Soon the matters dealt with in the convention would be entirely provincial and it would be unfair on the part of the Government of India to impose a burden by statute. It was presently doubtful how far the new local Governments could be prepared to undertake to translate the proposals in the convention. However, Mr. *Clow* was prepared to make a reference to the Provincial Governments for any action on the lines suggested in the convention.

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* said that in a hot country like India where working hours were long, holidays for workers were most essential and the object of the draft convention was to secure to a wide class of workers some annual holiday with pay. He failed to understand the practical difficulties narrated by Mr. *Clow*. If the Government wanted to do something for the workers they could certainly classify those industries to which they could apply the convention.

Referring to the recent proposal of the Government to bring forward in future before the House only such draft conventions to which they could give effect, Mr. *Saprú* said that such a course was the curtailment of the rights of the House enjoyed uninterrupted during the last fifteen years. He elaborately went into the historical background stressing that the invaluable right was vested in the Indian legislature through a resolution moved by the Government spokesmen in 1931 in both the Houses. Since then numerous draft conventions were discussed either for ratification or non-ratification and they had derived immense benefit by such discussions. The present proposal would not be helpful.

*Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru* further strengthened the arguments of Mr. *Saprú* that there was nothing to prevent to give effect to the proposals in a few selected undertakings and see if the enforcement of the convention was not possible in respect of them. He failed to see the consistency while expressing profound sympathy with the working class and refusing to do anything in the matter.

Proceeding *Pandit Kunzru* said that a change of procedure proposed to be followed by the Government without giving sufficient warning to the House of the change of procedure was entirely unjustified. He wondered what would be the position after the Federation whether the question of ratification or non-ratification of these conventions would rest with the popular Government or the Governor-General. The present curtailment of the right of the house, therefore, created nervousness in the minds of non-officials. He opined that the change of procedure suggested would result in serious injustice to those workers, most of whom they professed to protect.

Mr. *Ramdas Pantulu* suggested the Government to bring forward a resolution before the House on such a vital question and humorously remarked that the non-officials who were enjoying in Delhi many holidays with pay, would not grudge the trouble involved. (Laughter).

Mr. *Clow*, replying, said that surely he did not wish to deny that discussion of these conventions resulted in no useful purpose in the past. In fact the opposition objection to the new procedure was unjustified inasmuch as they would still be submitting these conventions before the House. Hence there was no question of any right being taken away from the Council. But he pointed out that there were a few matters in which such discussion in the Indian Legislature was entirely infructuous. He was sure that even those countries, which gave effect to these conventions did not do so by bringing forward all of them before their respective procedure. He pointed out that there was no difficulty, for non-officials themselves, to take the initiative to move a resolution.

Mr. *Clow's* resolution was adopted.

On the motion of Sir *Jagdish Prasad* the House adopted a resolution making lawful migration to Burma of unskilled workers subject only to the restrictions in force immediately before the commencement of the new Government of Burma Act.

The House adjourned till the 27th. when the Finance Secretary made the general budget statement.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

4th. MARCH :—The Council of State met this morning for the general discussion of the Budget. Mr. *Basu*, opening the discussion, said that the Finance Member had grappled with the financial situation with courage and imagination. The speaker was afraid that in the budget statement the Finance Member would reveal a fresh taxation over a vast field. But that apprehension to his pleasant surprise had proved untrue. It was due to the foresight of the Finance Member in having created a revenue

reserve which, to be certain, saved the situation and even provided autonomy. Mr. Basu congratulated the Post and Telegraphs Department which, he opined, was the most efficiently run department and was amenable to public opinion. As regards fresh taxation, Mr. Basu said that both increase in sugar excise and duty on silver had his wholehearted support.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* suggested that he would welcome in future some particulars in the Finance Member's budget statement of the average income of people so that they could know whether the country was progressing or not. He said that trade and industry had waited too long for the removal of 25 per cent surcharge on both income and supertax. On the other hand the Finance Member committed last year the mistake of restoring five per cent cut on salaries of Government servants thereby benefitting Government servants and not the general public.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* wanted to quote opinion of a newspaper in support of his view but the President held that he could not quote from a newspaper because, said the President, it was not the practice in the Council to do so.

Proceeding, Sir *Phiroze Sethna* said that the increase in sugar excise was viewed everywhere with great alarm. It was a serious mistake to put further handicaps on the industry which was in its infancy. He was glad, however, that postal rates in respect of book packets had been reduced but he wanted that postage on postcards was also reduced. Concluding, Sir *Phiroze Sethna* strongly objected to heavy, military expenditure and wanted more money to be spent on education.

Mr. *Ramdas Pantalu* said that Sir *James Grigg's* speech was confirmation of the fact that he was a British Agent and that his speech was a propaganda in favour of British interests. The rural grant of last year was now exposed as an election stunt. The explanation of decreased revenue lay in the continued depression and unfavourable ratio and not, as Sir *James* asserted, in the restriction against rural indebtedness. A legislation of this nature was insincere and an attempt by dying provincial ministries to catch votes in provincial elections. Mr. *Pantalu* emphasised that the unfavourable ratio maintained for rupee was primarily responsible for the falling off in export trade and urged that the Government should seriously consider the reduction of ratio to 1s and 4d. Foreign commitments had, on Sir *James Grigg's* own admission, been greatly reduced and could no longer be advanced as a reason for maintaining the existing ratio.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* said that the anti-national character of the Government in this country was very early seen in very unsatisfactory taxation proposals. Sir *James Grigg* had to cast aside all caution and restraint with which he had started and everywhere a policy of opportunism was visible. The speech of the Finance Member lacked statesmanship in handling the finances of a huge country but was more or less an auditor's report of company's accounts. He stressed that in order to counter-balance India's sterling commitments of over Rs. 40 crores Britain must purchase increased quantities of Indian exports, otherwise India would not be able to make up much of her deficits.

Referring to loans, the speaker hoped that Sir *James Grigg* would make a new departure in the policy and try to reduce sterling loans whenever occasion arose. He opined that by raising rupee loans and by the reduction of external expenses they would be increasing the purchasing power of the people and put idle money in circulation within the country.

Mr. *Abhta*, a newly elected member from Bihar, after expressing Bihar's gratitude for relief after the earthquake, said that the present budget was admittedly a story of disappointment but it was a deeper disappointment that the suggestions made in the Legislatures had not been given effect to. The budget did not even reflect the trend of people's wishes but remained bureaucratic in its outlook. Prosperity did not depend on statistics but on sympathetic contact between lawgivers and people.

*Pandit Kunzru* criticised the Government's method in disposing of the sum available in the revenue reserve fund. On this point he felt that the Finance Member had concealed the true position and he was forced to the conclusion that the real deterioration was much greater than the Finance Member had tried to make out. Supporting his action in enhancing the silver duty Sir *James Grigg* had said that recent imports of silver indicated a revival of the hoarding habit of the people.

*Lala Ramsarandas* also spoke on the military budget. He complained of what he called anti-Indianisation. To illustrate it, he showed that against the decrease of last year in Viceroy's commissioned officers, of 196 officers, there was an increase only of 10 Indian commissioned officers. That showed that Indianisation



was a myth. Lala Ramsarandas did not grudge the duty on silver, but strongly on sugar. If he were asked how to meet the deficit, his reply was to increase the import duty on tobacco and aniline dyes and also on cotton hosiery.

Sir *James Grigg* was applauded when he rose to reply to the debate. He said that he would deal only with more important points in the debate. Mr. Pantulu had levelled the now familiar accusation that the speaker was an agent of British Commerce. Sir James said that after some recent research among Parliamentary expressions, he would call the accusation "terminological inexactitude" (laughter). Replying to Mr. Pantulu's question, why the Government should not assist sugar export, Sir James Grigg said that the Indian price was a simple one, that the Indian price was more than double the competitive prices. The Finance Member pointed out that world condition did not permit reduction in the army expenditure and showed that in the last three years the Indian military expenditure had proportionately decreased compared with the expenditure in other parts of the Empire.

Referring to the contention that the silver duty amounts to a tax on capital deficient to saving and should have been replaced by a tax on gold, the Finance Member said that he could regard with equanimity a tax on hoarded and unproductive capital. It would have the effect of directing saving into more profitable channels. Sir James Grigg said that Mr. Hossain Imam had raised many points of substance, but it was a fallacious argument to suggest that because the Exchequer was full in a lean year and empty in a prosperous year, that budget was anti-national. Concluding Sir *James Grigg* thanked the House for the real pleasure he had experienced of hearing something pleasant about the budget. One member suggested that the budget should be framed on popular lines. He suggested that no budget was popular, but some were less disliked than others and the one he had just presented could be numbered among the less disliked (applause).

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* said that the Finance Member had left unanswered their basic objection to the budget proposals. Despite the admission by Sir James Grigg that the silver duty was a duty of capital, Mr. Saprú felt that it was admittedly a tax on the poor. Development of the sugar industry had done good to the country in various directions and an enhancement of the excise at the juncture would retard the progress of the industry. If, as was argued, there was over production, Mr. Saprú asked why did they not adopt compulsory rations when there was an increase of twenty lakhs. Referring to the defence expenditure Mr. Saprú argued that the separation of Burma had not in any way reduced the defence expenditure. On the other hand this year alone there was an increase of twenty lakhs. He suggested that at least the cost of 5,000 British troops be borne by Burma. This would not be unreasonable, as Burma had a surplus of two crores this year. Furthermore, Burma was conquered by Indian money and now that Burma was separated Burma should make some contribution to the Indian Exchequer. He asked if Burma would share the capitation charge and how, Mr. Saprú concluded that so long as India was not directly responsible for her foreign policy they would be justified in asking for drastic reduction in the military expenditure.

#### CONTEMPT OF COURTS ACT

5th. MARCH :—In the Council of State to-day Mr. *Williams*, Secretary to the Legislative Department, moved consideration of the Contempt of Courts Act (amendment) Bill, which provides that a High Court shall not impose sentence of six months for any contempt either in respect of itself or of a court subordinate to it. This amendment has been found necessary in view of the interpretation of the Lahore High Court in the case of Lala Harkishan Lal that power of punishment provided in section 3 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1926, applied only to subordinate courts and that a High Court possessed inherent power to pass an unlimited sentence.

Mr. *Saprú* remarked that contempt of law was in many respects archaic and was too wide. Even six months' sentence was a very long period.

Sir *David Devadoss*, a retired Judge of the Madras High Court, on the other hand opposed the measure, pointing out that because of the solitary instance of the Lahore High Court powers of all High Courts were sought to be curtailed. The Government should not rush in this manner. He further added that whenever an accused person apologised and purged of his contempt a High Court readily

accepted and released him and there had been no single instance during the last 150 years that anywhere an accused was kept in prison for more than six months.

Mr. *Sapru* emphasised that apology forced out of an accused person under pain of imprisonment could not be considered genuinely tendered and this has in no way enhanced the prestige of a High Court.

Mr. *Williams* replying to the debate said that the Government's original intention of the enactment of the 1926 Act was to restrict powers of High Courts in the punishment of any contempts whether themselves or of courts subordinate to them. The present amendment was giving effect to that intention beyond doubt. The Bill was passed.

#### ROAD FUND

Mr. *A. G. Clow* moved a lengthy resolution relating to the administration of the road-fund, which was passed in the Assembly. The resolution seeks to continue two annas extra duty on petrol and the proceeds thereof would be applied for purposes of road development. Inter alia, it lays down that the portions allocated for the provinces would be retained by the Central Government until they would actually require for expenditure in the agreed manner. The Governor-General-in-Council shall have the power to resume the whole or part of any sums in any particular province if it failed to comply with the recommendations of the Governor-General-in-Council for regulation and control of motor vehicles within the province. Mr. *Clow* briefly giving a history of the road development fund explained the salient features of the proposed resolution. He stressed how this road fund had been useful in building a network of roads linking together the various parts of the country where railways had not yet penetrated. Mr. *Clow* deprecated the tendency in some quarters, while discussing the question, unnecessarily to bring in the controversy involved in the road-rail problem. Over a great part of road there was no competition, and let not this conflict obscure the great work of road development.

There was general support to the resolution. Rai Bahadur Lala Ramsarandas and Mr. Ramdas Pantulu opposed it, stating that the action of the Government in restricting powers of Provincial Governments was unwise and inopportune at a time when provincial Governments were about to become autonomous.

Mr. *Parker* moved an amendment that the Governor-General-in-Council shall give Local Governments six months' notice of his intention to resume any such sum before doing so.

Mr. *Clow* assured Mr. *Parker* that the Central Government would not take such an action without notice.

The amendment was withdrawn and the original resolution was passed. The Council then adjourned till March 9.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS PASSED

9th. MARCH:—The Council State held a brief sitting to-day, lasting forty minutes, when two official Bills, namely, the *Tea Cess Act Amendment Bill* and the *Limitation Act Amendment Bill* were passed. These were already passed by the Assembly. The Tea Cess Act Amendment Bill enables Burma to be excluded from its scope consequent on Burma's separation from India.

Article 149 of the Limitation Act prescribes a special period of limitation of sixty years for any suit by or on behalf of the Secretary of State for India-in-Council. This article will in future govern suits by a province against another province or between a province and the Federation.

Both the Bills having been passed the House adjourned till March 12.

#### CATERING OF 3RD CLASS PASSENGERS

12th. MARCH:—The Council of State met to-day with six non-official resolutions on the agenda. Mr. *Mahapatra* moved the first resolution recommending the appointment of a committee of officials and non-officials to enquire as to how far the present policy and arrangements of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Company for catering were responsible for the supply of bad food at high prices at Railway platforms and to suggest ways and means to remove those grievances. He quoted figures to show that about one lakh of rupees collected annually by the Railway as licence fees from third class catering contractors was credited towards first class catering run

by the the Railway itself and still first class catering resulted in a loss. The food supplied to third class passengers was of the worst quality and was more expensive than that available in Calcutta. Third class caterers were moreover not local men who did not realise what taste of local third class travellers was.

Sir Guthrie Russell opposing the resolution said that there was no justification to say that catering arrangements for higher classes were being subsidised by the earnings from third class catering. It was periodically discussed by local Railway Advisory Committees and this was a subject which could be referred only to those committees.

Mr. Pantulu continuing the debate said that he was not satisfied with the defence put forward by Sir Guthrie Russell and hoped that the Government would agree to such modest demand as the appointment of a committee.

Mr. Kalikkar wished that the Government should have taken a detached view in this matter.

Sir Pheroz Sethna said it would not be fair to go over the head of the local Advisory Committee and appoint a special committee. He wanted the resolution to be withdrawn.

Pandit Kuseru, Mr. Padshah and Mr. G. S. Motilal further supported the resolution and Mr. Mahapatra replying said that he was thoroughly disappointed with Sir Guthrie Russell's reply. He asked why was the Railway Board so much afraid of the B. N. Railway or perhaps their attitude was due to the comfortable majority which the Government enjoyed in this House.

Sir Guthrie Russell retorted the allegation that catering for upper class passengers was being subsidised by the incomes derived from third class passengers. He assured the House to forward a copy of the debate to the B. N. Railway authorities for necessary action and report to the Railway Board results of any such action.

Mr. Mahapatra withdrew his resolution.

#### CREDIT TO AGRICULTURISTS

Lala Ramsaran Das moved a resolution recommending to the Governor-General-in-Council that in order to provide credit to poor agriculturists necessary arrangements should be made for the supply of funds to approved agencies on their furnishing sufficient security and on their agreeing to lend money to poor agriculturists at certain fixed and agreed percentage of interest and at certain fixed percentage margin of profit. He said that rural indebtedness in British India, which stood at 200 crores in 1929, had now reached the colossal figures of 1,400 crores and this problem would never be solved unless a bold step was taken by the Central Government to remodel the entire financial system and machinery. The speaker admitted that some thing was being done by certain provinces but it would not be such a great success if the Central Government kept quiet.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu moved an amendment that for words "approved agencies" the following be substituted: "indigenous bankers approved by the Reserve Bank and Co-operative Land Mortgage Banks approved by the local Government of provinces in which they are situated." Mr. Pantulu said that a class of money-lenders that existed to-day was a source of danger to rural economy. The problem of rural indebtedness could not be properly solved unless indigenous banks were placed in the right place beneficial to the masses. Their present unhealthy activities must, through a stringent legislation, be brought under control and regulation should be made compelling them to maintain proper accounts which should be open to periodical inspection.

Sir Pheroz Sethna, supporting the resolution, wanted the Government to help agriculturists so that they could get loans at six per cent.

Mr. J. C. Nixon, Finance Secretary, said that the mover had not explained for what purposes loan facilities should be given to agriculturists. Agriculturists had no difficulty in getting loans for genuine agricultural purposes from their provincial governments. There was also no difficulty in getting loans for marketing their produce. Did the mover want credit facilities to enable agriculturists to increase their indebtedness. That the Government were not prepared to give. He admitted the existence of certain amount of hardship to agriculturists in the present dearth of credit facilities, but the position also had desirable features. The speaker declared that the proposal put forward by Rai Bahadur Lala Ramsarandas in his resolution was impracticable and was one which could be solved by provincial Governments. He therefore opposed it.

Mr. *Hussain Imam* continuing the debate said that it was easy to tell the House that the position was complicated one. But was the Government there only to collect funds, pay its officials and the army and say that they had no responsibility?

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsaran Das* said that it pained him to find the indifference of the Government in this important matter. He said that he did not want agriculturist indebtedness to increase, but he wanted the agriculturist to be helped on occasions when the crops failed owing to circumstances, over which he had no control.

Mr. *Nixon* replied that in such disastrous circumstances provincial Governments always granted loans.

Mr. *Pantulu's* amendment was passed, but the amended resolution of Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsarandas* was defeated by 23 votes to 14.

#### RESIGNATION OF RESERVE BANK GOVERNOR

Pandit *P. N. Saprú* moved a resolution urging the Government (to lay on the table a full statement of the causes leading to the resignation of Sir Osborne Smith, lately Governor of the Reserve bank.

He said that the Finance Member had stated that there was no difference of opinion between the Government of India and Sir Osborne on any major question. If so, the public were entitled to ask what were those minor questions in which differences had occurred and whether in the Government's view questions like the Rupee ratio, gold export, fixation of the bank rate etc., were major or minor issues. The people were again and again told that the Reserve Bank should be free from political influence and he asked if the influence of the Governments in the matter of Sir Osborne's resignation was not political.

Pandit *P. N. Saprú* said: "We object to the influence of the City of London and all kinds of political influences". If Sir Osborne had resigned for personal reasons, then why did they not make a plain statement to that effect. The business community in India had confidence in Sir Osborne and his mysterious resignation had to a great extent affected the credit and business of the country to clear up the reasons of that mysterious resignation.

Mr. *Hussain Imam* said that Sir Osborne had come to India at the instance of the late Sir Basil Blackett and was appointed Governor of the Imperial Bank. He had remained in India for a sufficiently long period and had acquired intimate knowledge of India and certain amount of influence in banking circles. The speaker was prepared to concede to the Government right to interfere in the working of the Reserve Bank, but there should be a clear demarcation up to which the Government could go. It was a matter of imperative necessity that a healthy convention should be established between the bank and the Government in this respect from the beginning. There was a report that Sir Osborne would receive compensation as he was made to retire before the completion of his term and the speaker asked what was the amount of such compensation and whether the report was correct. He disliked any reticence in the matter and he hoped the Government would set aside sentimentality and furnish full information with a view to allay the apprehensions in the minds of the public.

Mr. *G. S. Motilal* and Mr. *Kalikka*r further supported the resolution.

Mr. *J. C. Nixon*, Secretary, Finance Department, replying to the debate said: "On 30th October last the Government of India in announcing their accepting of the resignation of Sir Osborne Smith published a resolution passed by the Central Board on the subject. As was stated to the shareholders at the last annual general meeting of the bank Sir Osborne had resigned for personal reasons.

Continuing Mr. *Nixon* said: "Practically all matter which fall to be discussed between the authorities of the bank on the one hand and the Government on the other are of a highly important and confidential nature. They are such that most complete frankness on both sides is essential—a frankness which would be impossible were there a danger of disclosure of the discussions in any matter, either during a debate in the Legislature or otherwise. Just as is the position between the British Treasury and the Bank of England or between the Government of any country and its Central Bank, the Government of India must hold that the communications between them and the Reserve Bank are confidential. Any other attitude would be seriously detrimental to the conduct of the public business. This is the general rule and the Government propose to follow it in the present case. They therefore are unable to lay anything on the table."

Concluding Mr. *Nixon* said: "But I repeat what the Finance Member stated in another place. There have been no difference of opinion between the Government

and the Reserve Bank on any major question of policy and the Government of India have never at any time interfered with the bank in exercise of the bank's statutory functions."

Mr. *Hossain Imam* asked whether the Government had interfered in the question of fixation of the bank rate which was the function of the bank itself.

Mr. *Nixon*—I have nothing more to add, Sir.

Pandit *P. N. Saprú* replying said that Mr. *Nixon's* statement left the position as mysterious as ever. As for the payment of compensation to Sir Osborne, Pandit *P. N. Saprú* said that since that report was not contradicted, their only conclusion was that Sir Osborne was forced to resign.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* intervening remarked that personal reasons put forward now was merely an after-thought.

The opposition pressed the motion to a division and it was rejected by 28 votes to 19. The Council then adjourned till the 15th.

#### APPOINTMENT IN SECRETARIATS

15th. MARCH:—There was an interesting discussion in the Council of State on the resolution moved by Pandit *H. N. Kunzru* urging immediate steps to increase the number of Indians occupying higher posts in every department of the Government of India secretariat so that the increase may be commensurate with the new constitutional status of India. He recalled that the Council in 1923 adopted Mr. *Sastri's* resolution that at least one of the posts of the secretary, the joint secretary and the deputy secretaries be held by an Indian in each department of the Government of India. Since then no appreciable progress had been made. It had been often said that the new constitution was a substantial advance towards responsibility. Personally the speaker was not a great admirer of the new constitution. But he, at any rate, believed that if the new constitution was progressive then a larger percentage of Indians in these superior posts was essential than in the past with a view to properly reflect the policy laid down by the Indian Ministers. Then Pandit *Kunzru* proceeded to deal with the various departments separately. He first took up the home, defence and foreign and political departments and emphasised that the Indian element in these key departments was practically absent or, at any rate, the position was more or less the same as that in 1923 when the Government issued a communique to the effect that in filling vacancies in the posts of the secretary, the deputy secretaries, the possibility of obtaining suitable competent Indian officers should be definitely considered. In the Finance department there was at present only one deputy secretary who was also the budget officer and he too would be soon replaced by a European. Similar was the position in the Railway Board. A European Major-General held the post of Financial Adviser to the Army and Pandit *Kunzru* asked if no Indian Accounts officer was available. For the post of Director General, Indian Medical Service the claims of a competent Indian who was very much senior was superseded by a Junior European. Similarly the post of the Educational Commissioner with the Government of the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India was given away to a European. When the post of the Vice-Chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research fell vacant a European was appointed and now the post of the director of the new Agricultural Institute was being held in abeyance and it seemed a European was being contemplated to fill the post. It was only in the Education department Indians held the post of secretary and joint secretary, the credit for which was due to the late Sir *Fazil Hussain*. Pandit *Kunzru* refused to accept the contention that there were not sufficient number of senior Indian officers to make a selection to fill these posts and from the facts he was led to believe that the exclusion of Indians from these superior posts were due to political considerations. He asked if Indians made good High Court Judges why no Indian was found suitable to fill the posts of secretary or joint secretary in the legislative department of India. What was needed was a thorough change in the policy.

Mr. *Ramdas Pantulu* moved an amendment to Pandit *Kunzru's* resolution omitting any reference to the new constitution. He argued that India had been a dependency and England meant to keep her so by imposing the new constitution which was retrograde. He opined there was no advance in the status of India and he quoted a passage from the J. P. C. Report to support his contention. Mr. *Ramdas* declared "Our demand for Indianisation of the services must rest and can only rest upon the basis of our right to Self-Government which can only be

achieved not by appealing to the British Government but by concentrated efforts to get rid of this new constitution which is meant to perpetuate slavery upon India.

Mr. P. N. Saprú said that Pandit Kuzru's resolution was the test whereby the Government should prove that they really meant what they had been saying all these years. He appealed that the question should not be looked from the viewpoint of the British service vested interests but from the viewpoint that India is for Indians. He in particular referred to the proposal to appoint an economic advisor and he asked whether no suitable Indian was available. He asked the Government to say plainly what their policy in the matter was.

Mr. Hossain Imam, supporting the resolution, said that Indianization of the services was the accepted policy of the Government and even in the I. C. S. a 50-50 ratio of recruitment had been accepted. That being so, if the pace of Indianisation was not accelerated and by trying to keep up the present order of things, the Government itself rendered the new constitution a mere moonshine, confirming the Opposition view. He specially put in pleas for a larger appointment of provincial service men for the listed posts in the Government of India.

Mr. Maxwell, Home Secretary, at the outset assumed the House that the Government were taking every possible step to carry out the policy laid down in 1923. He explained the posts of Educational Commissioner and Director of I. M. S. were not properly ranked as secretariat posts and as for his own department, namely, Home department, under the new constitution law and order will be a provincial subject and the Home department as such will not be directly concerned with the supervision of law and order for the whole of India.

Mr. Maxwell emphasised that no sweeping changes as suggested in the resolution were possible in a matter which depended on the utilization of the actual cadre. The question was simply one of the material available at any moment, and if it was denied that at this or any particular moment a certain class of material should preponderate this object could only be obtained as a result of the steps taken long before. The whole matter was a question of time required to realise the results of a previously determined policy.

Mr. Maxwell stressed that steps already taken towards Indianization were in the normal course of fulfilment, but they could only be accelerated by exercising a deliberate discrimination in favour of Indians, regardless of the consideration of fitness among even the actually eligible by seniority and experience. He took it that the mover would not urge any course derogatory to the self-respect of Indians in service. If so, he could sympathise with the idea underlying his resolution, but not with its actual terms.

Mr. Maxwell maintained that the posts in the Government of India secretariat were essentially selection appointments. He did not claim that all the officers, either Europeans or Indians, were equally suited for this very exacting work. Nor did he wish to claim that the percentage of suitable Indians was less than the percentage of suitable Europeans. He was prepared to assume that the average would be about the same. On that basis, therefore, he would examine the cadre of the I. C. S. in order to test whether there had been discriminations or not, and to form an opinion about the possible speed of Indianisation without any such discrimination.

Since the changes in the recruitment of the I. C. S. introduced in 1921, those recruited since would already be available for the post of under secretary, but would only just be coming into the field of selection for deputy secretaries. In 1925 the Lee Commission report suggested a further advance in the recruitment, namely, a 50 per cent. ratio of Indians and Europeans, respectively, in the I. C. S. cadre. This ratio of half Europeans and half Indians was expected to be reached by about 1939, but even then it would be only in 1946 (i. e. 1921 plus 25 years) before Indianisation was distributed equally over the cadre upto a probable stage of selection for secretaries, i. e., 25 years' service. Meanwhile, the selection for the secretariat depended on the actual state of the cadre.

Mr. Maxwell furnished numerous figures to show the strengths for various appointments. He explained that the length of service required for the post of secretary was 26 to 30, while for joint-secretaries 12 to 17 and for under-secretaries from 6 to 10. On this basis, taking the year 1935, the proportion of eligible Indians for the posts of secretaries was 11 per cent., while that of joint secretaries seven per cent. and deputy secretaries 48 per cent. This showed that Indianization was considerably in advance of the cadre in all the ranks. The natural consequence of gradual effect of Indianization in the cadre was that it would first be apparent in lower secretariat grades and gradually spread upwards.

He asserted that when there were sufficient eligible Indians available, there was no reason to believe that they would not be selected. The Wheeler Committee report, which had made certain recommendation in regard to recruitment, was now under close consideration of the Government and it was hoped that it would be possible to devise more systematic ways of exploring the field of recruitment. This would make it easier to ensure that Indians, well qualified for secretariat work, were not overlooked and there was not one word either in the Wheeler report or in subsequent discussions which was in any way designed to frustrate this declared policy of the Government.

Replying to Mr. *Hossain Imam's* question, Mr. Maxwell said that at present there were 65 superior posts (including under secretaries) in the Government of India secretariat and of these 28 or 40 per cent. were held by Indians.

*Sir Phiroze Sethna*, speaking after Mr. Maxwell, thanked him for giving the House a wealth of figures and suggested that the Government should be issuing a communique embodying a fuller explanation of the position.

Mr. *G. S. Motilal* expressed dissatisfaction at the slowness of the process of Indianization.

*Pandit Kunaru* did not agree with Mr. Maxwell's explanation that the posts of Educational Commissioner and Director of Medical Service were not secretariat appointments and that this would not remove the blot on the Education Department in superseding a competent senior Indian officer by a comparatively junior Englishman for the post of director of Indian Medical Service.

Mr. Maxwell, in conclusion, advised them to be patient and allow Indian officers in peace to get their experience and training to hold such responsible posts as secretaries and joint secretaries.

*Pandit Kunaru* accepted Mr. Ramdas Pantulu's amendment. The House divided and the resolution as amended was rejected by 26 votes to 18.

#### RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. *Kumorsankar Roy Chowdhury* moved the next resolution recommending to the Government to submit to the King-Emperor of India the most earnest and humble prayer of this House that his Majesty should graciously be pleased to direct the release of all political prisoners and those detained without any trial, on the happy occasion of his Coronation.

Mr. *Govindlal Shivlal Motilal* said that the detention of persons without trial was most detestable, while Mr. P. N. Saprú on the other hand characterized it as un-British. Mr. Kalikar said that the release of prisoners on the eve of the Coronation and reforms would go a long way in appeasing the public discontent.

Mr. *Macauliffe*, Home Secretary, said that the term political prisoners was vague. Did it mean that the persons convicted of terrorist activities and those who were convicted of rioting and assaulting in the elections were political prisoners? He cited two cases in which the releases resulted in the outbreak of crimes, and argued that the release of prisoners convicted of sedition and preaching hatred among the communities would result in chaos in the country.

Mr. *Pantulu*, continuing the debate, said that Mr. Maxwell should have known by now what the definition of a political prisoner was. The Congress Party did not want to be associated with those convicted of violence. The speaker's definition of a political prisoner for the sake of this resolution was one who had not been charged with any moral turpitude, but he who committed offence out of patriotism.

*Pandit Kunaru*, supporting the resolution, condemned the policy of detaining persons without trial. After the mover had also replied to the debate, Mr. Maxwell made it clear that he suggested that the matter of release of prisoners be left to local Governments.

The resolution was put to vote and defeated by 28 votes to 11.

#### B. N. RY. UNDER STATE MANAGEMENT

Mr. *Mahapatra* moved the next resolution recommending to the Governor-General in Council to take steps as early as possible to bring the Bengal-Nagpur Railway under state management. He was supported in his demand by Messrs. Hossain Imam, Ramsaran Das and P. N. Saprú, the latter accusing the Agent of not implementing the terms of the agreement between the railway and those who struck work recently.

*Sir Guthrie Russell*, replying to the debate, said that the policy of the Government before the taking over of the company railway was to go into the pros and

cons and decide the question from the financial, administrative and other points of view. He could not categorically say whether the House would be consulted before this company managed railway was taken over. Regarding the accusation against the Agent B. N. R., Sir Guthrie Russell said that he was awaiting certain information on the matter and if there was any ground that the Agent was to blame he would ask him if things could not be put right. The resolution was withdrawn and the House adjourned.

#### [RELIEF FOR GENERAL INDEBTEDNESS

18th. MARCH :—Mr. *Kumar Shankar Roy Chaudhury* moved the first resolution to-day recommending to the Governor General in Council to take steps to relieve the general indebtedness of the people by an issue of taccavi loans in the areas most affected by the lowness of prices of agricultural produce.

*Sir Jagdish Prasad* said that it was not possible for the Government of India to accept the resolution. It was entirely within the jurisdiction of the local Government to utilise taccavi loans for relieving indebtedness. Three local Governments, namely the United Provinces, Madras and Coorg had taken such action and if the honourable member wanted such a step being taken in Bengal he should bring pressure on the ministry of that province. All that the Government of India were prepared to do was to forward the copies of the debate to the local Governments.

*Mr. V. Ramdas Pantulu* complained of the curious way in which taccavi loans were administered and urged the Government to examine the recommendations of the Royal Agricultural Commission and the Central Banking Enquiry Committee and give a lead to the provinces in this matter.

*Syed Hossain Imam* advised the Government of India in the interests of their own financial well-being to take an initiative instead of leaving the matter entirely to the provincial Governments.

*Mr. J. C. Nixon*, Finance Secretary, explained that most of the provinces had during the last 15 years obtained their loan requirements from the Government of India and has also used the Government of India's credit for the purposes of raising loans. That facility would continue to be at their disposal till the 31st of this month when the position would be altered by the Government of India Act. The resolution was thereupon withdrawn.

#### INDIANISATION OF ARMY AND NAVY

*Pandit Hriday Nath Kumar* moved the next resolution recommending to the Governor General in Council to move the higher authorities to take steps to replace the British troops continuously by Indian troops in the Army in India.

He said that although such a resolution was previously accepted by Lord Rawlinson, the then Commander-in-Chief it had not been given effect to. He suspected that his Majesty's Government stood in the way of implementing the recommendation. It was not on military grounds that the ratio was being continued. He doubted whether his Majesty's Government would allow the British troops to be used in furtherance of the policy of the ministers in the reformed provincial Governments when the policy was not approved by his Majesty's Government. Such a position arose in the Dominions and his Majesty's Government withdrew the British troops which were replaced by the local troops. It, therefore, behoved the Government to look ahead and take early steps which would be in the interests of India and which would improve the relations of Indians and British.

*Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Matha* declared that the British contingents were in India to promote the British interests, watch the armies in the States and to swell England's reserves. Indian soldiers were more efficient especially under Indian conditions despite the fact they were ill-trained, ill-fed and ill-armed.

*Mr. P. N. Saprú* said that he thought he was not wrong in saying that since 1923 there had been no reduction in British troops. If India was really to be led to the goal of Dominion Status then her army should also be Indianised. The British army in India was maintained for the sake of the empire. Therefore why should the British Government not pay for that army.

In opposing the motion the *Commander-in-Chief* said :—

Sir, to begin with, I should like to compliment the mover of this resolution, if I may, on the able and moderate way in which he presented his case. He has obviously studied the literature on the subject most carefully and although I may



not agree entirely with his presentation of facts and figures, this in itself does not materially weaken his case or strengthen mine. In fact I should say that on paper (if I may so express it) he has made out as strong a case as could be made out. He will forgive me, if I go on to say that where he failed to convince me was with regard to the actual realities of the case and I propose to develop this side of it in my reply. I think two main aspects of this controversy that naturally appeal to the most honourable members opposite are, financial and sentimental aspects and when I refer to the sentiment I mean sentiment in the best sense of the word, sentiment of patriotism and national honour.

Now, sir, so far as the financial aspect is concerned, no one can deny that the substitution of Indian for British troops in this country would produce a saving, indeed a large saving. No arguments are required to convince me of that. What the exact figure would be it is difficult to say, nor do I think that it matters very much. Our own estimate made a few years ago is something in the neighbourhood of Rs. 8 crores excluding the cost of pensions which naturally must go on for many years and also excluding the cost of capitation payments which have been referred to. What the honourable members are apt to forget is that capitation payments are now more than covered by the contribution of Rs. 2 crores paid by his Majesty's Government towards the cost of Indian defence. That contribution may not be specifically related to the cost of British troops in India but I cannot imagine that it would be continued at any rate at anything like the present figure if all British troops were removed from his country. Some honourable members I know think that the present contribution ought to be increased. All I can do to-day is to refer them to my speech on this subject in reply to the hon. Mr. Kalikar's motion at the last Simla session. So much for the financial aspect. I agree that the British soldiers are comparatively expensive but that does not alter the fact that I consider them necessary.

I shall return to that point in a moment but first let me say a few words about what I have called the sentimental aspect of this question. I do not want to say too much and I only wish that the honourable members would read again what is said on this subject in chapter 6 of this pamphlet of facts and figures which was supplied to them a year or two ago and of which there are copies in the library. I think it will repay a study. But let me say this at once. The Government of India and myself are fully conscious of the natural and laudable desire of Indians to defend their own country. We have recognised this desire so far as we have been able to do so by the scheme of Indianization that is now in the process of being worked out. The scheme in itself does involve a gradual substitution of a considerable number of Indian for British officers and for a measure of substitution of Indian for British troops in such arms as artillery, signals and administrative service. I am of course aware that as a start this does not amount to anything enormous but it is a start and it does amount to something quite considerable. The point I wish to make and I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I make it, is that even the national sentiment, however much we may applaud, cannot be finally the decisive factor in a vital matter of this kind. We have got to consider certain hard facts which I now propose to deal with.

Firstly, I am most diffident to draw attention to myself but it is a fact that I am the person who is ultimately responsible to the Government of India and indeed to every single Indian in this country for ensuring so far as I can the peace and tranquillity of India. It is I who have to shoulder the blame if things go wrong and if when the moment comes our defence forces are found to be unequal to the tasks imposed upon them. I beg the House to remember that and to recognize that it is by no means a light responsibility.

Secondly, the force on which my predecessors and I have hitherto relied have been British soldiers led by British officers and Indian soldiers led by British officers. That is an organisation which has successfully preserved the peace of India for many years and that is an organization in which I am now asked to make radical and sweeping alterations. Believe me, Sir, I have served in the Indian army all my life and I yield to none in my admiration for that army and sepoy and Indian officers who constitute its foundations. But there is no getting away from the fact that it is the army which has been trained and led for years by British officers and we have had no real experience yet of army led and trained by Indian officers. I do not mean to say for the moment that it cannot be ever led and trained by Indian officers. I hope that one day it will be.

If I had not hope, so I could not have agreed to the measure of Indianization that is now in progress. But, Sir, it must take time. You cannot completely change the organization of any army in the world in a day. Meanwhile while this measure is going on and the whole international situation is so uncertain it is not in my opinion the moment to make a drastic reduction in the strength of the British army in India.

After all, Sir, the present combination of British and Indian troops has given us an army of which we may well be proud and which is, I venture to claim, the admiration of the countries outside India. To my mind this happy combination is due to the fact that there are qualities in British and Indian soldiers which are complementary to each other and produce a standard of efficiency which it behoves us to take into very careful consideration before it is disturbed.

Apropos of this point we have heard a great deal today about the ratio between British and Indian troops. There is evidently some misunderstanding of this point and I should like to take this opportunity of making the situation clear once and for all. Whatever may have been the case in the past I can assure the House that today there is no ratio laid down simply for the purpose of maintaining the mathematical proportion between the numbers of British and Indian troops in India. We have got past all that long ago. When we go to war our brigades are made up in proportion of three Indian units to one British unit. For internal security purposes it is true the number of British troops as compared with Indian troops is higher. And the result of all this is that the ratio of British to Indian soldiers in the army in India as a whole happens to work out at present at one to something between two and three. But these proportions are based on the practical experience of what has been found to give the best results and on what is considered necessary from time to time to carry out the role of the defence force as a whole. They are definitely not based on any preconceived notion that the number of Indian troops must not exceed the number of British troops by any particular figures. I hope I have made the point clear.

Now in this connection as already maintained by others this morning I may remind the House that the number of British troops in India has been reduced by some 20,000 since the war. In addition as I have already explained the measure of substitution of Indian for British troops is already in progress. Apart from this I can see no early prospect of any further substitution of Indian for British troops in India and I should be wrong to encourage false hopes in that respect. It is however possible that a certain reduction in the number of British troops may result from the changes of organisation which may be carried out in future as more modern weapons are taken into use and mechanization increased. It is also a fact as just explained by the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons that recruiting difficulties at home are going to cause fluctuations in the strength of British units overseas including India which will involve temporary shortages in establishments without reducing the actual number of units.

Thirdly and lastly, it may be suggested that I am merely giving my own personal opinions unsupported by those of other responsible authorities in India. That is very far from being the case. For instance, if I wish to move a single company of British troops from a single station anywhere in India I am immediately faced with the most vehement opposition from the local Government concerned. That is a hard fact and there is no getting away from it. Honourable members may suggest, as indeed they have, that an explanation is to be found in the composition of the present local Government. I do not agree, but anyhow that is beside the point. In not many days from now elected Indian Ministers will assume primary responsibility for maintenance of law and order throughout India. In discharging that responsibility they will have the full support of the army behind them just as the present Governments have it to-day. I do not claim to be a prophet, sir, but it may well be that Indian Ministers of the future to whatever political party they may belong will be very glad to feel that they have behind them the imperturbable and cheerful British soldier on whom in the last resort they will be able to rely for assistance. At any rate I would seriously ask this House whether it would agree to deprive the minister of the future in advance of the bulwark on which the local Governments of to-day place such implicit trust. Let us at least wait and see and let us not by any vote that the House may take to-day spread abroad the impression that provincial Governments of the future are going to be weakened in any way in discharging the onerous duties that lie before us.

To conclude, sir, from what I have said, I hope it is clear to the House that the main difference between the hon. mover of the resolution and myself lies in the words 'continuous reduction' as used in the text of his resolution. I have shown that the Government of India since the war have been working on the policy of 'gradual and prudent reduction' as regards the strength of British troops in India. They are still working on this policy but it must be left to them to decide as and when they are entirely satisfied that all circumstances are favourable. It follows, therefore, that the Government cannot commit themselves to the 'continuous reduction' regardless of what those circumstances may be. I regret therefore that I must oppose the resolution.

*Pandit Kunera's* resolution regarding the Indianization of the army was negatived by 59 votes to 10.

#### MORE APPOINTMENTS FOR ORIYAS

*Mr. Mahapatra* moved next a resolution recommending to the Governor General in Council to treat Oriyas as a minority community and to take early steps for recruitment of Oriyas in sufficient numbers in non-gazetted posts under the different departments of the Government of India particularly, railways and customs.

*Mr. Maxwell*, Home Secretary, opposing the resolution said that the principle had never been recognised by the Government that within the same religion there should be further territorial sub-divisions. If the Government went on making such divisions there would be no end to it. He opposed the resolution as he said the proposal therein was not practicable. He hoped, however, that with the separation of Orissa the Oriyas would get more opportunities to advance educationally when they should be able to hold their own in the open competitions.

*Mr. Mahapatra* withdrew the resolution.

#### AGENT TO PROTECT INDIAN INTERESTS IN BURMA

*Mr. P. N. Sappu* moved a resolution recommending to the Governor General in Council that he may on the separation of Burma from India be pleased to appoint an agent for protection of Indian labouring classes in Burma.

He said that the Royal Commission on Labour recommended the appointment of the protector of Indian labouring classes. After the separation the Government of India would not have any power to safeguard the interest of Indians in Burma as they had been doing hitherto. Some time ago there were anti-Indian riots in Burma when the Indian labourers suffered a good deal. In case a repetition of such unfortunate incidents occurred then there must be somebody to protect Indian interests.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad* said the Government would try to get certain statistical information as regards the position of Indian immigrants in Burma and their occupations. As soon as that information was available the question of appointment of an agent would receive the sympathetic consideration. He accepted the resolution on behalf of the Government. The resolution was therefore passed.

#### INDIGENOUS MANUFACTURE OF QUININE

*Mr. Sappu* moved another resolution recommending taking of steps to check malaria particularly by encouraging the indigenous manufacture of quinine and its distribution at rates within the means of rural classes. He said 100,000,000 to 200,000,000 people suffered every year from malaria in India. Of these only 100,000,000 people received treatment. The consumption of quinine was thus very low. It was only three and a half grains per head per annum as against 16 grains in Italy and 24 grains in Greece. While the consumption was inadequate being only 200,000 lbs. the supply was hopelessly insufficient. There were only two factories for the manufacture of quinine, one near Darjeeling and another near Ooty but both the factories did not produce more than 72,000 pounds. Therefore large quantities were imported. He wanted all that to be manufactured in India.

*Mr. Basu* said that the difficulty was that sufficient quantity was not grown and there was no private enterprise for the manufacture of quinine.

The debate had not concluded when the House adjourned.

#### VICEROY CERTIFIES FINANCE BILL

23rd. MARCH :—When the Council of State met this morning the President read the following message from the Governor-General :—

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly has failed to pass in the form recommended by me the Bill to fix duty on salt manufactured in or imported by land into our-

tain parts of British India, to vary the excise duty on sugar leviable under the Sugar (Excise Duty) Act of 1934, to vary certain duties leviable under the Indian Tariff Act of 1934, to vary excise duty on silver leviable under the Silver (Excise Duty) Act of 1930, to fix the maximum rates of postage under the Indian Post Office Act of 1898, and to fix the rates of income-tax and super-tax, a copy of which Bill in the form recommended by me is hereto annexed.

Now, therefore, I, Victor Alexander John, Marquess of Linlithgow, in the exercise of the power conferred by sub-section (1) of section 67-B of the Government of India Act do hereby certify that the passage of the said Bill is essential for the interests of British India.

(Sd.) LINLITHGOW

Viceroy and Governor-General.

The Governor-General's recommendation stated: "In pursuance of the provisions of sub-section (a) of section 67-B of the Government of India Act I, Victor Alexander John, Marquess of Linlithgow do recommend to the Council of State that it do pass the Finance Bill in the form hereto annexed."

Thereafter the Secretary of the Council presented the Bill to the House. The President then adjourned the Council till March 30.

#### RECOMMENDED FINANCE BILL DEBATE

**30th. MARCH :—**Mr. Nixon, Finance Secretary, moved to-day that the Finance Bill, as recommended by his Excellency the Viceroy, be taken into consideration.

He explained the effect of the two taxation measures proposed in the Bill as had been done by the Finance Member in the lower House. He emphasized that the additional sugar excise duty would not affect the producer of sugarcane in any way. He assured the House that this money was not being raised to finance additional expenditure at the centre, nor the top-heavy administration, nor the defence but to finance the provinces.

Mr. P. N. Saprú almost entirely devoted his speech to a consideration of the constitutional issue. He said this was the third occasion on which the Finance Bill came in a certified form. It had come to this that the executive could carry through legislation only by the exercise of special powers. This showed the Government was completely out of touch with public opinion. His main grievance was that the executive was not responsive. Government was getting more and more autocratic. The position taken up by the Finance Member was that here was a deficit budget and he had financial commitments and must therefore balance his budget. Even within limits of the present constitution, it was possible for Government to behave differently and be responsive to public opinion. Mr. P. N. Saprú asked why it was not possible for the Finance Member to consult leaders of the Opposition groups to settle beforehand in what direction taxation should be imposed in order to balance the budget. The speaker was sure that the House was not prepared to swallow the certified bill. It was convinced that Government was not responsible and no elected member should shoulder the Government's responsibility, specially in view of the fact that Government had failed to prove that the Assembly was wrong, and, therefore, there was no other alternative for Government than to certify the Bill.

The other alternative for Government was to carry an amendment to the Finance Bill in the Council of State and go back to the Assembly with the altered Bill and give its members a chance to revise their views. This would have been in conformity with democratic principles of government.

Dealing with the merits of the Bill Mr. Saprú wondered why non-official members should be asked to restore the budget deficit when these deficits were the creation of Government. He cited as an instance the separation of Burma, the creation of deficit provinces and thrusting of an expensive constitution on the people which was never wanted. He strongly opposed the excise duty on sugar as it would badly hit a rising industry.

Mr. V. Ramdas Pantulu opposed the Finance Bill with a 'clear conscience.' He did not share Mr. Saprú's regret that the Government did not adopt a procedure other than certification with regard to the passing of the Finance Bill. Any change in the Government's plan would not have made the slightest difference. There was no regret on his part that the Government did not try, according to Mr. Saprú, to placate either the moderates or the extremists. The Government's policy was one of exploitation, which had been resented. The Finance Bill clearly proved that the

Finance Member was an agent of British imperialism and was not acting on behalf of the people of this country. Concrete proposals had been made for balancing the budget, but the Government had other alternatives than the acceptance of constructive suggestions. He cited Government's attitude in adhering to the Loo Concessions and in spending six lakhs in sending an Indian contingent to London to take part in the coronation celebrations, and the growth of military expenditure as typical examples of their callous disregard of the popular demand for effecting an improvement in the financial position. The Government could effect savings if they wanted to do so. The budget was and would always be judged by the amount and extent of relief given to the poor. In India the problem of the poverty of the masses and commodity prices had existed for a long time.

Referring to the Finance Bill, Mr. Ramdas Pantulu said that the position of the Council of State was most humiliating. The Assembly had at least the satisfaction of rejecting the Finance Bill. He strongly opposed the excise duty on sugar, and regretted that the salt duty was not reduced, although it had been proved that whenever there was a reduction in the salt duty there was an increased consumption of salt. He next referred to the postal rate and said that he was sorry that at the time of laying down office, Sir Frank Noyce could not effect, a much desired reform. Dealing with the sugar duty, Mr. Pantulu observed that the Finance Member's statement that the sugar industry was making excessive profits was not correct. It had been hoped that with the investment of nearly 84 crores in this industry India would be self-contained with regard to sugar consumption. But the present measure had destroyed all such hopes. It was not true to say that the consumer was paying more as a result of protection.

Mr. V. V. Kalikar said that at the time of making the present constitution it was stated that the power of certification would be used only when law and order and the financial credit of the country were at stake. But, he regretted, this power was being used even when there was no such apprehension. What did it matter in a budget of 80 crores if the Assembly voted down 100 lakhs?

Raj Bahadur Lal Ramsaran Das enumerated the financial measures which the Government had taken recently, all of which, he said, had resulted in loss to India. While travelling recently through Java, he heard a rumour that owing to the international situation the British Government had agreed to take some measures which might encourage the import of Java sugar into India.

The Finance Member, interveniug, assured the speaker that he had not heard such a rumour and that, in any case, the increase in the sugar excise duty had no connection with such a rumour. Nor did he hope that the increase in the excise duty would encourage the import of Java sugar.

Continuing, Raj Bahadur Lal Ramsaran Das said that next year the House would be able to judge for itself the effect of the additional excise duty. He feared that it would result in an increased import of Java sugar into India.

Haji Syed Mohammad Hussain deplored that the House was in the hopeless position of having to pass the Bill without changing a comma. The time had come when the Government should not rely altogether on counting votes only. Government must abandon the policy of taxing the necessities of life. The Finance Member could have balanced the budget without taxing sugar and silver. If only a 5 per cent. export duty had been imposed on gold, the Finance Member could have got much more than what he needed; but unfortunately, he could not flout the instructions of the Home Government in the matter of gold exports.

Sir K. R. Menon expressed disappointment at the fact that no provision had been made for the continuation of grants for rural development, and hoped that it might be possible to restore it in the course of the new financial year.

Referring to the excise duty on sugar, he thought that the case for duty was complete and convincing. He was of the opinion that the State having lost considerable revenue through the loss of sugar customs, it was justified in recouping the loss, partly at any rate, by levying tax on sugar. Any difficulties confronting the industry must be solved by the industry itself. This industry had the entire Indian market, free from external competition, to itself. Internal competition was in the interests of the consumer, and the Government should not be a party to its restriction. Nor should the Government encourage any attempt to restrict the extension of the sugar industry beyond the areas now occupied by it. Provincial Governments had sunk

considerable sums in irrigation schemes and other projects, and they should be allowed perfect freedom in developing the cultivation of cane and the production of sugar in their areas. The speaker also thought it was possible that the best areas for the growth of sugarcane lay outside the areas now occupied by the sugar industry. He supported the proposal of taxation.

Continuing, *Haji Syed Mohammed Hussain* referred to the plight of Indian settlers abroad and said that the best course for calling the attention of the Colonial Office to this grave injustice was, for the Government of India, to resign in a body. More lip sympathy was of no avail. He appealed to the House to throw out the Finance Bill.

*Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru* criticised the top-heavy administration of the Government of India and particularly referred to the appointment of an army officer as a military financial adviser. Where was the necessity for having a whole-time officer as Government Whip in the Assembly?

Referring to the I. O. S. officer who was on special duty in the Railway Board, Mr. Kunzru wished to know whether he was doing any responsible work at all. He characterized these appointments as scandalous and said that if the Government had even a modicum of fairness in what they were doing, they need not have come before them with a certified Finance Bill. Mr. Kunzru declared that the sum total of Government's policy was racial, their object being to keep away Indians, as much as possible, from positions of responsibility.

Dealing with the proposals of taxation Mr. Kunzru said that a tax on the export of gold or the re-imposition of surcharge of incometax and super-tax would have been preferable to the silver or sugar duty. If Government were unwilling to await the recommendations of the Sugar Tariff Board, the least they could have done was to reduce the import duty other than increase the excise duty.

Concluding, Mr. Kunzru said that the methods advocated by the Government were not the best possible that could be brought forward under the circumstances. They could have devised measures which, while bringing in necessary revenue, would have spared the poor man.

*Sir James Grigg*, replying to the debate, said that the Opposition speeches had great similitude. Some speakers attributed to him arguments he did not use and then proceeded to demolish these unfounded contentions, while other groups of speakers repeated the speeches of years ago, without considering what bearing subsequent events had on these earlier arguments, and there was a final group which dealt only in 'emphatic protests'. The inescapable fact was that the budget proposals had to fill a gap of Rs. 165 lakhs.

Dealing with what he called an invariable untruth—that he was an agent of British Commerce, Sir James Grigg said that he might with more truth refer to some speakers as the jackals of Big Business; but he contented himself by saying that they could more aptly be called sheep in the wolf's clothing. Sir James Grigg then said his remarks did not apply to many thoughtful speeches like that made by Sir Ramuuni Menon. The Finance Member affirmed that the fact that vested interests were appearing as champions of the cultivator convinced that it was not the cultivator who was going to pay. The essence of the protectionist argument was that the general community should lose more than the particularly protected community. He did not think any great economist was needed to rebut that argument. Sir James Grigg quoted the opinion expressed by one closely interested in the sugar industry, which he said, might be considered as an antidote to a good deal of fictitious agitation and threats. This gentleman had in no uncertain terms condemned the tactics of a certain section of manufacturers and the get-rich-quicker idea which underlay their arguments. Sir James did not deny that the primary motive in the enhancement of the excise duty was revenue; but at the same time he strongly believed that this measure would have a stabilizing and beneficent effect on the sugar industry as a whole. Economic interests required that action would in any case require to be taken if the disaster which lay ahead was to be averted. Nothing had been said to alter the view which he had originally adopted. The Finance Member again assured the House that he was not advocating a policy of Free Trade for India. Nothing was futher from his idea. What he desired was that protection should be justified, it should not be excessive and that it should not cost revenue more than was necessary.

Sir James Grigg next said that he shared the regret, expressed in the course of

the debate, that grants for rural development had been discontinued, and hoped that it would be possible to restore this at some future time.

Turning to the suggestion that a tax on gold exports should be imposed, the Finance Member said he could not understand how the Opposition speakers could consistently advocate this. Adherents of this proposal had openly stated the export of gold was due to distress selling by the cultivator, yet there was not the slightest doubt that in a free gold market the tax must fall on the seller. Advocates of a gold export tax were, therefore, advocating a tax on the cultivator.

In connection with the military expenditure, Sir James Grigg said he would be deceiving the House if he led them to suppose that, in the existing circumstances, there was the slightest possibility, even if it were desirable, of reducing the military expenditure. The Finance Member referred to the sympathy expressed by Sir Philip Chetwode two years ago with the suggestion that the United Kingdom might be asked to bear an increased contribution; but he said that this was not the right time, when the United Kingdom was trebling its own military expenditure, to press such a suggestion.

Mention had been made, in the course of the debate, of the expenditure which the United Kingdom and Germany were incurring, and Sir James Grigg pointed out that Germany was spending at least twenty-five times Britain's expenditure, and eight times more than India, on military expenditure. India was practically the only country where the expenditure was remaining stationary.

The House divided, and Mr. Nixon's motion for taking the Finance Bill as recommended by the Viceroy into consideration was adopted by 27 votes to 15. The House then adjourned.

**31st. MARCH :—**The House commenced consideration of the Finance Bill clause by clause to-day. The second clause relating to salt duty was passed without discussion.

When the third clause containing the additional sugar excise duty was put *Syed Hussain Imam* challenged the Government contention that the additional duty would stop the growth of new sugar factories. He feared that it would badly hit smaller factories which were almost exclusively owned by Indians.

Mr. S. N. Mahtha said the bill had the bad odour of autocracy after certification. The Finance Member had contended that members on the Opposition benches had no reason to protest on what he (the Finance Member) had proposed in the bill. Mr. Mahtha said the Opposition members protested because they felt that Government still had some respect for the views of the people's representatives.

Mr. J. S. Roy opined that the deficit in the budget could have been met by tapping other sources such as imposition of duty on pig iron.

Mr. Nixon, Finance secretary, assured *Syed Hossain Imam* that Government were not neglecting small industries. Ninety-six per cent. of Khandasari manufacturers were not touched by this duty.

After all the clauses were adopted without any amendment, Mr. Nixon moved that the bill be passed.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu, opposing the motion, said that he could not help feeling the Government was pursuing a shortsighted policy under the direction of the Finance Member.

*Syed Hossain Imam* complained that by not being present in the Council of State when the House met at 10-30 yesterday the Finance Member showed deliberate 'dis-respect' to the House.

The *President* pointed out that the Finance Member was not a member of the House and was under no obligation to be present in the Council of State. He only did so when it was convenient and suitable to him.

*Syed Hossain Imam* discussed at length India's debt position and the provision for sinking fund etc. Referring to income-tax he strongly protested against legal avoidance of the tax by officers proceeding home on leave. He criticized the unfair financial adjustment between India and Burma at the time of separation and in particular emphatically condemned the policy of allowing India to be the training ground for a huge army for the benefit of empire countries. The Burma Government should in equity and justice make some payment for the liabilities incurred by India to supply a certain portion of the army after separation.

Mr. P. N. Saprú's speech was mainly an answer to Sir James Grigg's speech delivered in the House yesterday. Mr. Saprú, speaking after Syed Hossain Imam, said that if there were repetitions in the speeches of members on the Opposition benches there were also repetitions and old platitudes in the speech of the Finance Member. The intensity of feelings against the Finance Bill was apparent from the fact that out of the 17 elected members present in the House yesterday 15 voted against the Bill.

Mr. Saiyad Mohamed Pashah, opposing the Bill, said that the Government was not well advised in imposing an additional excise duty on sugar without waiting for the conclusion of the Tariff Board's enquiry into sugar.

Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das said that since there had been a drop of over four crores in the revenues of India during the last four years there was a clear case of appointing a committee of enquiry to examine the present expenditure of the Government of India and propose retrenchment. He regretted that the Government of India had not implemented the recommendations of the Inchaape Committee. Some of the recommendations which were given effect to were later undone. Lala Ram Saran Das criticized the tariff policy as being against the interests of India.

Mr. Sita Kanta Mahapatra said that he had come from a province where there was no sugar factory but despite the fact that almost every elected member in the lower house opposed the sugar excise duty the Government still remained unconvinced.

Mr. H. N. Kunzru opined that the Finance Member's speech delivered yesterday was a curious mixture of his resentment to criticism and superiority complex. In delivering such a speech the Finance Member was misusing his position. Mr. Nixon's case for the imposition of silver duty came to this that he told the people of India to export their goods but in return accept only British goods.

Mr. Nixon, replying to the debate, said that he would not answer to some of the libellous remarks against Sir James Grigg but would say that 'I who work in close touch with him more than any body else can say that never on any occasion have I seen him moved by any thing else than the good of India which he like all others has come to serve'.

Turning to the arguments of the previous speakers, the Finance Secretary told Lala Ram Saran Das that if India wanted recovery from Burma of all the expenditure incurred in their behalf then surely Burma had the right of demanding back their contribution to Indian revenues made by Burma during the past many years at the rate of two or three crores per year.

The Bill as certified was passed by 26 votes to 15 and the house adjourned.

#### INDIAN ARMY ACT AMEND. BILL

1st. APRIL :—No Congress Member was present in the House when the Council of State met this morning. The President at the outset announced that he was satisfied that Pandit Kunzru's motion for adjournment regarding the I. M. S., was in order and decided to take it up immediately after termination of to-day's legislative business.

The Commander-in-Chief moved for consideration of the Bill amending the Indian Army Act. He said the fact that it was discussed at considerable length in the Assembly was sufficient reason for passing it readily. Its provisions were entirely unobjectionable. It provided that Indian officers of the Reserve be subjected to military law when they were called to duty. That was the position which British officers of the Reserve enjoyed. Therefore, if the Bill was not passed, Indian officers of the Reserve would automatically be governed by military law at all times.

Mr. Saprú and Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru asked certain questions, replying to which Mr. Tottenham admitted that the British personnel of the army was governed by the British Act and Indian Section by the Indian Act, but that this did not imply discrimination for power of command given to the respective sections and did not differ in way. The motion for consideration was passed and the Bill as passed by the Assembly was also passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTION ON THE I. M. S.

It was 11-30 when Pandit Kunzru moved the adjournment motion on the Reorganisation of the I. M. S. He said that Indians' main objections against the I. M. S. had been that it had unnecessarily a larged cadre and Indians enjoyed very restricted opportunities. He was glad that some reduction in the cadre had taken place



and hoped that more reduction would take place in the very near future. In the resolution recently issued by the Government the proportion of 2 British to one Indian was still being maintained, despite the fact that Indians had been found to be equally efficient as British I. M. S. Officers. Why should India be made to keep the Royal Army Medical Corps in its I. M. S. for war purposes?

*Mr. E. Sir Robert Cassels*, participating early in the debate, said that a number of claims and interests had to be considered before drawing up the scheme. It would be impossible to evolve a plan which would satisfy everybody. As the Commander-in-Chief, the speaker must satisfy himself that efficiency of the Army Medical organisation was high and war reserve was reliable. He should also have a certain minimum of British officers.

*Mr. Kumaru* : Why!

*Sir Robert Cassels* answered that it was not a new principle and if there were differences of opinion as to its necessity, then "we should disagree". (Words in quotation were inaudible both in the press gallery and to the official reporter). At the same time he did not wish to employ more British officers than was strictly necessary. Total reduction of 87 officers had been made and he opined that it was a distinct improvement on the present situation from the Indian point of view.

*Mr. P. N. Sanyal* characterised the reorganisation and reservation of most important posts for Britishers as the worst form of racial discrimination. The speaker condemned selection by nomination and said that India was entitled to ask that competitive examination for I. M. S. should be held in India alone; but as a moderate he would be content if the examination was held simultaneously in India and England.

*Mr. Hossain Imam* said that the reason why the system of nomination was resorted to was that Britishers were afraid to face the competition. He warned the Government, against fooling Indians by this bogie of British Doctors for Britishers and said they could not be fooling everyone for all time.

*Mr. Tottenham*, Defence Secretary, who took his seat in the Council to-day maintained that it would be far cheaper to continue to employ a certain number of I. M. S. Officers for war reserve in civil employ. He was not prepared to go into the merit of the question whether British Doctors were essential or not for the treatment of British Officers, their wives and children. But rightly or wrongly, having reached that decision that they must have a certain number of British Doctors, the problem was how to recruit the required quota. The system of nomination was introduced as they were finding it difficult to get sufficient number of Britishers through competition. *Mr. Tottenham* claimed that the present communique would result in a great improvement in future so far as the standard of British-recruits was concerned. He denied that the present reorganisation implied any reduction in the number of Indian Officers. What is implied was a reduction in the number of British and Indian I. M. S. Officers to a minimum that the Provincial Governments would be under statutory obligation to employ. This would also mean as little interference as possible with Provincial autonomy in this matter. Beyond a fixed minimum, Provincial Governments would be free to appoint as many Indian I. M. S. Officers as possible. Proceeding, *Mr. Tottenham* contended that reserving posts for Britishers was not a new principle. He claimed there have been very rapid Indianisation in Medical Services since the war. Quoting figures, he pointed out that now there would be about 80 to 85 per cent of Indian I. M. S. Officers as compared with only about 10 per cent ten or twelve years ago.

*Mr. Padshah* and *Mr. Mahata* condemned the invidious discrimination against Indians. *Mr. Padshah* referring to certain reserved posts in the Madras Medical College asked why they were being reserved for British Officers.

*Sir Jagdish Prasad* argued that, once the principle of British Doctors for treatment of Britishers having been recognised, for a long time the present was the most economical arrangement under the circumstances. He assured that so far as Indian I. M. S. Officers were concerned, they could rise to the highest posts on civil side and there was no bar or obstacle in the way.

*Pandit Kumaru* replying to the debate said that India could not remain contented with a mere reduction in the cadre of I. M. S. The Government must reduce the ratio of British soldiers to Indians. By accepting the Government resolution, they would be accepting for all times the ratio of two British to one Indian in I. M. S. and would not have any hope of having Indian civil surgeons in big cities. Was that Indianisation, he asked. Moreover the resolution increased the number of British I. M. S. in the provincial services by ten.

At 1-30 the President rose and said that the debate had terminated, the motion having thus been talked out.

#### INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY AMEND BILL

3rd APRIL :—The Council of State passed to-day the Bill amending the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and the Bill amending the Indian Red Cross Society Act of 1920 which were recently passed by the Assembly.

Before adjourning the House till the 5th., *Sir Maneckji Dadabhoj* apologised to the House for not being able to continue as President till the conclusion of the present session as he was proceeding to the Coronation. He announced that his duties would in his absence be performed by a panel of Chairmen consisting of *Sir Phiroze Sethna* and *Sir David Devadas*.

5th. APRIL :—The Council of State met to consider non-official resolutions to-day, *Sir Phiroze Sethna*, chairman, presiding.

#### ANTI-MALARIAL MEASURES

Further discussion on *Mr. P. N. Saprú's* resolution urging steps to check malaria, particularly by encouraging indigenous manufacture of quinine and its distribution at rates within the means of the rural classes, was taken up.

*Sir Jagdish Prasad* said that from April 1 the question of fixing the price of quinine was entirely a provincial matter and the central Government had no power therein. Considering that questions of health extended beyond provincial boundaries, the Government of India constituted a central health board in order to coordinate provincial activities. He assured the House that when the board met at the end of May the subject matter contained in *Mr. Saprú's* resolution would be one of the items that would be placed before it.

In view of this assurance, *Mr. Saprú* withdrew the resolution.

#### EXCLUSION OF INDIANS FROM GOVT. COMMITTEES

*Mr. Ramdas Pantulu* moved a resolution that in future no non-Indian, except those who were in the service of the Crown in India, be appointed on a committee appointed by the Government of India.

*Mr. Ramdas Pantulu* explained that the idea of tabling this resolution occurred to him while listening to the speech of the Commerce Member defending the appointment of the Wedgwood Committee. He got the impression that the sentiments or wishes of the people of India had no place whatever with the Government of India in making its choice of experts whose advice they desired to obtain on matters relating to administration and affairs in this country. The most aggressive manifestation of the Government's policy was the appointment of an expert on the Wedgwood Railway Enquiry Committee from South Africa, which country was openly pledged to a policy of evicting Indians from its territory and had nothing but contempt for India and her people. In this connection the speaker quoted the remarks made by the Minister of Agriculture in the Union Government replying to a deputation of Indians in connection with the Marketing Bill: 'Gentlemen, you must realize that you Indians in South Africa will ever be a tragic community because of the temper and temperament of the people of South Africa. We have that temper and temperament because we are determined to keep this a whiteman's country'. Could an insult to Indians be more deliberate or take a more aggravated form? Even if the South African in question was the best railway expert in the world no Government which had the slightest regard for the wishes or sentiments of the people over whom it ruled would stoop to perpetrate such an outrage on the public opinion of the country it governed.

*Mr. Ramdas Pantulu* said that it seemed to him that the old policy of appointing mixed committees with Britishers and Indians had given place to a new policy of excluding Indians altogether. During *Sir George Schuster's* time several committees were appointed invariably composed of Indians in large proportions, but a most regrettable change in the attitude and outlook had set in in recent years ever since *Sir James Grigg* came, and suddenly it appeared that the Government of which he was a Member lost faith in the capacity of Indians. The speaker instanced the recent committees which were entirely composed of Europeans and said that Indians to whatever political party they might belong to could not have confidence in the investigations thus conducted solely by non-Indians. It was a pity that the Government of India had not benefited by the experience of the Simon Commission.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu, concluding, said that the struggle for India's political and economic betterment had reached a stage where she was no longer in a mood to rely on foreign advice as to what was good for her and the children of her soil. An attempt to solve such problems on the advice of foreigners was an anachronism and a political heresy.

Raj Bahadur *Sri Narain Mahtha* moved an amendment to the effect that in future committees appointed by Government should always have a majority of non-official Indians. Mr. Mahtha commended his amendment which, he said, would relieve the original resolution of its exclusivism. If the resolution was passed without amendment it would exclude from committees non-Indians who might have earned a status in this country by entering learned professions and acquired a stake in the country by investment in industries, agriculture or planting.

*Syed Hossain Imam*, supporting the amendment, said that it laid down a principle which should not only be acceptable but should have been accepted without being moved. The only objection to it was that India did not have many experts of its own. Although there was some justification for this objection, it was the result of Government's policy of keeping the nation deliberately in a state of minority. He suggested that just as India was producing industrial goods under a protective system similarly experts could be produced by sending Indians abroad for study. But meanwhile by having a non-official Indian majority in committees Government would give satisfaction to the country while retaining liberty of action in their own hands.

*Syed Mohamad Fadzah* said that the amendment was reasonable both to Indians and non-Indians.

Mr. P. N. Saprú said that he would be sorry if foreign experts were excluded altogether from committees. He referred to several enquiries in which distinguished experts from outside had been associated such as Sir Michael Sadler and Sir Arthur Salter. He referred to the immediate provocation for the resolution, namely, the appointment of the Wedgwood Committee and he asked if the South African Government would have appointed Sir Guthrie Russell or Sir Raghavendra Rao to enquiries in the Union.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad* pointed out that the South African representative on the Wedgwood Committee was only a servant of the South African railways and not a South African himself. Sir Jagadish Prasad, continuing, stressed the undesirability of allowing in India the racial bar against which India was struggling so hard in South Africa. The resolution mentioned only committees, but the mover's speech included experts, and Sir Jagadish Prasad declared that it would be a misfortune if in seeking advice India should not go outside the country even if she was convinced that advice from outside would help her in advancing more rapidly.

Regarding the amendment it raised a question of officials versus non-officials and sought to lay down that no matter what the object of the enquiry was, whether it was technical or scientific or some other, there should be a non-official majority. He illustrated the unacceptability of such a proposition by referring to the Anti-Malaria Committee, the Sewage Committee in Delhi and Quetta Reconstruction Committee and asked how Government could not on the advice of committees of this kind if they contained a majority of non-officials who had no expert knowledge. It was, therefore, not possible to accept either the resolution or the amendment.

Mr. *Rett Parker* did not think it a feasible suggestion that when they wanted an expert enquiry they must first send three or four non-official Indians on a tour round the world and turn them into experts. As regards South Africa he said it was one of the best countries that could be studied with a view to getting some idea of the best method of co-ordinating the road-rail problem and that was one of the reasons why an Englishman from South Africa came here.

*Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru* complained that Sir Jagadish Prasad had made a negative speech and failed to indicate what the positive policy of Government was. He dealt at length with the Wedgwood Committee and said that the Government's explanation of this committee's personnel meant in plain terms that Government wanted a body politically biased in its own favour. Pandit Kunzru declared that the suggestion that Indians should be sent abroad to study and become experts was not so novel as Mr. Parker seemed to think. It was an ordinary method followed in other countries.

Mr. *Ramdas Pantulu*, replying to the debate, made it clear that no racial discrimination was involved in this resolution. It admitted a certain section of Britishers who had become experts in matters Indian but excluded European capitalists and

industrial magnates because in the present circumstances of India there was a fundamental conflict between Europeans and Indians and it helped neither the British nor the Indian to collaborate in matters where such conflict existed. As regards South Africa, he declared that the policy of retaliation was now the accepted policy and even if we could not get an expert from any other country he would not have one from that country.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad* reiterated that Government could not accept the proposition that non-Indians in India should be excluded because they were not in office, but he said that under the resolution it was open to Government to have a committee to three European officials for instance. Would that be acceptable to the mover?

*Mr. Ramdas Pantula* replied, 'yes if that is the best course'.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad* declared that there was no desire on the part of Government to scorn Indian advice. After all the report of every committee would come before the legislature and Government would not constitute a committee whose recommendations were regarded with suspicion or prejudice from the start.

The amendment was put and rejected by 27 votes to 9 and the resolution was negatived without division.

#### RADIO RESEARCH

Thereafter *Pandit Hriday Nath Kunnru* moved a resolution that in view of the great importance of radio development to India, an All India Radio Research Board be established on the lines of the Radio Research Board of the United Kingdom.

He said that radio was in modern days one of the potent instruments for breaking down the citadel of illiteracy and for enlightenment of the masses. The experience of England and the Dominions showed how useful the establishment of such a research board would be to India as well. The importance of academic research seemed to have been recognized by the Government of India themselves. The creation of a Radio Research Board would be useful both to this country and the empire broadcasting service.

*Mr. A. G. Clove* said that he was in full agreement with the mover as regards the potentialities of radio in educational and cultural spheres. But the crux of the question was funds and personally he did not believe in creating a board which would soon get into the cold for want of money. Besides radio, there were a large number of other claims on Government funds. He felt that broadcasting would grow in India, but that the stage had not yet been reached when the creation of research board as suggested in the resolution would be beneficial or useful.

*Syed Hossain Imam* said that he wanted a better, cheaper and more extensive broadcasting service. The village programme broadcast by air was too light. He suggested that one way of raising money for research work was to collect a surcharge of two and half per cent on imported radio articles.

*Mr. P. N. Saprú* urged more facilities for research work for university professors. If a choice were to be made between radio research work and industries research work he would certainly devote money for the former (latter?).

*Pandit Kunnru* replied to the debate.

*Mr. Clove*, winding up the debate, informed *Syed Hossain Imam* that even if a Radio Research Board were given wide terms of reference they would not be able to substitute a heavier programme for villages. He wished he had more money to distribute to university professors for research work. Government were already spending Rs. 60,000 yearly and wanted more but could not get from the Finance department. The resolution was rejected without division.

#### INDIAN JUDGES IN HIGH COURTS

*Haji Syed Mohammed Hussain* moved that 'the number of Indian judges in the High Courts of India be increased to at least 2-3rd of the total number of judges of that High Court'. He had not begun his speech when the House adjourned.

6th. APRIL.—The discussion was resumed on *Haji Syed Mohamed Hussain's* resolution recommending increase in the number of Indian judges in high courts in India to at least two-thirds of total number. *Haji Mahomed Hussain*, continuing his speech, asked why, when Indian judges were equally good and in some cases better, we should have more than a certain number of judges from outside.

Mr. P. N. Saprú urged that only efficiency should be the test of appointments to high courts and he declared that high courts would not be satisfied with the quality of civilian judges whose ignorance of Indian law and Indian conditions was often commented on the bar libraries.

Mr. Saprú complained that after transfer of Sir Shah Sulaiman to Federal Court there would be no Indian Chief Justice left. The speaker referred to the rumour that Justice Subbarao was likely to be superseded and his claims to Chief Justiceship of the Madras High Court overlooked. What was this if not racial discrimination?

Mr. B. K. Basu stated that the appointment of judges was under the new Government of India not no longer within the purview of the Governor-General in Council. The speaker, therefore, could not understand the scope of the resolution. He asked, 'Are we going to have racial discrimination in our high courts?' Personally if there was discrimination in favour of Indians he would oppose even that.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu declared that every department of administration should be manned by the Indians who were best fitted among Indians. Assuming that the European judges were equally competent, was that any reason why they should appoint an Indian? Mr. Ramdas Pantulu cited several instances in which barristers and civilian judges betrayed ignorance of Indian law. He said under the present Act, Government were now at liberty to give effect to the recommendation contained in the resolution.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu also referred to the attempts being made to supersede Justice Subbarao of the Madras High Court.

Mr. Nixon (official) said that he would intervene only to say that the supporters of the resolution seemed to think that they would prefer to be judged by an Indian judge than by an English judge.

Mr. Maxwell, speaking on behalf of Government, pointed out that the subject matter of the resolution was not within the competence of the Governor-General in Council and added that high courts, in the words of the Joint Parliamentary Committee were essentially a provincial institution. The Governor-General in Council while in no way hostile to the spirit of the resolution must oppose it because if it was passed it would be beyond his power to implement its recommendation.

The speaker would nevertheless place a few very simple considerations before the House and show the present position. The total number of non-European judges of the high-courts in India this year was 48 and European judges 47. The percentage of non-European judges had increased from 20 in 1910 to 51 in 1937 and had slightly exceeded the recommendation in favour of 50 per cent. made by a resolution moved in 1922 by Sir Phiroze Sethna (who was in the chair).

Haji Mohammad Hussain, interrupting, asked if the efficiency had increased or decreased.

Mr. Maxwell said it would be highly improper for him to express an opinion. As regards the value of barrister and civil service judges, Mr. Maxwell quoted Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú's speech made in 1921 in which he paid a tribute to the high tradition of independence and freedom which English barristers brought with them.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu—We prefer the son to the father.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru asked, was Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú speaking at the time as a non-official member. Pandit Kunzru himself replied to his own question and said that Sir T. B. Saprú was a member of the Government then.

Mr. Maxwell proceeding quoted the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report in which Indian Civil Service judges had been commended for their knowledge of Indian country life and conditions and of the criminal law. He said the report was signed by eminent Indian lawyers.

Mr. Maxwell's statement was contradicted by several members who said that the Indian delegation had nothing to do with the preparation of the report.

Sir Phiroze Sethna, from the chair, confirmed that the report was not signed by the Indian delegation.

Mr. Maxwell referring again to the increased percentage said that there was no reason why it should not go on increasing still further. He thought that the motion was a vote of non-confidence in the high courts and he added that if there was one department of administration which commanded the confidence of the Indian public generally it was the high courts and it would be against the sense of the majority of the House to say, as was implied in the resolution, that they were not satisfied with what the high courts were now able to do.

Syed Hossain Imam said that it was not an unnatural demand that Indians should have a certain proportion in service in the administration of their own country. The argument of inefficiency was a mere matter of opinion.

Haji Syed Mohammad Hussain said that it was true that His Majesty had made appointments of judges, but before such appointments were made the recommendations of the Government of India were always considered and accepted. His demand was a very modest one. Was it not time to ask the Government to increase the proportion of Indian judges laid down as far back as 1923? The resolution did not in any way mean a reflection on the existing European high court judges.

Mr. Maxwell, winding up the debate, expressed his inability to give an assurance in a matter which did not concern the Government of India. He said in the existing law there was no obstacle to the increasing of Indian judges to any number.

Haji Mohammad Hussain, being satisfied with the reply, withdrew his resolution. The House, then, adjourned for lunch.

#### HINDU WOMEN'S RIGHT

The House carried with acclamation Mr. P. N. Saprū's motion that the bill to amend the Hindu law governing the Hindu women's rights to property as passed by the Legislative Assembly be passed. Dr. Deshmukh, author of the bill in the Assembly, was present in the gallery.

Mr. Kumar Sankar Roy Choudhry introduced a bill to provide for trial by jury in sedition cases.

#### IMPORT OF VEGETABLE OIL

Lala Ramsaran Das moved a resolution recommending the prohibition of import of vegetable oil unless it is given a permanent harmless colouring which would readily distinguish it from and render it unfit for mixing without detection with the natural pure ghee. The resolution also recommended the prohibition of manufacture of vegetable oil in India unless it was also similarly coloured. Lala Ramsaran Das dealt lengthily with the harmful effects of adulteration of pure ghee with vegetable ghee.

Sir Jagadish Prasad pointed out that the provincial Governments were now the proper authority to take action of the kind suggested in the resolution.

Lala Ramsaran Das, replying, stated that it was doubtful whether provincial councils would work and whether they would last long. In those circumstances it devolved on the Government of India to take steps in the interest of India's health.

The resolution was rejected and the House adjourned.

#### GRANT TO ORISSA GOVERNMENT

7th. APRIL :—The Council of State had a thin attendance when it reassembled to transact non-official business.

Mr. Mahapatra moved a resolution recommending the giving of substantial grant to the Government of Orissa for the improvement of cottage industries in that province.

Mr. Clow, Secretary, Industries department, explained that so far over Rs. 24,000 had been given to that province in the shape of grants for cottage industries. Grants had been increasing from year to year and he could not say what amount the industries conference would recommend this year. He hoped the grant would be more than Rs. 9,400 given in the last financial year.

Mr. Mahapatra satisfied with the reply withdrew the resolution.

#### PURCHASING POWER OF INDIANS

Syed Hossain Imam moved a resolution recommending the Governor-General in Council to take practical steps in all possible directions to increase the purchasing power of Indians. He opined that India's currency was overvalued. The result was that India's position in the world trade list had gone down. Whereas she was sixth previously she was ninth now. He did not wish the ratio to be manipulated but the same course should be followed in respect of currency as in England, the aim being to regulate the prices and not to maintain any rigid connection between the currencies of foreign countries. He advocated the utilization of the man power of India to the advantage by providing some cottage industries to agriculturists during their leisure season. In short Government should have a clear cut policy

for the good of the people behind their fiscal and currency policy. He acknowledged what the Government had done so far but that was far too little.

Sir K. R. Menon opined that the devaluation of the currency was an extremely complicated subject which could be dealt with only by Government.

Mr. Malika suggested that Government should try to make the villages self-sufficient units and help in the starting of cottage industries on cooperative lines.

Mr. P. N. Saprú advocated the organization of industries on a vast scale.

Mr. Nixon, Finance Secretary, replying on behalf of Government enumerated certain principles which could not be ignored. He said the rise in agricultural prices would not necessarily benefit the cultivator, particularly in India where the agriculturist owing to his ignorance was robbed of benefit. Any interference in the economic machine would create its own repercussions. It was therefore dangerous to meddle with any link in the economic chain without clearly seeing the consequences beforehand.

As regards the ratio, he said Syed Hossain Imam had said that if the rupee were devalued the prices in India generally would increase and also the exports from India would increase. He pointed out that the two effects were opposed to each other. Devaluation was another manner of putting burden on the consumer and he did not see how prosperity could come merely by calling eight annas a rupee. That was how devaluation was described by a prominent person. He assured the House that Government were doing planning in almost every department. The Lloyd Barrage and civil aviation were the results of planning. He admitted that planning was not on a scale at which it was done in Russia or America but that was incompatible with a democratic Government. Government were constantly taking steps to increase the purchasing power of the masses but there were no short cuts to prosperity.

After Mr. K. R. Choudhury had supported and Syed Hossain Imam had replied the resolution was rejected.

#### ARYA INTER-MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL

The House passed Mr. P. N. Saprú's bill to recognize the validity of inter-marriages current among the Arya Samajists as passed by the Assembly.

#### BILL TO CONTROL COASTAL TRAFFIC

Mr. Saprú introduced the bill to control the coastal traffic of India. The bill was originally introduced by the same member in the last Council and circulated for opinions but fell through with the dissolution of the Council. It has been redrafted in order to meet certain criticisms. The statement of objects and reasons makes it clear that there is no question of any discrimination between British and Indian shipping. Past experience, however, shows that a well-established powerful company engaged in coastal traffic can easily put a new venture out of action by unfair competition. The fear of such an unfair competition deters the Indian capital from being invested in coastal shipping. If the Governor-General in Council be given power to prevent such competition the fear will largely be allayed and a new line of commercial activity may be opened out to Indians. The bill gives the Governor-General in Council the power to fix the maximum rates of freight and fares and also to prevent the grant of rebates or other concessions calculated to reduce such minimum rates. The carrying on of business in coastal traffic, without licence is made penal.

#### STEAMER LINES OVER BENGAL RIVERS

The House rejected Kumar Sanker Ray Choudhury's resolution recommending the starting of steamer lines over the river system of Bengal in conjunction with the Eastern Bengal Railway system with a view to make it a profitable concern.

#### PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

Lala Ramsaran Das moved a resolution recommending the institution of schemes of pensions and gratuities payable to the families of all officers and servants of the Government of India in the event of death of such officers and servants whether before or after quitting the Government service. The mover explained the necessity for the resolution was that the span of life in India was becoming progressively shorter and owing to the higher standard of life and increased amenities Government servants were not able to leave much out of their salaries.

Mr. Nixon said it was particularly dangerous for the legislature to suggest the type of expenditure which would not fall on the present generation but on the generation or so ahead. The local Governments who after all employed more men than the Central Government were not prepared to spend anything more on pensions and gratuities. Further provision for the family was no different responsibility from the provision for education, for example, and it was primarily the concern of the individual and not the State. The resolution was rejected and the House adjourned.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN BILL

8th. APRIL :—The Council of State held its last sitting of the session to-day and agreed to three official bills.

Replying to a short notice question Sir Jagadish Prasad, Education Member, made the following statement :—The House is aware that last February a private Bill to prohibit the employment of Europeans by Asiatics in South Africa was referred to a select committee of the Union Legislative Assembly. The Government of India protested against the principle of the Bill both directly and through the Agent-General and the latter was instructed to give evidence before the select committee himself and to assist the Indian community to present their case. The select committee has recommended that only the employment of European females by Asiatic should be restricted, the restriction not to apply to Cape Malays or to Japanese, while the trade agreement between Japan and the Union of South Africa is in force. The Government of India are still profoundly opposed to the principle of the Bill and in particular to the differentiation sought to be made between Indians and other Asiatic races. They are instructing the Agent-General to make vigorous representation to the Union Government. The House may rest assured that they will spare no means in order to safeguard the self-respect and interest of Indians in South Africa.

#### FEASIBILITY OF GROWING CLOVES IN INDIA

Sir Rahimtoola Chinoy asked : Have the Government considered the desirability of having an early date into the question of feasibility of growing cloves in India ?

Sir Jagadish Prasad replied : The Government will consider the suggestion.

The President then made reference regarding the death of Mr. Suhrawardy, a former member of the Council of State and the leaders of groups associated themselves with the reference.

The House passed the Bill to amend certain enactments and repeal certain others.

#### INDIAN TARIFF ACT AMEND. BILL

Mr. Dow, Secretary, Commerce department moved a bill to further amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1934 to continue the protective duty of twelve annas per maund on broken rice.

Mr. Dow said that from 2,32,000 tons in 1934 the imports of broken rice had fallen to 3,000 in eleven months up to February 1937, while during the same period whole rice decreased from 51,000 to 15,000 and paddy from 112,000 to 68,000. The import duty had therefore proved effective and there has also been considerable rise in the prices of rice in some parts of the country. In view of this there had been a suggestion that some scope existed for reduction of duty but considering that the rise in prices was not general and considering the expected increase in this year's rice crop this suggestion was not favoured.

Syed Hossain Imam suggested that the export duty on Indian rice be eliminated. He said such duty on articles which were not a monopoly was not desirable.

Sir David Devadoss and Syed Padshah expressed the view that the present duty was insufficient.

Mr. Dow replying said that the suggestion made by Syed Hossain Imam was more for the Commerce department but he was sure that the Finance department would consider it especially as since the separation of Burma this duty was not bringing a great deal of revenue.

The bill was passed.

#### PAYMENT OF WAGES BILL

The House also assented to the Bill to amend the Payment of Wages Act of 1936 and adjourned *sine die*.



# The Legislative Assembly

## LIST OF MEMBERS

*President* :—THE HONOURABLE SIR  
ADDUR RAHIM

*Elected—Non-Officials—(102)*

(1) Madras—16

S. SATTANORTI  
K. S. GUPTA  
M. THIRUMALA RAO  
PROFESSOR N. G. RANGA  
M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR  
T. S. AVINASHILINGAM CHETTIAR  
O. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIAR  
K. SANTHANAM  
GEORGE JOSEPH  
SAMUEL AARON  
UMAR ALI SHAH  
MAULVI SYED MURTAZA SAMI  
BAHADUR  
H. A. SATHAR H. ESSAK SAIT  
F. E. JAMES  
RAJAH SIR VASUDEVA RAJAH  
M. R. RY. SAMI VENKATACHELAM  
CHETTY GARU

(2) Bombay—16

DR. G. V. DESHMUKH  
SIR COWANJEE JEHANGIR, BART  
DIWAN LALCHAND NAVALRAI  
BHULABHAI JIVANJI DESAI  
HOSEINBHAY A. LALLJEE  
KESHAVRAO MARUTIRAO JEDHE  
N. V. GADGIL  
S. K. HOSMANI  
MAHOMED ALI JINNAH  
NABI BAKSH ILLAHI BAKHSH BHUTTO  
SETH HAJI SIR ABDULLA HAROON  
W. B. HOSSACK  
SIR LESLIE HUDSON  
MATHURADAS VISSANJI  
MIAN GHULAMKADIR MD. SHAHBAZ  
SIR H. P. MODY

(3) Bengal—17

N. C. CHUNDER  
DR. P. N. BANERJI  
BABU AMARENDRA NATH  
CHATTOPADHYAYA  
PANDIT LAKSHMI KANTA MAITRA  
SURYA KUMAR SOM  
AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA  
SIR ABDUR RAHIM  
HAJI CHOWDHURY MOHAMMAD ISMAIL  
KHAN

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZNAYI  
CHOWDHURY SEKANDER ALI  
MD. ANWAR-UL-AZIZ  
K. AHMED  
T. CHAPMAN MORTIMER  
A. AIKMAN  
SRIJUT DHIRENDRA KANTA LAHIRI  
CHAUDHURY  
BABU BAJNATH BAJORIA

(4) United Provinces—16

DR. BHAGAYAN DAS  
CHOUDHRI RAGHUAIR NARAIN SING  
PANDIT SRI KRISHNA DUTT PALIWA  
DADRI DATT PANDE  
SRI PRAKASA  
PANDIT KRISHNA KANT MALAVIYA  
SHRI MOHAN LAL SAKSENA  
SIRDAR JOGENDRA SINGH  
MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI  
QAZI MOHAMMAD AHMED KAZMI  
SIR MOHAMMAD YANIN KHAN  
MAULVI SIR MOHAMMAD YAKUB  
DR. ZIA UDDIN AHMAD  
MOHAMED AZHAR ALI  
J. RAMSAY SCOTT  
RAJA BAHADUR KUSHAL PAL SINGH

(5) Punjab—12

SHAM LAL  
RAIZADA HANS RAJ  
BHAI FARMA NAND  
SYED GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG  
MAULANA ZAFAR ALI KHAN  
H. M. ABDULLAH  
NAWAB SAHIEZADA SAYAD SIR MOHA  
MAD MEHR SHAH  
KHAN BAHADUR SHAIKH FAZL-I-HA  
PIRACHA  
KHAN BAHADUR NAWAB MAKHDUM  
MURID HOSSAIN  
SARDAR MANGAL SINGH  
SARDAR SANT SINGH  
M. GHILASUDDIN

(6) Bihar and Orissa—12

SATYA NARAYAN SINHA  
B. B. VARMA )  
B. DAS  
PANDIT NILAKANTHA DAS  
RAMAYAN PRASAD  
GAURI SHANKAR SINGH  
KAILASH BIHARI LALL

BABU RAM NARAYAN SINGH  
 MUHAMMAD NAUMAN  
 MUHAMMAD AHSAN  
 MOULVI MOHAMMAD ABDUL GHANI  
 MAHARAJA BAHADUR RAM RAN  
 VIJAI PRASAD SINGH

## (7) Central Provinces and Berar—6

GOVIND VINAYEKRAO DESHMUKH  
 SETH GOVIND DAS  
 PANDIT SHAMHUDDAYAL MISRA  
 KHAN SAHIB NAWAB SIDDIQUR ALI  
 KHAN  
 SETH SHKODASS DAGA  
 M. S. ANEY

## (8) Assam—4

KULADHAR CHALIHA  
 BROJENDRA NARAYAN CHOUDHURY  
 ABDUR RASHEED CHOUDHURY  
 (ONE EUROPEAN)

## (10) Delhi—1

M. ASAF ALI

## (11) Ajmer-Merwara—1

RAI BAHADUR SETH BHACHAND SONI  
 (12) North-West Frontier Province—1  
 ABDUL QAIYUM

## Nominated—(39)

## (a) Officials—(28)

THE HONOURABLE SIR NRIPENDRA  
 N. SIRKAR  
 THE HONOURABLE SIR THOMAS  
 STEWART  
 THE HONOURABLE SIR SAIYID SULTAN  
 AHMED  
 THE HONOURABLE MR. J. C. NIXON  
 THE HONOURABLE MR. R. M.  
 MAXWELL  
 B. M. STAIG  
 G. H. SPRNCE  
 C. M. G. OGLVIE  
 M. S. A. HYDARI  
 LIEUT.-COLONEL A. E. B. PARSONS  
 A. H. LLOYD

S. N. ROY  
 M. SLADE  
 K. SANJIVA ROW  
 R. F. MUDIE  
 R. S. PURSELL  
 J. A. MACKROWN  
 SUSIL CHANDRA SEN  
 M. R. RV. DEWAN BAHADUR B. V.  
 SRI HARI RAO  
 RAO BAHADUR K. C. MANAVEDAN  
 RAJA  
 C. B. NAGARKAR  
 A. K. CHANDA  
 J. F. SALE  
 KHAN SAHIB SHAIKH FAZL-I-ILLAHI  
 S. L. MEHTA

## (b) Non-Officials—13

SARDAR BAHADUR SARDAR SIR  
 JAWAHAR SINGH  
 SIR SRINIVASA SARMA  
 N. M. JOSHI  
 DR. R. D. DALAL  
 DR. FRANCIS XAVIER DESOUZA  
 CAPTAIN SARDAR SIR SHER MOHAMMAD  
 KHAN  
 MAJOR NAWAB SIR AHMAD NAWAZ  
 KHAN  
 L. C. BUSS  
 KHAN BAHADUR SIR ABDUL HAMID  
 HON. CAPTAIN SARDAR BAHADUR  
 DALPAT SINGH  
 RAO SAHIB N. SIVA RAJ  
 HIRANYA KUMAR MITTER  
 C. W. A. GIDNEY

*Deputy President*

AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA

*Secretary*

MAIN MUHAMMAD RAFI

*Assistant Secretary*

RAI BAHADUR D. DUTT

*Marshal*

CAPTAIN HAJI SARDAR NUR AHMAD  
 KHAN

# The Legislative Assembly

Budget Session—New Delhi—25th. January to 3rd. April 1937

The Budget Session of the Legislative Assembly commenced at New Delhi on the 25th. January 1937 with Sir *Abdur Rahim* in the chair. Members belonging to the Congress and Nationalist parties were absent while not more than twenty visitors were noticed in the public galleries. Sir *Cawasji Jehangir* and Sir *Homy Mody* represented the Independent Party of which no other member was present. Similarly *Bhai Paramananda* and *Dewan Lalchand Navairai* were two exceptions among the Congress Nationalist Party who found the opening day too attractive to keep away. The European group also was not without absentees.

Replying to *Sj. Mohanlal Saxena's* question regarding the death of detainee *Santosh Ganguly*, Sir *Henry Craik* said that he had committed suicide in the Deoli Detention Camp while of temporary unsound mind. He also supplied details regarding daily and monthly allowances paid to detainees.

Replying to another question Sir *Henry Craik* refused to lay on the table representations submitted by the detainees confined in Deoli.

The House then quickly disposed of the legislative business.

## OFFICIAL BILLS INTRODUCED

Sir *Frank Noyce* introduced two Bills, the first to amend the *Indian Boilers Act 1933* and the second to amend the *Indian Electricity Act of 1910*.

Sir *James Grigg* introduced the *Bill amending the Land Customs Act of 1923*

On Sir *N. N. Sirkar's* motion the House agreed to recommitment to Select Committee his *Bill to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908*, for certain purposes (insertion of the new Section 414) and the Committee to report on or before February 8.

Sir *Girija Sankar Bajpai* moved consideration of the *Bill to amend the Lac Cess Act of 1930*, necessitated as a result of the separation of Orissa. The Bill was passed.

The solitary member of the Congress Party appearing in the Assembly Chamber to-day, Dr. *Deshmukh*, then entered and presented the Select Committee report relating to the *Hindu Women's Right to Property* and immediately after hurried from the Chamber. The House then adjourned.

## MAINTENANCE OF RIGHTS UNDER INVALIDITY

26th. JANUARY:—Sir *N. N. Sircar* formally introduced, without speech, his Bill to amend Insurance Law.

Sir *Frank Noyce* then moved a resolution to the effect that the Assembly having considered the Draft Convention concerning the establishment of an international scheme for the maintenance of the rights under invalidity, old age and widows and orphans insurance, adopted by the nineteenth session of the International Conference recommends that the Convention be not ratified. He said the delegates to the conference, Sir *B. N. Mitra* and Sir *Joseph Bhole*, had expressed the view that the Convention had no application to India, with which the Government of India agreed.

Mr. *N. M. Joshi* expressed disappointment that the Government of India did not attach due importance to Labour matters. Crores of Rupees were spent on rural uplift, but not even a few thousands were spared for the benefit of Labour. It was a pity that Labour problems were considered as unimportant. Mr. *Joshi* caused amusement by moving what he termed as a small simple amendment, namely the omission of the word "not" the effect of which will be that the Government would ratify the Convention. Mr. *Joshi* repeated the arguments used in the earlier resolution and also that the necessity for allowing Conventions was being debated by the House since the Government were not responsible to electors.

Sir *H. P. Mody* said that few countries had been able to ratify the Convention. Therefore, India, which was on the backward industrially, should not be asked to adopt the position which even advanced countries were unable to adopt. Sir *H. P. Mody* brought to the notice of the House illustrations of difficulties which would arise as between the employer and the employed if the Conventions were adopted. He

said that the record of the Government showed that they were alive to the necessity of Labour legislation.

Sir *Frank Noyce* assured Mr. Joshi that there had been no chance of practice the Government followed or privilege which the House had hitherto enjoyed. Referring to Mr. Joshi's amendment Sir Frank Noyce felt that it would be dishonest on the part of the Government and contempt to their power of legislation if they tried to enforce legislation when they were definitely sure that it would be impracticable and useless.

The House rejected the amendment and adopted Sir Frank Noyce's original resolution. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS PASSED

27th. JANUARY :—To-day's Assembly sitting was adjourned the next day after about 40 minutes sitting in course of which 19 supplementary grants totalling Rs. 28 lacs and 79 thousand were passed. The supplementary grants included Rs. 6,78,000 in respect of capital outlay on Posts and Telegraphs and Rs. 2,02,000 for capital outlay scheme of agricultural improvement and research. In connection with the grant of Rs. 1,000 for broadcasting Dewan Lalchand Navalrai pleaded for the claims of Karachi.

Sir *Frank Noyce* during the first stage of broadcasting development expressed the hope that later the Finance Member would provide sufficient funds.

In connection with the grant under the head "Miscellaneous" Mr. Joshi raised the question of the constitution of the Coal Mining Committee and complained that no member of the mining community had been nominated. Sir *Frank Noyce* explained that it was a strong expert committee and would deal with the problem from an independent point of view.

#### INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL

28th. JANUARY :—Dr. *Bhagwan Das* moved to-day reference to the Select Committee of his Bill to validate marriages between the different castes of Hindus. Dr. *Bhagwan Das* explained in detail the biological, psychological and economic principles of the Institution of marriage quoting extensively from ancient Sanskrit writings. He said that the Bill was a purely permissive measure based on the principles of live and let live. It was designed to sweeten the relations between the different subcastes and to check kidnapping, infanticide and other crimes so rampant under the present conditions. The Bill will not infringe any principle of the Hindu Dharma. Intercaste marriages permitted by the Bill would be a desirable exception.

Sir *N. N. Siroor*, Law Member, explaining Government opposition to the measure characterized it as mischievous and not worthy of serious consideration. He disputed the mover's contention that it was a permissive and progressive measure but, on the other hand, it was coercive and retrograde.

Sir *Mohamed Yakub* expressed surprise at the speech of the Law Member, who, he had thought, was a social reformer. The speaker welcomed the Bill which indicated that the more India advanced in civilisation the more she advanced towards the principles of Islam. Indeed, as civilisation progressed, the principles of Islam would be accepted not only by the Hindus but the whole world. After extolling the principle of equality enjoined by Islam, Sir *Mohamed Yakub* declared that if ex-King Edward VIII had been a Muslim he would not have been compelled to abdicate in order to marry the lady of his choice.

Mr. *Umaratisha* also opposed the measure declaring that it violated the principle of caste system which was fundamental to Hinduism. The speaker quoted Sanskrit verses to refute the mover's interpretation of the Hindu 'dharma'.

*Bhai Parmanand* opined that the legislation could not be enforced if society was not prepared for reform embodied in it. The right course for reformers was first to convert people.

Hindu members of the House opposed the measure. The speaker, therefore, urged the mover to secure the support of Hindu opinion before coming to the House with a bill of this kind.

Dr. *Bhagwan Das*, replying to the debate, reiterated that the Bill was nothing new and added that the late Mr. Vithalbhai Patel brought a similar measure. The present bill was a copy of it word for word. As for the Law Member's objection that the present measure did not contain provisions such as those made in Gour's Act, the speaker pointed out that his measure was distinct from Gour's Act. Dr. *Bhagwan Das* had not concluded his reply when the House adjourned.

## ASSEMBLY &amp; ELECTION

29th. JANUARY :—The Assembly adjourned after 7 minutes sitting to-day, in the course of which Dr. *Khan Sahab's* resolution, as amended by Sir *Muhammad Yakub* was passed "nem con". Dr. *Khan Sahab's* resolution urged non-interference in the elections by Government servants, while Sir *M. Yakub's* amendment wanted strong measures with which the unruly conduct and demonstrations or singing songs or pronouncing religious bans against candidates or voters should be stopped.

## AMENDMENT OF LEGISLATIVE RULES

1st. FEBRUARY :—Sir *N. N. Sircar* introduced to-day the *Bill to amend the Contempt of Courts Act of 1926*, and Sir *James Grigg* introduced the *Bill further to amend the Indian Income Tax Act 1922*.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* next moved amendments to the rules relating to interpellation. He described the different stages through which the question of changing the rules had passed. In 1933 the question was taken up when a non-official member, Mr. *S. C. Mitra*, suggested that the number of questions for oral answer should be limited to four. Since then the position regarding the number of questions put had shown no improvement. Taking the last Simla session, one member occupied the whole of the question time on September 1. On September 4, again the whole time was occupied by one member. Sir *Nripendra* concluded by referring to the assurance given by his predecessor, Sir *B. L. Mitter*, that before any changes were made in the Standing Order the opinion of the House should be obtained. He said that he was making the motion in pursuance of that assurance.

The Congress party whip, Mr. *Asaf Ali*, who was the only member of the party present, moved that consideration of changes of rules should be adjourned till after February 23. Mr. *Asaf Ali* said that his reasons were simple. The Government desired to obtain the opinion of the House. If this was so, how could the Government say that they were consulting the House when only 19 elected members were present out of a total of 105 elected members? Concluding, Mr. *Asaf Ali* said that the only effective check which the Opposition were able to exercise on the administration at present was the power to ask questions. Nothing, should be done to restrict this power without consulting the House and the "empty benches staring the Government in the face. It is monstrously scandalous to suggest that they are consulting the House."

Sir *N. N. Sircar*, in replying to the debate, was frequently interrupted by Mr. *Asaf Ali* with whom he had several spirited encounters. Sir *Nripendra* said that the two arguments used by Mr. *Asaf Ali* were that the benches were empty and that the matter was not urgent. Dealing with the second point first, he submitted that the matter was urgent and declared that he would not concede that he had to make out a strong case for emergency before any matter could be discussed in the House on the ground that the benches were empty. Sir *N. N. Sircar* stated that more than a dozen members were drawing daily allowances and travelling allowances when they were not attending the Assembly. Proceeding Sir *N. N. Sircar* declared that if twelve men were unable to be present it was not right to assert that others, who were present, could not discuss important questions. He urged members, to persuade those outside to attend the House.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* then moved his amendment that changes of rules be referred to a Committee. The House adopted Sir *Cowasji's* motion. The house then adjourned.

## INSURANCE ACT AMEND. BILL

2nd. FEBRUARY :—In the Assembly to-day Sir *N. N. Sircar*, moving that the Insurance Bill be referred to a Select Committee, said that with the increase of insurance in India and with the starting of Indian companies for fire, marine and other classes of insurance, the necessity for further legislation became increasingly apparent. He described the important changes proposed to be introduced by the Bill. The definition of "insurer" has been widened to include Lloyds Underwriters, thereby making the local agents for Lloyds Underwriters liable to all control applicable to other insurance. By clause 3 the carrying on of business in British India would only be possible after registration and was directed to ensure that the requisite deposits had been made and that the requisite minimum capital was available. The subject of commission and rebate and the licensing of agents was a matter which had been found to be one of great difficulty. It would require very careful consideration in the Select Committee and later in the House and power had been

given to impose reciprocal disabilities on non-Indian companies by foreign countries. Dealing with provident societies, the Law Member said that every effort had been made to tighten up the law of insurance. He added that Mr. Sen, who investigated the matter, came to the conclusion that the agitation alleging dumping and unfair competition by foreign companies was unfounded. On the other hand he viewed the matter in a broader outlook and was prepared to investigate and find out whether any unfair, though not illegal, methods had been resorted to by non-Indian measures for hampering Indian insurance business. He assured the House that all interests, namely, Indian and non-Indian companies as well as policy-holders, had been fully taken into account in drafting the Bill. Concluding, Sir Nripendra said that he proposed to circulate the Bill without delay and give a long time of six months for opinions and comments on a far-reaching and comprehensive measure of this kind and for consideration of the same when received. These opinions and discussions in the Select Committee, which was not meeting till August, must be carefully considered by the Government before it could fairly make its mind.

Sir Leslie Hudson, Leader of the European group, rising immediately after Sir N. N. Sircar, paid a handsome tribute to the Leader of the House who had shown considerable industry and patience soon after the hard work to reform Company Law by bringing forward another equally important, comprehensive and voluminous measure reforming Insurance Law. Dealing with the Bill, Sir Leslie Hudson said that in a general sense they were satisfied with the proposed alterations of and extensions to the existing law which were desirable and welcome. When considering the Bill the House should bear in mind the special conditions of business in India. Quoting the old adage that "the fool and his money are soon parted," Sir Leslie Hudson said that the aim of the Legislature should be to reduce to a minimum the opportunities for the perpetration of fraud. India suffered from the flotation of insurance companies by persons lacking in experience and financial backing. Condemning the propaganda directed towards turning the Bill into a discriminatory measure, Sir Leslie Hudson said that European attitude had no communal origin. All they asked was fair field and the interests of the insuring public should be placed above the interests of any company or its shareholders. Dealing with the provisions of the Bill, Sir Leslie Hudson criticised building up of deposits with the Government in instalments instead of lumps, also some aspects of the restriction proposed by the Bill on the investments of the insurer.

Sir N. N. Sircar, replying, gave an assurance that all the criticisms made not only by the European group, but also by other groups would receive the most careful consideration of the Select Committee. Personally, he had no final views in the matter. If it was the general view that no restrictions should be put as regards investment, the Government would accept that view. There was, however, no difficulty in this connection as far as British companies were concerned as they were even now investing 33 and one-third per cent of their funds in Government Securities. As regards managing agents, Sir N. N. Sircar pointed out that the reason given to justify their existence in respect of general companies did not apply to insurance business. There was no need for managing agents in order to get funds for insurance concerns. Sir N. N. Sircar's motion was passed.

#### RAILWAYS ACT AMEND. BILL

Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan moved reference to, a Select Committee the Bill further to amend the Indian Railways Act. He pointed out that the measure had been discussed most thoroughly from every point of view for four days at the last session which finally agreed to the circulation of the Bill. The criticism since received on the Bill, also the opinion of the local Governments, were found to be such as had already been covered in discussion in the House as well as in his summing up. There was no new point suggested. He assured the House that he stood by the undertaking that certain features of the Bill to which objection had been taken would be carefully examined and that certain safeguards urged in the course of the discussion would be incorporated. The members of the Select Committee included all the parties in the House and as some of the members could not be present before a certain date he did not purpose the Committee to meet before the date.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed expressed the opinion that certain provisions of the Bill were too drastic. He particularly objected to the onus of the proof being made to rest on the accused. He also wanted that the danger of misuse of the provisions should be guarded against.

Mr. G. Morgan agreed with Dr. Ahmed that the possibilities of misuse were a matter for careful consideration.

Sir Henry Gidney declared that ticketless travel could not be checked by law and asked whether the Railways had gained by the reforms already tried such as crew system.

Sir Mohd. Yakub said that corruption among lower scales Railway services was greatly responsible for ticketless travels. Concluding, he said that over ninety per cent of people in India opposed the measure and asked the House to reject it.

Sir Mohd. Zafrullah, replying, pointed out that much of the criticism was ill-informed since it referred to cases in which persons were accidentally travelling without tickets. He said that persons who gave notice before they were caught that they were travelling without ticket or those who paid up on demand would not be penalised. This should allay much misapprehension but the Railway Member concluded by saying that it was for the purpose of removing any possibility of hardship that the Bill was being referred to a Select Committee.

The President then put the motion which was challenged by Sir Mohd. Yakub, Sir Henry Gidney and others, thus giving the first division of the session.

The House adopted the motion by 40 votes to 13 and adjourned.

3rd. FEBRUARY :—Seven supplementary demands in respect of Railways for 1936-37, amounting to about Rs. 78 lakhs, were passed when the Assembly met this morning.

#### INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL (CONTD.)

4th. FEBRUARY :—The Assembly met to-day on a note of breezy good humour. Dr. Bhagwan Das contributed to it when with several volumes of the proceedings of the pre-Reform council piled up in front and a flask of coffee standing at one end of the desk he rose to continue his speech replying to the debate on his Bill to validate marriages between the different castes of Hindus last discussed on January 28. Dr. Bhagwandas said that if he had been a younger man he would with the volumes before him and the coffee flask to assist him in his task have kept the House amused the whole day. Proceeding to deal with the provisions of the Bill he declared that it sought to shift the basis of caste back to its original conception of vocational class. Dr. Bhagwandas proceeded to analyse the extent of support as well as opposition his Bill had received from official and non-official quarters, and stated that it was not right to expect that every new reform should come only when large majorities were in favour of it. He instanced the case of the legislation against *sutti* and other social evils, which was in advance of public demand. He concluded by appealing for support to his measures.

The motion was pressed to a division and negatived by 36 to 14 votes. This was the second division of the session.

#### HINDU WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO PROPERTY BILL

Dr. Deshmukh next moved that the Bill to amend the Hindu women's rights to property, as reported by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration. In a spirited speech Dr. Deshmukh declared that the Bill represented the minimum that they could do for the Hindu widow. The Bill proposed no innovation, but was merely a measure of restoration. Criticising some provisions of the present Hindu law, which he characterised as hybrid mongrel and half caste law, he asserted that the principle of limited property for widow and the other principle of reversioners, whom he called "free booters" came to India as an importation along with the British rule. Replying to the argument advanced by orthodox Hindus that women could not have the right to property because they were dependent all their lives, Dr. Deshmukh said that extending the argument to India as a whole it might as well be contended that because Indians for a thousand years had been dependent therefore no Indian had the right to hold property (laughter). The Bill, as it emerged from the select committee, might not perhaps mean material gain to a Hindu widow but it certainly represented moral gain inasmuch as it recognised her right of partition.

Mr. Baijnath Baoria expressing orthodox viewpoint thought that Dr. Deshmukh, who as surgeon had performed many successful operations on individuals, was now attempting mass operation on the Hindu society. The select committee had chiselled the Bill so much that they had chiselled away 15 and a half annas and left only half anna.

The *Law Member* denied that only half anna of the Bill had remained. From the point of view of progressive parties the Bill was disappointing and he personally thought that the Bill did not go far enough. There were very few among Hindus who would not agree that the position of Hindu women during the last few centuries had been a deplorable one and one which they ought to be ashamed of. It was not the position which could be justified by reason, whatever interpreters of old texts might say. The position of Hindu men too had deteriorated and "as we became slaves, the only slaves we could think of were our women". The Law Member concluded declaring that as an initial step restoring the wrong this was a very substantial measure.

Mr. *Joshi* expressed disappointment at the whittling down of the original Bill and affirmed that the Government should have shown themselves more progressive and should not have taken the unnecessary responsibility of whittling down the provisions of the Bill.

Dr. *Deshmukh* did not make any speech in reply and the Bill was then taken clause by clause.

Dewan *Lalchand Navairai* and Mr. *Bajoria* attempted a few amendments of the Bill but they were rejected by the House. At the last stage of the Bill Sir *Mohd. Yakub* and Mr. *Hassimbhoy Lalji*, while congratulating Mr. *Deshmukh*, thought that the Bill did not go far enough. Sir *Mohd. Yakub* hope that the Bill would lead to more responsible measures favourable to womanhood, securing to them such rights to which they were entitled. Mr. *Lalji* declared that unless and until they raised the status of women India had no right to demand independence. There was no justification to exclude daughters from the right of inheritance. The House passed the Bill amidst cheers.

#### CR. PR. CODE AMEND. BILL

*Sardar Sant Singh* then moved that the Bill further to amend the Criminal Procedure Code 1898 (amendment of sections 30, 34, 34-A. and 35) be referred to a select committee. *Sardar Sant Singh's* Bill sought to amend sections 30, 34, 34-A. and 35 with the object of raising the standard of judicial administration in minor provinces and inspiring greater confidence in courts.

The statement of objects and reasons asserts that accused charged with serious offences are not satisfied with the trial held before Magistrates who are especially empowered under these sections. In most cases Magistrates in their zeal to show what they term good disposal hurriedly proceed with the trial with the result that cool and calm consideration of facts of a case is not possible as in the case of Sessions trials.

*Sardar Sant Singh* moving reference of the Bill to a select committee complained that the Punjab Government had not taken usual steps to obtain the opinion of the Bar Associations, Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner.

*Sardar Sant Singh* had not concluded his speech when the House adjourned.

8th. FEBRUARY :—Seven questions and eight non-official resolutions were on the agenda when the Assembly met to-day. Six of the questions were in the name of Prof. N. G. Ranga, who was absent. The last question was put by Dewan *Lalchand Navairai* regarding the Wedgood Railway Enquiry Committee.

None of the members whose resolutions were on the order paper was present. The Council adjourned till the 8th.

#### AMENDMENT OF LEGISLATIVE RULES (CONTD.)

8th. FEBRUARY :—Sir N. N. *Sircar* moved to-day consideration of draft amendments to legislative rules relating to questions as reported by the Committee of the Assembly. Sir *Nripendra* in a brief speech stated that the responsibility for making rules lay with the Governor-General-in-Council with the sanction of the Secretary of State. But it was made clear by his predecessor that this House would be consulted in connection with the change of rules. He was making the motion in pursuance of that assurance. Proceeding to deal with the report of the Committee of the Assembly Sir N. N. *Sircar* said that as regards the limit to the number of questions, there was a majority in favour of five, and he thought the Government were prepared to increase the number from three to five, if that was the sense of the House. As for carrying over questions the Government were not agreeable. He also wanted that whatever questions were intended to be postponed should be indicated before they were put.



Mr. A. C. Dutt moved an amendment that the proposed sub-rule three (limiting the number of questions to three) be omitted. Mr. A. C. Dutt declared that he was still unconvinced as to the necessity of the proposed changes in the rules which he regarded as an attack on the fundamental right of questions.

Sir N. N. Sircar, replying to the debate, pointed out that fixing of number of questions each day would depend entirely on the discretion of the President in whom the House had perfect confidence. Apprehensions expressed by Mr. A. C. Datta and others had no basis whatever.

The House carried the motion for consideration after which Mr. A. C. Datta moved a series of amendments with a view to deleting the proposed sub-clause restricting the number of questions to three for each member per day and failing therein suggesting larger number of questions. He also suggested that the number of questions to be asked by a single member for oral answers be limited to two hundred in the Budget session and one hundred in the autumn session. All these amendments were rejected.

The House disposed of twelve amendments in all and of these the *Law Member* accepted the amendment of Mr. F. E. James proposing a limit of five to the number of questions placed for oral answer on any one day.

The third division of the session took place on Dr. Ziauddin's amendment proposing commission of sub-rule VI which provides that questions not answered within the time available each day shall become unstarred, that is no oral reply shall be required and no supplementary questions shall be asked in respect thereof. The amendment was rejected by 42 votes to 7.

Sir Leslie Hudson's amendment to the same sub-rule VI was under discussion when the House adjourned till the next day. The amendment was to the effect that unanswered questions shall become unstarred if the member asking the questions has not, before questions are disposed of, signified his desire to postpone the question.

**7th. FEBRUARY :—**The Assembly made galloping progress to-day and passed in succession the Income Tax Amendment Bill, the Contempt of Courts Amendment Bill, the Execution of Foreign Decree (passed by courts of reciprocating countries) Bill and the Arbitration (Protocol and Conventions) Bill.

#### AMENDMENT OF LEGISLATIVE RULES (CONTD.)

After questions, the debate on Sir Leslie Hudson's amendment to the new rules relating to interpellation was continued.

Sir Mahomed Yakub, Mr. Lalohand Navalrai, Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. A. C. Datta supported the amendment, arguing that the new rule without this amendment would interfere with the right of supplementary questions. Sir, N. N. Sircar reiterated his assurance that it was not the desire of the Government, nor was it intended by the rules, to affect the right to ask supplementaries.

The amendment was pressed to a division and lost by 31 to 18 votes.

The last amendment to the new rules, also moved by Sir Leslie Hudson was accepted by the Government. The New Rules as amended were then adopted.

#### INCOME TAX AMEND. BILL

Mr. A. P. Lloyd next moved for the consideration of the Income Tax Amendment Bill, designed to put an end to avoidance of taxation by means of nominal partnerships between husband and wife or parent and minor child or by nominal transfer of assets to his wife or minor child (or to an association consisting of the husband and wife) when there was no substantial separation of interests of the assessee and his wife or child. By relating the actual cases which had come to the notice of tax authorities Mr. Lloyd illustrated to the House the type of situation which the Bill sought to avoid. Mr. Lloyd quoted the opinion of the recent tax enquiry report and said that they singled out this particular matter for immediate treatment because avoidance of taxation under the cover of the law was widespread and the matter was extremely urgent.

Mr. A. C. Datta moved an amendment urging the House to refer the Bill to a Select Committee with instruction to report on February 15 or, if necessary even at an earlier date.

Sir James Grigg, opposing the motion for a Select committee, said that he did not wish to deal with the technical points. Dealing with the amendment for a Select Committee, the Finance Member said that it would mean that there would be practically no prospect whatever of getting the Bill passed into law by March 31.

It would also mean that the Bill would not have any application to Burma and that the Burma Government would be faced with the choice of either having to introduce corresponding legislation of their own or acquiescing in different income tax law in this respect for Burma and India, which would add more complication to the work of operating double income-tax relief arrangements. In any case, continued Sir James Grigg, the matter was admittedly urgent.

Mr. A. H. Lloyd, replying to the debate, gave an assurance that the object of the Bill would not be to discourage the making of transfer of assets or similar transactions, but to remove encouragement to such transactions.

Mr. Datta's motion was lost by 44 votes to 10. Mr. Lloyd's motion was adopted.

Mr. J. D. Anderson, Secretary, Legislative Department next moved an amendment to the effect that in counting the total income of any individual for the purpose of assessment there should be included so much of the income of the wife or minor child of such individual as arose directly or indirectly from the membership of a firm or partnership etc.

Mr. A. C. Dutta opposed the amendment and after Mr. Lloyd had replied the amendment was passed. The House then passed the Bill as amended.

#### CONTEMPT OF COURTS AMEND. BILL

Sir N. N. Sircar next moved a Bill to amend the Contempt of Courts Act, 1926, so as to make it clear that the limit of six months proscribed for punishment of any contempt applied to High Courts, as much as to courts subordinate to them. He stated that the Bill did not raise any comprehensive question of contempt of court generally, but was confined to a narrow issue. When the House passed the original Act of 1926 it was the intention that High Courts should be prevented from keeping a man in detention for more than six months for contempt, but since then in the case of Lala Harkishonlal, Judges had held that they had the power to keep him in jail indefinitely, as a result of summary proceedings. Sir N. N. Sircar emphasised that after the Bill was passed it would not be possible for court to inflict any longer sentence than six months for contempt. The Bill was passed.

#### EXECUTION OF FOREIGN DECREE BILL

Sir N. N. Sircar next moved a Bill to amend the Civil Procedure Code, 1908, as reported by the Select Committee. He said that the object of this Bill was also a narrow one. In case of foreign judgment there was no procedure by which that judgment could be executed in India unless a separate suit was brought for that purpose. The whole idea of the Bill was to make foreign decrees executable here and thereby expedite procedure and cheapen costs.

Mr. F. E. James moved an amendment to substitute the following for sub-section III: "Provisions of section 47 shall, as from the filing of a certified copy of a decree, apply to proceedings of a district court executing the decree under this section and the district court shall refuse execution of any such decree if it is shown that the decree falls within any of the exceptions specified in clauses (A) to (F) section 13." The amendment was passed.

Mr. James next moved his second amendment to add the following words in rule 22 of order 21 of the first schedule: "Or where an application is made for the execution of a decree filed under the provisions of section 44A."

The amendment, however, was put to vote and carried without any opposition.

On the motion of Mr. J. D. Anderson, Secretary, Legislative Department, another minor amendment was made to the Bill whereby it would be called the 1937 Act and not the 1935 Act as stated in the original Bill. Thereafter the Bill as amended was passed.

#### THE ARBITRATION (PROTOCOL AND CONVENTIONS) BILL

Sir N. N. Sircar next moved that the Bill making certain further provisions respecting the law of arbitration in British India as reported by the Select Committee be passed. The motion was passed.

When the Bill was being passed clause by clause, Mr. James asked whether the High Courts would consult the business community before making rules under this legislation.

Sir N. N. Sircar replied that it was a matter for the High Courts only to decide, but it was open to the business community to send in their views. In addition to that the Government could forward to all High Courts the speech of Mr. James and the Government's reply. The Bill was passed without any amendment.

## ATTACHMENT OF SALARY BILL

Sir *Henry Craik* moved that the Bill amending the Code of Civil Procedure, as reported by the select committee, be taken into consideration as amended by the select committee. The Bill seeks to exempt from attachment salary to the extent of first sixty rupees and one half of the remainder of such salary. Sir *Henry Craik* explained that the Government were unable to agree to reduction of the amount from hundred to sixty rupees. The Government of India had fixed the amount at hundred after consulting opinions throughout the country. The law already gave the agriculturists some protection, but this was considered insufficient by some members, who were bringing out Bills and resolutions for achieving their object. The Government of India, however, felt that it was a matter for local Governments to decide in the light of conditions prevailing in their provinces. Therefore, only salaries incomes were dealt with in the Bill.

The House adopted the motion for consideration after which Mr. *Joshi* moved an amendment substituting Rs. 100 instead of Rs. 60 as proposed in the Bill relating to wages of labourers and domestic servants.

Mr. *Navalrai* maintained that the opinion of the majority of the select committee members must not be ignored.

Sir *Henry Craik* supported Mr. *Joshi's* amendment which was carried.

The House also adopted two more amendments moved by Mr. *J. A. Thorne*, who suggested that where the whole or any part or portion of such salary liable to attachment had been under attachment whether continuously or intermittently for a total period of 24 months such portion shall be exempted from attachment until the expiry of a further period of twelve months and where such attachment had been made in the execution of one and the same decree, shall be finally exempt from attachment in the execution of that decree. The above provision would be in substitution of the one proposed in the Bill.

Another amendment of Mr. *Thorne* accepted by the House suggested that the provisions of the amending Bill shall not have effect in respect of any proceeding arising out of any suit instituted before June 1, 1937.

The Bill as amended was passed. The House then adjourned.

## CENTRAL GOVT. AND ROAD FUND

10th. FEBRUARY:—In the Assembly to-day, after Sir *N. N. Sircar's* Bill to amend certain enactments and repeal certain other enactments and Sir *Frank Noyce's* Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act had been introduced, Sir *Frank Noyce* moved a lengthy resolution providing for the continuance of the extra duty of two annas on motor spirit and the establishment of a Road Fund.

Moving the road resolution, Sir *Frank Noyce* said that he had not anticipated that, after the road resolution of 1934, he would be called on to move another resolution on the same subject during his term of office. The changes had, however, become imperative and a resolution embodying these was given notice of during the Simla session. Sir *Frank* then explained the important changes which the present resolution sought to introduce. Firstly, the shares allocated for expenditure in Governor's Provinces would in future be retained by the Governor-General in Council until they were actually required for expenditure. He informed the House that the local Governments had spent only 360 lakhs of the 563 lakhs placed at their disposal leaving an unexpended balance of 200 lakhs or about two and a half years' revenue. Though the reasons for the delay in the progress of the expenditure was not unreasonable, the fact remained that the amounts granted had not been spent. It was to prevent the accumulation of large unspent balances and ensure prompt utilisation of the money placed at their disposal that the Government were proposing that in future, instead of placing sums at the disposal of the local Governments, the Central Government should hold the amounts. Secondly, an important change was the taking of the power by the Central Government to resume the whole or any part of the sums which the Central Government might hold for expenditure in any province if that province delayed without reasonable cause to utilise its share in the Road Fund for purposes of Road development. He, however, hoped that the local Governments would not give occasion for the use of this power. Thirdly, powers were taken to resume the share of a province which was being held by the Central Government if it failed to take such steps as the Governor-General in Council might recommend for the regulation and control of motor vehicles within the province. The attachment of this condition to future participation in the Road Fund was one of the

results of the discussion of the road-rail problems during the last three years, being based mainly on the recommendations of the Transport Advisory Council.

Mr. G. Morgan (European group) opened the general discussion on the resolution. He said that no one would deny, and the Government least of all, that there were some paragraphs in the resolution which had given rise to a great deal of anxiety in the provinces. For seven years the proceeds of the Road Fund had been distributed to the various provinces and throughout that period no violent departure from the policy which had been laid down for governing the distribution had been made. It was little surprising therefore to find in the resolution a sharp departure from that policy. The Government of India could attach such conditions to the fund as they liked, but it was matter, serious no doubt, as to whether they should attach conditions which presupposed a lack of fidelity on the part of the provinces in respect of those matters which the constitution had decided that the provinces were capable of discharging in their own way. Concluding, Mr. Morgan wanted the central reserve retained by the Governor-General in Council to be raised from fifteen to twenty per cent for the benefit of provinces like Assam.

Mr. A. C. Datta supported the resolution with certain reservations. He congratulated Mr. Morgan on his speech and endorsed every word of it. He, however, thought that it was difficult to appreciate why, at this late hour and on the eve of the introduction of the new Constitution, changes which amounted to restriction on provincial autonomy should be made.

Mr. F. E. James asked what would happen to the interest on the accumulation of the Road Fund. Would it be credited in future to the provincial or central balance?

Sir Frank Noyce, replying to the speeches, assured the House that there had been no change of policy regarding the use of the Road Fund. Every penny raised in future would continue to be used for road development, and for no other purpose. He emphatically denied that the resolution constituted an attack on provincial autonomy. Answering Mr. James's question, he stated that the amount of interest would probably be small, but suggested that there was no justification for provincial revenue benefiting by the interest on the accumulation of the Central Fund.

Mr. F. E. James moved the first amendment on behalf of the European group for the deletion of the sub-clause under which, "if, in the opinion of the Governor General in Council, the Government of any of the Governor's provinces at any time failed to take such steps as the Governor-General-in-Council may recommend for regulation and control of motor vehicles within the province, the Governor-General-in-Council may recommend for regulation and control of motor vehicles within the province, the Governor-General-in-Council may resume the whole or part of any sums which he might at that time hold for expenditure in that province."

Mr. James said that there was not only a departure from the recommendations of Mr. Mitchell's report, but a fundamental change in the policy adumbrated in the resolution passed by the Assembly in 1934 was being effected without any reason or fault of any local Government. The change now proposed in that policy was contrary even to the spirit of the Government of India Act, 1935, for the change contained an element of coercion in respect of a matter under which the Government of India Act was exclusively within the sphere of the Provincial Governments. Mr. James admitted that the fund was not a statutory fund. It existed at the will of the Government of India subject to a declaration of policy. Continuing, Mr. James said that the assurance that the power sought to be taken under the clause would not be used against road development was of no use. If it was not to be used why have the sub-clause? The insistence on the part of the Government to include this clause and the appointment of the Chief Commissioner of Railways on the Standing Committee made clear what the Government's intention was. The proper time for taking the power was after the formation of the Federation. The Government of India had been better advised to press at this stage a scheme for the formation of a Ministry of Communications.

Sir Frank Noyce, replying to the debate, quoted from the speech made by Mr. James a year ago in which he had suggested urgent drastic steps to co-ordinate control of motor traffic. The speaker drew the House's attention to the maximum that voluntary co-ordination without sanction was impossible, and said that the League of Nations was an example of futility of such voluntary co-ordination. Sir Frank Noyce thought that the word "coercion" had been used far too often, and declared that no undesirable element of coercion was there in the resolution. The amendment was rejected.

Mr. *Chapman Mortimer* moved an amendment to the effect that the Governor-General-in-Council might resume the sums held for expenditure in a province if that province failed to take such action as an Act of the Indian Legislature might provide for the regulation and control of motor vehicles in that province. The amendment was rejected.

The previous amendment having been defeated, Mr. *Morgan* moved another amendment suggesting that the Governor-General-in-Council should consult the Standing Committee for roads before making recommendations for the regulation and control of motor vehicles within a province.

Mr. *F. E. James* rose to move an amendment to clause 7 (6) of the road resolution. The purpose of the amendment was to remove restriction on a province for utilising the allocation from the road fund in future to meet the interest on road loans. Mr. James said that the purpose of moving the amendment was to obtain information as to the policy of the Government. The position in the past had been that a province was entitled to charge interest on loans raised for road purposes to its share on the road fund. Mr. James said that he was aware of the constitutional position and the necessity of framing a resolution in harmony with the new Government of India Act.

Sir *James Grigg* opposing the amendment said that during a comparatively short time in India he noticed nearly infallible method of creating friction was to take grants from Central money subject to certain conditions. It was obviously impossible to assign as a security for road loan provincial allocation from the road fund. It would be wrong to allow provincial grants to be used for defraying the charges of road development loans raised in the market. These were the reasons, said Sir James Grigg, why the Government had proposed to discontinue the provision to use the road fund for defraying the charges for road loans but in view of a previous resolution on this matter the Government had taken care very carefully and abundantly to see that all existing commitments were fully met. Referring to Mr. James' amendment, Sir James Grigg said that the Centre would thereunder be faced with an invidious task in deciding the soundness of provincial schemes and ascertaining whether the provincial budget would be able to bear particular loan charges for an indefinite period. The Centre would be called on to judge the soundness of the scheme and budgetary stability of the provinces involving endless arguments and irritation between the provinces and the Centre. Sir James Grigg concluding said that these were the reasons for opposing the amendment.

After Mr. *A. C. Dutt* had supported the amendment Sir *Frank Noyce* replied and the House rejected the amendment.

Sir *Frank Noyce* accepted two amendments of the European group to the effect that the one nominated official member of the Standing Committee shall be one of the official members of the Committee other than the Chief Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. *Morgan* moving both the amendments said that his object was to remove suspicion that the railways would dominate the Committee. The resolution as amended was passed.

#### ARMY MANOEUVRES BILL

Mr. *G. B. F. Tottenham* then moved reference of the Army Manoeuvres Bill to a Select Committee consisting of Mr. Sriprakash, Mr. B. Das, Lala Hansraj, Bhai Parmanand, the Raja of Kollengode, Mr. Witherington, Mr. Siddiq Ali Khan, Captain Lalohand, Mr. Essack Sait and the mover.

Mr. Tottenham's motion was passed and the House adjourned.

#### CRI. PROCEDURE CODE AMEND. BILL

11th. FEBRUARY :—The Assembly considered to-day non-official Bills. *Sardar Sant Singh* proceeded with his speech, moving reference to Select Committee of his Bill to further amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

The Bill seeks to repeal sections 30 and 34 and amend sections 34A and 35 with the object of raising the standard of judicial administration in the minor provinces in order to inspire confidence in the courts. The motion was made on February 4.

The mover to-day emphasised that the most important thing in trials was that the accused person should have confidence in the trying magistrate but such confidence was absent in the case of trials by magistrate empowered under these sections. He referred to the recent Russian trials and suggested that they inspired confidence in the civilised world. He referred to the provinces, such as, Sind and

United Provinces where he said, section 30 had been rarely if at all, used. Continuing Sardar Sant Singh said that in the N. W. F. Province a majority of officials consulted by the Government were in favour of the Bill, while officials gave opinions both for and against it. The District Magistrate of the most important district, namely Peshawar, had expressed sympathy with the proposed legislation.

*Dewan Lalchand Navalrai* supporting the Bill, said that section 30 was introduced at a time when it was considered that executive should have more power than judicial courts. That was in old times and it no longer held good in modern days when the country was prepared to have juries in every court. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai emphatically protested against the opinion which the Judicial Commissioner of Sind expressed in giving his views on the Bill, that certain portions in Sind were savage and primitive. All eight districts in that province had been enfranchised. After that how was it right to describe any section of Sind population as wild or primitive?

Sir *Henry Crosk* said that the Government would oppose the Bill at every stage. He declared that the Bill would involve the provinces in great expense. It would delay and procrastinate the course of justice and in no province which was affected was there any evidence of the desire for a change. The Bill had been debated for three full parliamentary days and they had got to a stage when there was nothing new to say about it.

Mr. *Sant Singh*, replying, complained that the several points he had raised during the debate had not been answered by the Home Member. He proceeded to say that the Government could now treat Opposition arguments in such fashion, but let February 23 come and the benches full.

When the President put the motion before the House Mr. Sant Singh pressed for a division and his motion was defeated by 37 to 12 votes.

#### ARMS ACT AMEND. BILL

Mr. *Lalchand Navalrai* moved reference to a select committee of the Bill further to amend the Indian Arms Act so as to exempt carrying of "kirpans" in all provinces. Mr. Navalrai explained that at present the rules made under the Act in different provinces were conflicting with the result that "kirpan" of a size permitted in one province was not permitted in another. The principle of exemption having already been accepted by the Government, all he asked for was that there should be uniformity of rules among the provinces as to what length of "kirpan" should be permitted.

Mr. *Basmath Bajoria* and Sardar *Sant Singh* supported the Bill. Sir *Mahomed Yakub* pleaded for uniformity of treatment of "kirpans" as well as swords. He did not want to oppose the Bill nor was it necessary to support it, but he wanted uniformity of treatment.

The debate had not concluded when the House adjourned.

#### PENSION FOR INFERIOR SERVICES ]

12th. FEBRUARY :—To-day the Assembly sat for a little over an hour. It was a non-official day and there were a number of resolutions on the agenda. But as none of the movers with the exception of Mr. Joshi was present the House busied itself during the period with the one moved by the representative of the Labour.

Mr. *Joshi's* resolution related to pension rules for menial Government servants. The speaker pleaded powerfully for relaxation of those rules.

Mr. *Asahar Ali* supporting Mr. Joshi spoke in the same strain.

Finally the mover withdrew his resolution upon assurance given by the Finance Member of a sympathetic consideration of the case built up by Mr. Joshi. The Assembly then adjourned till the 16th.

#### RAILWAY BUDGET FOR 1937-38

16th. FEBRUARY :—The Railway Budget for 1937-38 was presented to both the Houses of Central Legislature to-day. The following is the financial position of State-owned Railways in India as revealed by the Railway Member Sir *Zafriullah Khan* in the Assembly.

Deficit for 1935-36	...	Rs. 3,99 Crores
Surplus for 1936-37 (Revised estimate)	...	" 15 Lakhs
Surplus for 1937-38 (Budget estimate)	...	" 15 Lakhs
Loan from Depreciation Fund	...	" 81.33 Crores
Unpaid Contribution to General Revenues	...	" 30.75 Crores

It is proposed to write off all loans from the Depreciation Fund and all unpaid contributions to General revenues till the end of 1936-37 and to start the new year with a clean slate.

The estimated surplus of Rs. 15 lakhs in 1937-38 will be paid to General revenues.

In explaining why the Government did not embark upon a large programme of expenditure or development immediately, Sir Zafarullah Khan said that till there were more substantial indications that the country was in for a prolonged period of prosperity, it would be wise to move cautiously.

#### FIGURES FOR 1936-37

Following are the principal figures of the revised estimate for 1936-37 as compared with the budget estimate for 1936-37 and actual results of 1935-36 :—

	(In lakhs of Rupees)		
	1935-36 (Actual)	1936-37 (Budget)	1936-37 (Revised)
Gross Traffic Receipts (State lines)	80.65	91.25	95.00
Total Working Expenses	64.12	64.53	63.90
Miscellaneous Receipts	2.13	2.05	1.14
Miscellaneous Expenditure	1.26	1.10	1.26
Interest Charges	31.39	31.11	30.83
Total...	-3.99	-3.44	+15

#### FIGURES FOR 1937-38

The important figures of estimates for 1937-38 are given below with those for the two previous years :—

	(In lakhs of Rupees)		
	1935-36 (Actual)	1936-37 (Revised)	1937-38 (Budget)
Traffic Receipts (State lines)	87.03	91.35	90.75
Working Expenses	61.28	61.18	61.34
Miscellaneous Receipts	2.00	1.01	1.26
Miscellaneous Expenditure	1.25	1.35	1.18
Interest Charges	29.92	29.41	29.36
Total...	-3.42	+42	+15

	(In lakhs of Rupees)		
	1935-36 (Actual)	1936-37 (Revised)	1937-38 (Budget)
Traffic Receipts	1.26	1.45	1.45
Working Expenses	2.09	2.09	2.06
Miscellaneous Receipts	18	9	8
Interest Charges	1.38	1.34	1.33
Net loss in working	2.08	1.89	1.86

The Railway Member pointed out that receipts from passenger traffic had been disappointing despite various efforts to improve them on the part of different railways. Goods earnings, on the other hand, showed an improvement.

#### PASSENGER EARNINGS

1935-36 (actual)	Rs. 28.08 lakhs.
1936-37 Budget	" 28.50 "
1936-37 Revised	" 27.90 "

#### GOODS EARNINGS

1935-36 (actual)	" 61.43 "
1936-37 Budget	" 61.25 "
1936-37 Revised	" 65.50 "

In introducing the estimates, Sir Zafarullah Khan said that for the first time since 1929-30 Railway estimates forecast surpluses instead of deficits. In each of the

years, 1936-37 and 1937-38, it is now expected, there will be a small surplus of 15 lakhs. As the budget estimate of the net financial result of railway working in 1936-37 was a deficit of 3.44 crores, the present estimate indicates an improvement of 3.59 crores, but, the change in the allocation agreed to by the Public Accounts and Railway Standing Finance Committees and brought into effect from the current year has reduced the net revenues of railways by 36 lakhs and the real improvement as compared with last year is nearly 4 crores.

Traffic receipts in 1936-37 are now expected to reach 95 crores or 4 and one-third crores more than last year. Working expenses, including full contribution to the Depreciation Fund at the rate 1-60th of the capital, are half a crore more than last year and interest half a crore less. Including all miscellaneous receipts and charges as well as the result of the accounting charge referred to, the net revenue available to meet the interest charges will be 31 crores or 3 and half crores more than last year. The result is that after paying interest, the balance of 15 lakhs will be left as Surplus on the working of the all State-owned Railways. The Surplus of Commercial lines alone will be 2 crores. The net surplus of 15 lakhs will be utilised in part re-payment of loans taken from the Depreciation Fund in previous years to meet the deficits.

In 1937-38 Burma Railways will be separated from the Indian railway system. Under the present circumstances, since the Burma Railways are working at a deficit the separation will improve the financial position of Indian Railways. As it is doubtful whether the present level of earnings is a definite index of permanent returning prosperity, traffic receipts for 1937-38 are put at 90 and three-fourth crores as against 91 and one-fourth crores in the current year, excluding Burma Railways. Working expenses are estimated at 10 lakhs more, mainly because of the change introduced in the new Government of India Act by which provincial Governments are entitled to receive from railways the cost of police required for maintaining order on railway premises. The net revenue will be 20 and a half crores, 1-3 crore less than in the current year, while interest charges are practically the same. There will be a surplus of 15 lakhs as against 43 lakhs in the current year, excluding the Burma Railways. The surplus on commercial lines alone will be 2 crores.

At the end of 1936-37 the total loan from the Depreciation Fund will stand at 31-1-3 crores and unpaid contribution to the general revenues at 30 and three-fourth crores. Total liabilities of railways will thus exceed 32 crores. If these liabilities are carried forward the general revenues will not be able to obtain for many years any benefit from improved railway revenues, as the first charge on surpluses is the repayment of loans from the Depreciation Fund. As, moreover, the balance of the Depreciation Fund is considered sufficient for emergencies, it is proposed to write off all loans from the Depreciation Fund and all unpaid contributions to general revenues till the end of 1936-37 and to start the new year with a clean slate.

As a result of this, the surplus of 16 lakhs in 1937-38 will be paid to general revenues as part of the contribution fixed under the terms of the separation convention.

The Depreciation Fund balance at the beginning of 1937-38 will, after Burma Railways' share had been paid to the Government of Burma, stand at 13 and three-fourth crores. It will be increased to over 20 and one-fourth crores at the end of the year.

The total sum provided for works in 1937-38 is 8 and a half crores after allowing for reduction of stores balances by half a crore. Two new lines are expected to be taken up, both in Sind. The programme includes a provision of 2,859 wagons of which 2,000 are broad gauge general service wagons, to be added to pool. This is a great advance on the current year's purchase of 750 and is justified by the increasing traffic.

In explaining why Government did not propose to embark upon a large programme of expenditure or development immediately, Sir Zafrulla Khan said as follows :

"It will have been noticed from what I have already said that we do not propose to embark upon a large programme of expenditure or development. We do not feel that we would be justified in doing this even though there are signs that we have at least temporarily got away from the worst of the depression. In saying this I do not wish to imply that we are making no preparations for the better times which we all hope are in prospect. We fully realise that if traffic develops, we must be prepared to deal with it and move forward with the times. But till there are more substantial indications that we are in for a prolonged period of prosperity, it would be wise to move cautiously. Various reasons have been given for the increase in our earnings during the current year. Some people believe that the increase is due



mainly to the rise in commodity prices. In a country like India any rise in the prices of staple commodities is bound to enhance the spending capacity of the bulk of the people and Railways in due course would get their share of this additional prosperity. Other people claim that the main reason for the improvement must be sought in the rapid deterioration of the international situation and that, therefore, the improvement is likely to prove to be only temporary and is based on no firm foundation. There are still others and among them very eminent authorities who consider that there is a real improvement in trade conditions throughout the world which is likely to continue. The fact that the upward tendency in staple commodity prices began to manifest itself before any serious disturbance of the international situation became a feature of world news appears to lend support to this view. One pleasing feature in the improvement is that the increase has been gradual. A spectacular rise is often followed by a spectacular fall and the gradual character of the improvement that we have experienced leads one to hope that we might at no distant date get back to a steady market at neither too high nor too low a level of prices which will give the producer a reasonable profit. Given such a condition I feel little doubt that the Railways, though they may not be able to set aside large surplus profits each year, will be able to pay their own way and save reasonable sums for the future."

As an example of what the railways are doing to prepare for the future, Sir Zafrullah instanced one experiment which is intended to try out this hot weather namely the scheme to run an experimental air-conditioned coach on one of the mail services. He said :—

"If the experiment proves a success we shall go ahead on larger scale and, I hope, I am not looking too far into the future when I suggest that it may be possible to run complete air conditioned trains including third class coaches wherever traffic conditions justify."

Sir Zafarulla also explained at some length the various lines of research on which investigations were being made at present which should result in appreciable savings.

He finally referred to the Railway Enquiry Committee presided over by Sir Ralph Wedgwood and felt sure that they would be able to give Indian railways very valuable advice and assistance. He said :—

"Railways in India have reason to be proud of their achievements in the past but I am quite sure that there is no inclination in any quarter to claim that the system is a perfect one and that there is not room for improvement. Those who are responsible for administering and running the system of railways in India are only too willing to admit mistakes and shortcomings and to accept advice and I know of no man who is in a better position to give such advice than Sir Ralph Wedgwood assisted by his able colleagues.

In conclusion, Sir Zafrulla gave expression of his sense of gratitude to all those who may in any manner be connected with the administration and working of Indian Railways for the loyal co-operation and assistance they have given him during the last two years.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF RAILWAY BUDGET

**18th. FEBRUARY :—**The general discussion of the Railway Budget started in the Assembly to-day. Sir Henry Gidney, opening the debate, suggested that since the Railway Member had been able to turn a deficit into a credit budget, there was no need for bringing out the Wedgwood Committee. After referring to the contrast between the returns of the State-managed and Company-managed railways, Sir Henry urged the Railway Member to cry halt "in his headlong rush for economy at all costs at the expense of railway subordinates. Let me tell him that he has gone too far already. Let me advise him to retrace his steps. Otherwise, he will be faced with a united opposition of such magnitude that the Government of India will be impotent to combat it." Proceeding, Sir Henry Gidney declared that it was the Anglo-Indian community alone which had suffered so much by the new scales amounting to an all-round reduction from 50 to 60 per cent in the initial salaries and 40 to 60 per cent in the maximum salaries. Yet, it was to the Anglo-Indian community that the Government always looked for loyalty and help when they were in trouble as had recently been evidenced in the B. N. Railway strike which the Anglo-Indian community had helped to stop.

Criticising other features of the Administration, Sir Mohd. Yakub said that the system of divisional superintendents was very expensive. Under these superintendents were officers called and named another such as D. T. O. A. T. O. and so on, etc.

hausting the whole English alphabet, but simply signing huge files (laughter). He asked the Railway Member to give serious attention to this and take steps to go back to the old system. In regard to the road-rail competition he blamed railways for the diversion of traffic and said that the time tables were prepared without regard to the convenience of passengers and trains were generally slower than buses and that the lower staff badly treated passengers and were corrupt particularly in their dealings with business men. Sir Mohd. Yakub objected to the new system of auctioning refreshment stalls on railway stations and declared that it amounted to taking the food of passengers. Finally he expressed strong resentment against the non-inclusion of Indians in the Wedgwood Committee and entered a vehement protest against the appointment of a South African to the Committee. It was an insult to Indian self-respect, he declared, and caused feelings of disgust.

Mr. A. C. Dutt, Deputy President, discussed at length the Railway freight policy. He criticised Railways for allowing favourable freight rates to and from ports as compared with internal rates which tended to encourage the export of raw materials and the import of foreign goods. He opined that there should not be such a wide difference in rates.

Sir Leslie Hudson said that the European group preferred to see what the Wedgwood Committee had to say before they proceeded further with the expression of any views on the general policy. Referring to the question of over-capitalization Sir Leslie Hudson agreed that the Railway Member's proposals would have an effect of checking over-capitalization which the group criticised a year ago. In regard to publicity, Sir Leslie Hudson pointed out that it was the Publicity Department which has kept in touch with public and it was largely the consequence of their efforts or lack of effort whether railway-mindedness of the public increased or diminished. If the Railway Member's problem were to be solved Railways would not only have to retain their present passenger traffic but would have to attract fresh custom by improved publicity.

Mr. N. M. Joshi referred to the origin of Indian railways and said that it lay in the desire of the British people to find a lucrative investment for their capital, a market for their manufactured goods and employment for their people. Though since then the policy had changed and railways were treated as an Indian public utility service, traces of the old policy were again evident in railways' neglect of third class passengers who numbered 49 crores as against 45 lakhs of first and second class passengers and contributed 13 times the revenue from higher class passengers. Yet the Government seemed satisfied so long as first and second class passengers were satisfied. As regards the employment of Britishers, Mr. Joshi complained that even after ten years of Indianisation a number of British people could be counted in thousands and Parliament had decided that they should be paid more. That would not have been tolerated in any commercial undertaking. Referring to the Anglo-Indian community, Mr. Joshi asked if there was any Indian who would tolerate racial discrimination because Parliament decreed such discrimination. Mr. Joshi declared that Anglo-Indian employees could prosper only if they co-operated with other employees and not by "blacklegging" other community. Mr. Joshi referred to the B. N. K. strike and said that the Railway Member, and the Industries Member whom he thanked for helping its settlement would have felt that if railway had been state-owned the settlement would have been quicker.

Mr. Ghiasuddin directed an attack on the various aspects of the railway administration in India. Referring to the road-rail problem he said that if railways viewed road traffic with little more imagination and foresight instead of treating it as an arch-enemy of railways they could make it feeders to the railway system. Prompt action should be taken to eliminate corruption. He considered level crossing a nuisance to motoring public and that railways would do well to spend money to construct overbridges with a view to avoiding accidents and inconvenience. Proceeding the speaker dealt with the lack of amenities to third class public and opined that air-conditioning was needed more in their cases. He also criticised non-inclusion of Indians on the Wedgwood Committee.

Sardar Sant Singh said that he had expected from Sir Md. Zafrullah Khan, who was the first Railway Member coming from public life of the country, some explanation in his budget statement for not appointing an Indian on the Wedgwood Committee. Sardar Sant Singh said that in the budget speech the House had expected something more. Sardar Sant Singh complained of the slow pace of Indianisation and asked why had not extension been granted to Sir Raghavendra Rao when Sir K. L. Parsons and Sir Outhrie Russel had been given extensions in the past. As

regards the experiment for air-conditioning of railway coaches, he hoped that sudden drop and rise of temperature, to which passengers would thereby be subjected, would not prove injurious to the health of passengers. The speaker thought that such experiment had proved a failure in the United Kingdom. Sardar Sant Singh drew attention of the Railway Member to the prevalence in railway services of corruption.

Sir *Md. Zafrullah Khan* intervening asked whether the speaker could give specific instances of corruption, so that he could take action.

*Sardar Sant Singh* offered to take Sir *Md. Zafrullah Khan* to any railway station to get evidence to that effect. He added "If you cannot uproot corruption, then abdicate and let others come to govern the railways." Concluding *Sardar Sant Singh* warned Sir *Henry Gidney* that his demand for discrimination in favour of Anglo-Indians would cause the greatest bitterness in the country.

*Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan*, Railway Member, rising amid cheers, expressed gratefulness to members who expressed gratifications at a surplus budget. Some members had gone further and congratulated him on his good luck. To a very large extent the railway earnings depended upon economic conditions, and recent changes in those conditions, adverse as well as favourable, could not be attributed to the efforts of any individual or Government, and those who used the expression "good luck" were therefore, perfectly right. But these matters were not entirely or purely matters of luck. Referring to Sir *Henry Gidney's* demand regarding the Anglo-Indian community, the Railway Member said that the matter could not be profitably carried any further during the course of discussions this year and it would have been wiser, pending the discussions in which the Government were engaged, to leave it where it was last year. On the question of proper timing of trains he assured the House that the authorities had been constantly watchful and examined the matter at frequent intervals. He dealt lengthily with the subject of corruption, pointing out that it was difficult to proceed further in the matter of unsubstantiated allegations made on the floor of the House. Nevertheless he was prepared to admit that the complaints had assumed such a widespread nature that the matter had almost become a subject of national importance. In these circumstances he welcomed any proposals put forward to deal with the evil. On the rating policy the Railway Member emphasised that they fully realised the increase in volumes of internal traffic and they were trying to adjust the railways to that changed condition. Some criticism had been made of the expenditure of nearly two and a half lakhs on costly experiments in air-conditioning the coaches and he thought that it was a big experiment and in case the experiment financially as well as scientifically proved successful, it was bound to revolutionise railway travel in India. As for introducing air conditioning in third and if sufficient custom was forthcoming to meet the additional expenditure, it was not outside practical politics to introduce it in faster mail trains. Referring to criticism about the rail-road competition Sir *M. Zafrullah* said that to him it appeared that there was no difference in principles put forward by the Government and non-official members. The principle which the Government had in mind was "money that is available for making further improvements in communications should be so spent as not to duplicate those communications but to add to them in a useful way in opening up new country." Sir *M. Zafrullah* said that a great deal was being done to secure third class passengers more accommodation and more latrines. Improvements which were noticed in the new type of third class coaches were being introduced in the various railways. The process of improvement could not be very rapid as it would depend on the number of new coaches required and built. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE GRADING AND MARKING BILL

19th FEBRUARY :—The Assembly met to-day with eight official bills and one official resolution on the agenda. The House agreed to the introduction of Sir *Henry Craik's* bill to further amend the Indian Limitation Act, 1908. Sir *Mohd. Zafrullah's* bill to further amend the Indian Tea Cess Act, 1903, and Mr. *Tottenham's* bill to further amend the Indian Army Act, 1911.

*Sir Girijashankar Bajpai* next moved a bill to provide for the grading and marking of agricultural produce. Explaining the bill Sir *Girijashankar* said that grading implied classification of commodity according to quality and marking meant the application to each recognised grade or quality of a distinctive mark for the purpose of ready identification. To the consumer the practice of marking and grading was a guarantee of quality and to the producer it brought a contested and growing clien-

tole and better and stable prices. The need for experimenting with the possibility of introducing this practice in India was indicated by the success achieved by it in other countries. Experimental stations for hides and skins were accordingly established in Delhi and Agra and for eggs in the North-West Frontier Province. The second-egg grading station was to be shortly started in Travancore. The result had been that merchants and producers were now demanding systematisation of both grading and marking.

The three features of the bill that needed comment were: firstly there was no intention to compel any one to join the existing experiment or start a new one, secondly, the schedule of commodities to which regulation might be applied was small and power to extend the list was sought but only after consultation with the interest concerned and thirdly, the scale of penalties was exceptionally moderate.

The use of mark or label by a person not authorised to do so was punishable only with fine. Counterfeiting of grade, designation mark or possession of implements for counterfeiting, however, would be punishable with imprisonment.

The Bill was passed with the two amendments moved by Mr. J. D. Anderson, the first to make it clear that the rules under the Bill should first be published so that those concerned might have the opportunity to express their views and the second to exempt from punishment any person who made a mistake in marking.

#### BOILERS AND ELECTRICITY BILLS

The House passed Sir Frank Noyce's two Bills as reported by the Select Committee, one to amend the *Indian Boilers Act* and the other to amend the *Indian Electricity Act*.

#### INDIAN NAVAL ARMAMENT ACT

Mr. Tottenham moved a bill further to amend the Indian Naval Armament Act so as to give effect in British India to the treaty of 1936 between the British Commonwealth and certain other Powers to limit naval armament and exchange information concerning naval construction. The Bill was passed.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

Sir Frank Noyce moved consideration of the Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923. He said that section 35 of this Act enabled rules to be made for transfer of the sums paid to the Commissioners in India as compensation for the benefit of persons abroad or paid to the authorities abroad as compensation for persons in India. But it did not provide for transfer of distribution proceedings when the employer did not object and the dependents were in a country other than one in which compensation was deposited. The Amendment of the Act was designed to make this possible and was required in the first instance to provide for transfer between Burma and India after separation.

There was no other speaker and the Bill was passed.

#### BURMA EMIGRATION

Mr. G. S. Bajpai moved a resolution that emigration to Burma for the purpose of unskilled work shall be lawful, subject only to the restrictions in force immediately before the commencement of the Government of Burma Act, 1935.

The resolution was adopted and the House adjourned till the 23rd.

#### VOTING ON RAILWAY DEMAND

23rd. FEBRUARY :—When the Assembly met to-day after three days' recess to vote Railway demands for grants there was a large attendance of elected members; and, while the Congress was not represented in full strength, there were about 30 members of the party present on the Opposition benches.

In accordance with an agreement arrived at among party leaders, Mr. A. C. Dutt, on behalf of the Nationalist group, moved a cut of Rs. 100 in the demand under the head "Railway Board" in order to discuss the general policy of Railway administration. Mr. Dutt strongly urged a complete reorientation of the policy of what after all was the biggest single industry in this country. Its outlook, he complained, was anti-national and irrational. That had been their complaint for a quarter of a century. Its policy had been to encourage foreign industry and discourage Indian industry.

Mr. Sriprakash wished that the motion had been that the whole demand be cut including the Railway Board itself. It was a useless body and more than that it had

become handmaidens to the political department. A commercial concern, he declared, could not be run with a political bias and political prejudice. He quoted instances of harassment of passengers and referred to free passes given to C. I. D. men to travel on trains and to police officers to enter platforms. Mr. Sriprakash also mentioned that several useless or inconvenient trains were being run. As regards air-conditioned coaches, he said that he would never venture into a air-conditioned first class coupe, because he would catch cold (laughter). He had known air-conditioned law-courts, magistrate's courts and other places. "When you go in, you catch cold. When you get out, you catch hot" (renewed laughter). The Railway Board, he said, had made a contribution to the English dictionary. When a person of the other sex travelled in third class, she was a woman, when she entered the intermediate class she became a female and when she entered the first class she was a lady (loud laughter).

Prof. Ranga complained of inadequate provision of third class coaches and of a rise in the total wage Bill. He urged that salaries of higher officials should be lowered, but no worker in the Railways or anywhere in this country should get less than Rs. 30. Concluding Prof. Ranga said that although the corruption was still there and the Railway Administration was censured last year, the corruption was still rampant in all Railway stations. Third class passengers were still being harassed and Railway freights still continued to be high to the detriment of trade and industry.

Mr. Anwarul Azim said that he was not holding any brief on behalf of either of Sir Md. Zafrullah Khan or of Sir Raghavendra Rao, but the House must admit that several improvements had taken place in the administration of railways during the last fifteen years.

Mr. Ramnarayan Singh declared that the Railways had been built to create an outlet for British capital, to transport troops for governing the country and to create markets for British goods. He had no hope of the grievances of third class passengers being ever remedied.

Sir Md. Zafrullah Khan, Railway Member, replying to the debate said that some members particularly Mr. A. C. Dutta, had accused the Government of helping export and import rather than internal trade by their freight. This, he declared, was not correct. Railways followed no definite policy of encouraging exports and imports in competition with internal traffic. But having regard to certain existing factors special rates had to be quoted. The Railway Member said that he hoped that nobody in the House declared that exports should be discouraged. Only last year, reduction in wheat and coal was urged in order to help export and the Railway administration agreed to the proposal. Sir Mohd. Zafrullah said that it was also wrong to say that nothing had been done in the matter of freights to help the Indian industry and producer. As regards the complaint that the administration was costly, Sir Md. Zafrullah Khan informed the House that recently there had been a downward tendency in the operating ratio. Excluding depreciation, the operating ratio before the war was fifty-two. On that basis the ratio was the highest in 1930-31, but since then it had gradually gone down to 53 point 4 in 1936-37. As regards the question of treatment to third class passengers, Sir Md. Zafrullah Khan said that at this stage he proposed to make only general observations, reserving detailed examination to a later occasion when a specific matter was taken up. He had special reports sent to him from all Railway systems, pointing out improvements made in third class travel. These improvements were more on certain railways and comparatively less on others, but all the Railways were fully conscious of their responsibilities.

The cut motion was put to the House and rejected without division.

Sir Leslie Hudson on behalf of the European group urged reduction by one rupee of the demand under head Railway Board in order to discuss the control of expenditure. Sir Leslie Hudson stressed the need for thorough overhaul of railway finances and declared that to set up the proposed new Statutory Railway authority before the whole position had been carefully examined would be a profound mistake. He suggested a thorough enquiry into the systems of cost accounting in use on the railways but the most perfect costing system in the world was valueless if proper use was not made of the information it yielded. He suggested that the right policy would be in good times to build up reserves and in bad times to draw from reserves to maintain an even level of expenditure.

Mr. N. M. Joshi condemned the wastage of money on undertakings, which did not pay, such as remodelling of railway stations at Lucknow and Poona. He agreed with the general statement of Sir Leslie Hudson regarding the need for greater con-

trou over finances of railways, but what the railways really wanted was not internal control but control of an independent organisation and independent individuals.

Mr. *Sripalakasa* enumerated examples of what he thought as wasteful expenditure. The greatest wastage, he said, occurred in the construction of unnecessarily big railway stations at some places and too rickety in other places.

*Sir P. R. Rau*, replying to the debate, assured *Sir Leslie Hudson* that the railways had a proper system of cost accounting. He agreed with the same member that a strict system of budgetary control of expenditure should exist. Turning to Mr. *Joishi's* point that the Financial Commissioner should be independent of the Railway Board, the speaker said that after some years' experience of the job, he could say that the present position was better.

When the President put the cut motion to the House, the European Group by remaining silent signified their desire not to divide the House, but some members of the Congress pressed for a division. The House divided and the motion was carried by 58 votes against 37.

It was exactly 4 p. m. when the President called upon the Congress Party to move their cut but, some front bench members pointed out that their turn was on the next day. The President accordingly adjourned the House till the next day.

**24th. FEBRUARY** :—The Government sustained two successive defeats to-day when two cut motions to the Railway Budget demands sponsored by the Congress Party raising debates on the exclusion of Indians from the Wedgwood Enquiry Committee and also on the failure of the Government to take over the company-managed Railways such as B. N., W. R. K., and M. & S. M. Railways were carried by the House, the former without division and the latter by 50 votes against 42.

**25th. FEBRUARY** :—When the Assembly met to-day the debate on the cut motion moved last evening by Mr. *Mahomed A. Kazmi* to discuss the Government's failure to take steps for the manufacture of locomotives in India was continued.

*Sir Atahomed Zafrullah Khan*, replying to the debate, said that he could only re-state briefly the considerations that carried weight with Government in coming to a conclusion against the starting of a locomotive factory. The Government had certain responsibility (Voice: To whom?) to the country in financial matters and that responsibility must be discharged with reference to certain principles. It had been found that to make and manufacture them economically at least two hundred locomotives would have to be built yearly. But even the demand for fifty or sixty locomotives could not be guaranteed by Indian Railways. The fact that private enterprise would not touch it clearly indicated that it was not likely to be paying. *Sir Zafrullah* referred to the wagon industry to refute the contention that the Government had done nothing to promote Indian industries. The promise to which *Sir Henry Gidney* referred only existed in the new nationalist imagination.

The motion was put and carried by 58 votes to 41.

Mr. *Ohiasuddin* moved the Independent Party cut motion to discuss the grievances of third class passengers. He declared that third class passengers were abominably treated. The speaker suggested the appointment of guardians to help third class passengers to see that there was no overcrowding to examine the waiting sheds and prevent passengers from being rudely treated by officials. He also suggested the provision of hanging beds in third class carriages and the running of motor buses on railway lines in order to relieve congestion on usual trains. He confessed that he was puzzled when he was told that traffic receipts were low because he could not reconcile it with the intolerable state of overcrowding in trains. The proposal to air-condition first class carriages reminded him of *Mary Antoinette*, Queen of France, who, when she was told that people were clamouring for bread, exclaimed, "Why don't they eat cakes?" (Laughter).

*Sir Mohd. Zafrullah* admitted that there was a great deal still required to be done to secure to lower class passengers the minimum standard of comfort and hoped that they would steadily continue to progress towards the achievement of that ideal.

The House carried the cut motion by 53 votes to 44.

*Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang* moved a cut under the Railway Board to discuss the Indianisation of railway services. *Syed Nairang* urged that cut motions should not be treated as an opportunity of ventilating grievances. They should be treated more seriously, if not more respectfully. He asked why there had been series of defeats

in the past and why even this year was there only an insignificant surplus. The explanation lay in the neglect of speedy and complete Indianisation.

Sir *Mohamed Zafrullah* replying quoted figures from the Wages Bill and explained that the wages of those drawing from Rs. 30 to Rs. 500 aggregated to Rs. 29 crores. These included very few Europeans and no possible economy could, therefore, be effected nor was there room for Indianisation.

The motion was pressed to a division and carried by 40 votes to 41. The Assembly then adjourned.

**26th. FEBRUARY** :—*Khan Bahadur S. F. Piracha* moved a cut motion reducing by Rs. 1 the demand under the Railway Board to discuss the pravity of Muslims in Railway services and "favouritism" shown in matters of promotions against interests of Muslims in the service.

Dr. *Zauidin* declared what the Muslim community wanted was that justice should be done. He expressed the apprehension that when the statutory Railway authority came into being, the interests of Muslims might suffer.

Sir *Mohamed Zafrullah* replying to this point explained that the policy of recruiting only in subordinate grades was adopted as a measure of economy, but he agreed that if recruitment to intermediate grades was shut out, it might eventually be found that there were few people with ability or initiative necessary to discharge the duties of these posts.

In view of the Railway Member's assurance the mover withdrew the cut motion."

Mr. *Nauman* moved a cut motion to discuss the road-rail problem. He dealt with a number of grievances which the public had against the railways, such as pilfering of goods in transit, non-receipt of intimation of arrival of goods, demurrage being charged for failing to take delivery in time, while the railways would not guarantee delivery in time themselves.

Sir *Mohamed Zafrullah*, replying to the debate, said that various improvements suggested in the course of discussion would be considered and adopted as far as practicable. On the whole, speaking generally, he was personally convinced that the railway ought to show a little more imagination in these matters and not adhere strictly to the middle path or to the path of safety. Some of the suggestions if carried out might not directly be remunerative but would create greater public confidence. The Railway Member proceeded to examine the other proposals made in the course of the day. The reduction of railway fares over short distances, for instance, would not help the railways to meet bus competition. Its effect could be nullified by re-bookings. As regards the statement that the railways were an imperialist concern while motor buses were a nationalist concern, Sir M. Zafrullah pointed out that in the sense in which the word imperialist had been used motor buses which were not manufactured in India were equally imperialist.

After Sir M. Zafrullah's reply Mr. *Nauman* wanted to withdraw his motion, but the House refused permission and the motion was pressed to a division and carried by 43 votes to 40.

Thereafter guillotine was applied and three more demands were pressed to a division and rejected by 43 votes to 37 in each case. The demands were the following: Over Rs. 16 crores under working expenses, maintenance and supply of locomotive power, over Rs. 5 crores under maintenance of carriage and wagon stock and Rs. 27 lakhs under maintenance of ferry steamers and harbours. Other demands were passed and the House adjourned.

#### Financial Statement for 1937-38

**27th. FEBRUARY** :—Sir *James Grigg*, the Finance Member rose at 5-0 p. m. to-day to introduce the Budget proposals for 1937-38 and said:—In my two previous Budget speeches I have had to tell a story of good fortune, of expectations more than realised, of reductions of taxation and of grants for various kinds of development. To-day I have a different kind of story to tell, a story of disappointment, and unexpected difficulties superimposed upon those which we expected and had braced ourselves to bear. Nevertheless the story will, I hope, show that the difficulties can be surmounted with little hardship or even inconvenience and that being so, the confidence in the future which I have hitherto expressed need only be tempered and certainly not abandoned."

#### FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 1935-36

Sir *James Grigg* pointed out that the [surplus for the year ending March 31st

1936, which had been earmarked as a Revenue Reserve Fund to assist in balancing the budget during 1937-38 had proved to be 1,84 or 13 lakhs less than was expected.

#### REVISED ESTIMATES 1936-37

Revised estimates for 1936-37 showed a deficit of 1.97 lakhs instead of a surplus of 6 lakhs, expenditure being up 25 lakhs and revenue down 1.78 lakhs.

The changes responsible for the drop in Revenue were: Deficits of 2, 16, 37 and 28 lakhs under Customs (all heads), Income Tax and Currency respectively and improvements of 41, 37 and 10 lakhs under Central Excises, Miscellaneous and Salt.

In the debates on the Finance Bill a year ago the Finance Member drew attention to the heavy deterioration in receipts from imported sugar which set in towards the end of 1935-36. The further rapid decline in sugar imports during the current year was responsible for a short fall of 1.45 lakhs. This alone provided justification for the Finance Member's refusal during the last two years to adopt a programme of remission of taxation on the basis of the continuance of this source of revenue.

Receipts from British piecegoods were 75 lakhs down. Exaggerated apprehensions about British piecegoods when the recommendation of the Tariff Board was accepted had proved unfounded, as their prices remained beyond the reach of the average Indian purchaser. A decrease in imports of metals other than Iron and Steel was a reflection on European rearmament resulting in delayed deliveries and the same cause was probably responsible for reductions in other imports also.

The deterioration of 37 lakhs under Taxes on Income was attributed in the main to two causes—a decline in receipts from sugar manufacturing companies owing to the reduction of profits caused by over-production and the consequent price-cutting, and a fall in the profits of money lenders due to the various Rural Indebtedness Acts. The decline in receipts from Currency was a reflection of the prevailing low rates of interest which reduced the return on the Reserve Bank's investments.

The increase of 25 lakhs in expenditure was due to heavier discharges in Post Office Cash Certificates—Interest Charges being 46 lakhs up—counteracted by savings amounting to 20 lakhs under Civil Administration and Civil Works.

The Defence estimate was 44.85 lakhs ordinary expenditure 'plus' 60 lakhs for Quetta, a total of 45.45 lakhs. Excesses of 33 lakhs mainly due to increased demands

#### BUDGET AT A GLANCE

Financial year 1936-37

Net Deficit of 1.97 lakhs

Revenue decline 1.78 lakhs.

Income-tax decline 37 lakhs.

Customs decline 2.16 lakhs.

Posts and Telegraphs surplus 8 lakhs.

Defence estimates excess 33 lakhs.

Expenditure excess 25 lakhs—Compared to 1935-36 estimates.

Financial Year 1937-38

Net Deficit of 1.58 Lakhs.

(Revenue 81.83 lakhs; Reserve Fund 1.84 lakhs; Expenditure 83.41 lakhs).

Cost of Burma separation 2.33 lakhs.

Cost of Provincial Autonomy 1.85 lakhs.

Decline of revenue 1.37 lakhs.

Decline of customs 2.07 lakhs.

(Excluding loss by separation of Burma, an improvement of 2.19 lakhs).

Income-tax (loss by Burma separation) an improvement of 40 lakhs.

Total expenditure increase of 8 lakhs.

Defence estimates increase of 20 lakhs.

Posts and Telegraphs surplus of 4 lakhs.

—Compared with estimates for 1936-37.

Requirements of Provincial Governments 6.57 lakhs, against original estimate of 5.61 lakhs.

On the 1st April, India Government to provide provinces with 10.60 lakhs (including Burma's 2.00 lakhs) in cash.

The Budget announces the following:

An increase in sugar excise from Rs. 1-5 to Rs. 2.

Customs duty on sugar is fixed at Rs. 7-4 per cwt. plus the excise duty for the time being in force.

The Silver duty is raised from 2 annas to 3 annas.



for stores, 11 and one-fourth lakhs for the Waziristan operations and new unforeseen expenditure had been met from savings and 5 and a half lakhs would be added to the Defence Reserve Fund. Out of 60 lakhs provided for Quetta 50 lakhs would be spent this year and 10 lakhs carried forward to next year.

The revised forecast for Posts and Telegraphs provided for a surplus of 8 lakhs against a nominal surplus of one lakh anticipated originally.

The Finance Member said—"So, on the basis of these figures, the position is that we are faced with a deficit of 1.97 lakhs in the current year. This represents a considerable falling off from our hopes of a year ago and it is bound to make us re-examine with some care the foundations on which the Niemeyer proposals for subventions and allocations of revenue to the Provinces rest."

#### FINANCIAL YEAR 1937-38

Two major changes of scope affected the estimates for 1937-38—the separation of Burma and the Niemeyer Award. The general effect of the separation of Burma was a net reduction of Revenue of 3.38 lakhs and a net reduction of Expenditure of 9.2 lakhs, apart from an improvement of 13 lakhs in net balance of Posts and Telegraphs Department. The net cost of separation was therefore 2.33 lakhs.

Regarding Provincial Autonomy, the net result was a reduction of 51 lakhs in Revenue combined with an increase of 1.34 lakhs in Expenditure—a total cost to the Centre of 1.85 lakhs.

The sum of these two figures, viz., 4.18 lakhs represented the extra burden on the Budget arising from the constitutional changes due on 1st April next. These changes were additional to those assumed in earlier years, viz., the devolution of 50 per cent. of the jute duty and the subventions to the N. W. F. P., Sind and Orissa, which amounted to more than as much again.

Sir James Grigg next dealt with the arrangements made for payment of existing debt and future borrowings as between the Centre and the Provinces. No further loans would be sanctioned from the Provincial Loans Fund (which would be wound up). All future borrowings by Provinces, apart from temporary accommodation from the Centre, during the transition period would be through the medium of the Reserve Bank.

The total figure for revenue, including a contribution of 15 lakhs from Railways, was 79.99 lakhs, or 1.37 lakhs less than the revised estimate for 1936-37.

The Customs estimates was 44.66 lakhs against the current year's revised estimate of 46.73 lakhs—a decrease of 2.07 lakhs but, excluding the loss of 4.26 lakhs due to separation of Burma, an improvement of 2.19 lakhs. The estimate for Taxes on Income was 14.30 lakhs against the current year's revised estimate of 15.30 lakhs—excluding the loss of 1.40 lakhs owing to separation of Burma, an improvement of 40 lakhs. The estimate included 20 lakhs on account of the Amendment in the Income Tax Act brought forward during the current session.

The total figure for expenditure, excluding Railways was 83.41 lakhs or 3 lakhs more than the revised estimate for the current year. As constitutional changes will cost 42 lakhs extra. There was a net reduction of 34 lakhs in other directions.

Defence estimates amounted to 43.87 lakhs plus 75 lakhs for Quetta. After taking into account reduction of 1.24 lakhs for separation of Burma and Aden and provision for sending Army Contingent from India to the Coronation the real excess over the current year was 20 lakhs. As there had been unavoidable increases of 60 lakhs under Ordnance services, grain prices, rates of pay and transport charges, there had in effect been a reduction of 40 lakhs over the rest of the field. This reduction in expenditure represented the contribution which the Defence authorities had been asked to make to what was hoped to be temporary difficulties in this most difficult of years. This expedient could not be repeated often if at all, for the figures had only been reached by a curtailment of services which were bound to be provided for sooner or later.

After allowing for separation of Burma and Aden a small surplus of 4 lakhs was estimated in Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Two changes in postal rates were provided for. The book packet rate would be reduced from three-fourth anna for the first five tolas and a half anna for every additional 5 tolas to a half anna for the first 2 and a half tolas and one-fourth anna for every additional 2 and a half tolas. To remove the anomaly whereby parcel rates are at certain stages cheaper than letter rates and even book packet rates the 3 annas minimum rate per parcels of not more than 20 tolas would be eliminated and all parcels weighing 40 tolas or less would be charged 4 annas.

In brief the position for 1937-38 was Revenue Rs. 83 lakhs, including Revenue Reserve Fund of 1.84 lakhs, and Expenditure Rs. 83.41 lakhs—resulting in net deficit of 1.58 lakhs.

The revised forecast of £41 millions for sterling requirements was practically the same as the original estimate. The requirements for next year were estimated at £35 millions. The Reserve Bank position was very strong as the ratio of gold and sterling to liabilities in the Issue Department was nearly sixty instead of the statutory forty per cent and there were considerable additional sterling assets in the Banking Department. During the first nine months of the current financial year the favourable balance of trade amounted to 50.00 lakhs against 19.00 lakhs during the corresponding period last year. Exchange had remained firm throughout the year mainly on account of the large favourable balance of trade in merchandise accompanied by steadily rising prices of primary products. It certainly did not look as if the rupee were over-valued—in fact there was a good deal to be said for the contrary view.

A sterling loan of £17 millions was repaid during the year and thus in effect it had been possible to repatriate a considerable sterling liability and at the same time lower the cost to the taxpayer by reducing the rate of interest. No rupee or sterling loans matured next year and on present showing it might not be necessary to issue any new ones. Should conditions again prove favourable, however, Government would not hesitate to take full advantage of them.

The revised estimate of the requirements of Provincial Governments for the current year amounted to 6.57 lakhs against the original estimate of 5.81 lakhs; the increase was more than accounted for by the withdrawal by certain provinces of amounts available in their Famine Relief Funds for direct investment. Next year the balances of Provincial Governments would be separate from those of the Centre but the Government of India would have to provide provinces on April 1st with 10.60 lakhs (including 3.00 lakhs for Burma) in cash on account of their initial Treasury and other balances.

Discussing the question whether there was any reason for doubting the soundness of the conclusions of the Niemeyer Report in regard to the ability of the Centre to bear the cost of the successive stages by which the new Constitution was to be introduced, the Finance Member did not think that the disappointments of 1936-37 had falsified the calculations. In spite of the falling off of revenue there were definitely encouraging signs. "Railway traffic returns indicate quite clearly a substantial increase in prosperity. The steadily increasing prices of primary products point to the same conclusion. Further, the almost phenomenal increase in exports of merchandise must soon result in an enhancement of purchasing power and altogether we have many pointers towards a greater resiliency of revenue in the not distant future. On the whole I do not think that I shall be indulging in unjustifiable optimism if I say that there is no reason why the Niemeyer prognostications should not be realised in the long run and that even in the nearer future his programme can be fulfilled with the help of no more than a very modest addition to our resources, which I should estimate to be roughly Rs. 1 and a half to Rs. 1 and three-fourth crores by which we are short of a balance this year. Of course, I am always pre-supposing the absence of internal disorder or external strife".

Sir James Grigg continued that personally he believed that given time the amount could be found by improving and tightening up the administration of existing taxes. The amendment in the Income Tax Act recently introduced was expected to arrest deterioration in revenue in one direction and to yield an immediate improvement of 20 lakhs next year. Other recommendations of the Income Tax Enquiry Report concerning changes in the tax system involved questions of principle on which public opinion would be elicited before legislation was introduced. Proposals in the report to improve the taxation machinery would be examined without delay with a view to the early introduction of reforms. In the spheres of Customs administration and Central Excises some improvements had already been introduced and others were under consideration. These would in due course yield a substantial return but they would not solve the immediate problem of filling the gap of Rs. 1 and a half to 1 and three fourth crores in the next financial year.

Sir James Grigg said: "In the first place I propose to increase the sugar excise from Rs. 1-6 to Rs. 2 per cwt. The main single cause of the present weakness in our revenue position is the virtual disappearance of revenue from imported sugar. I would remind the House that in 1930-31 this item accounted for no less than Rs. 10

and three-fourth crores. That customs revenue has now practically gone and in its place we are to be left with excise revenue of under Rs. 2 and half crores. It is hardly necessary to emphasise the tremendous strain which the loss of 6 to 8 crores in the yield of consumption tax on a single commodity must impose on finance of the country. The present level of internal prices is such that the consumer, even when he has fully shouldered the burden of an additional eleven annas per cwt., will be paying no more for his sugar than he was, until a very recent date.

As regards the manufacture, I have already mentioned the plight to which over-production has reduced the industry. In so far as enhanced excise will check this tendency of eliminating the weak and inefficient producer, it will have a salutary effect and by arresting further deterioration will preserve the position, pending a fuller enquiry which will shortly be held by the Tariff Board. For the same reason, I believe the effect on cultivator also will be beneficial for it is no advantage to him to be induced to grow cane for supply to precarious manufacturer, who cannot be relied on to take the crop off his hands. I estimate the additional revenue from increase in sugar excise at 115 lakhs. The change in excise duty involves a change in the customs tariff. The protective duty was imposed in accordance with the recommendation of the Tariff Board in April, 1931, at Rs. 1-4 per cwt., but in the emergency Budget of September, 1931 a surcharge of 25 per cent was added, which brought it to the present level of Rs. 9 per cwt. When instead of the revenue surcharge being removed the excise was introduced in 1934 it was thought desirable to maintain the additional margin of eight annas per cwt. between the duty on domestic sugar, which was fixed at Rs. 1-5 per cwt. and that on imported sugar.

This additional margin based on the subsidiary recommendation of the Tariff Board, which apprehended in certain circumstances that the price of imported sugar might fall below the figure which the Board estimated to be a fair selling price for Indian product. In the present conditions Indian sugar is being sold at prices of imported sugar that there is no necessity or justification for maintaining any addition to the substantive protection of Rs. 7-4 per cwt. to which the industry is entitled until the 31st March, 1938. The import duty, therefore, will be fixed at Rs. 7-4 per cwt. plus the excise for the time being in force. In order to prevent forestalling and minimise dislocation of the market, I have decided that these changes should take effect forthwith and a declaration under the provisional collection of Taxes Act has been attached to the relevant clauses of the Finance Bill. I should also mention that sugar producing Indian States are being approached with a view to bringing them into line with British India and securing that enhanced excise also be levied on their output.

(B) My second proposal for filling up the gap in the revenue is to raise the duty on silver from the present level of two annas to three annas per ounce. I do not think that this modest increase is likely to stimulate the recrudescence of smuggling, which we encountered when the duty was five annas or more. I estimate the additional yield to be Rs. 50 lakhs. This change will also take effect at once. With an additional revenue of Rs. 1,65 lakhs we expect from these measures, our net deficit of Rs. 158 lakhs for 1937-38 is turned into a small surplus of Rs. 7 lakhs or so in the current year, and thus reduce the deficit for 1936-37 to Rs. 1,92 lakhs.

Additional taxation always arouses controversy and there is no particular reason why I should expect to escape from the operation of this universal law, but the new burdens I am imposing are modest, and to the best of my belief no part of them will fall on the shoulders of the poorer classes. The price we have to pay for balancing our Budget, is not therefore, exacting one. The economic position in the country is undoubtedly improving, and in spite of a temporary setback in our budgetary affairs, we have certainly no cause for pessimism, but rather considerable cause for optimism. And in any case, let us not forget that in this very Budget we are paying nearly Rs. 2 and half crores for the separation of Burma and are providing over Rs. 8 and half crores of assistance to other provinces.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET

2nd. MARCH:—The Assembly held a general debate on the Budget to-day. After questions, Sir *Leslie Hudson* opened the debate. He said that the European Group supported the additional duty on sugar and silver. The proposal with regard to sugar was perhaps drastic, but an efficient producer had nothing to fear from the additional duties. Referring to the new Empire air mail scheme, Sir *Leslie Hudson* thought that it meant that all first class mail matter would be carried by air, but one point about which the commercial community would worry was with regard to

the carriage of commercial documents which were often bulky and heavy and would involve an additional cost. He hoped that some arrangement would be made to meet this difficulty.

Mr. K. Chaliha said that the effect of an increase in the sugar duty would be that competition in the sugar market would increase, which only the European producers of sugar could survive. Thus many Indian factories would eventually close and a very large number of Indian shareholders would be ruined. Proceeding Mr. Chaliha criticised the opium policy of the Government of India. He said that it was a shame that while India had sacrificed over nine crores yearly income from export of opium to the East, she was not prepared to forego about fifty lakhs to save her own people from the vice of the opium habit. Concluding, he pressed the claims of Assam for a larger subvention, as that province had been making large remissions in land revenue.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee did not object to the enhancement of the silver duty, but strongly opposed the increase in the sugar excise duty. To support his view, he quoted the opinion expressed by Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharia at Bombay. Dr. Banerjee deprecated that the Finance Member was imputing motives to a man like Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharia. Continuing Dr. Banerjee said that nobody could deny that the sugar industry could not bear a heavy taxation at this early stage of its career. "India is a rich country, she has vast resources, but the people of the country are poor, because of the financial system of the Government," Dr. Banerjee added.

Mr. Kailash Behari Lal, a new member from Bihar, in a maiden speech criticised the general policy of the Government. He declared that the Government was responsible for "tickling communal passions." He criticised the work of the Statistical Department and referred to the unemployment in the country.

Mr. K. Sanatanam opined that the Finance Member's speech merely stated how salaries of Government officials were paid during last and current years and were to be paid next year. It contained a most casual reference to the fortunes of the people. When the only activity of the Government was to impose taxation and pay salaries of Government officials, the condition of people must be deplorable. "If the Government of India had acted like other foreign Governments the situation would not have been so bad. Mr. Sanatanam proceeded to comment on the Finance Member's casual and lighthearted observation that the increase in export indicated that the 18d. ratio appeared to be under-valued rather than over-valued. When Mr. Sanatanam used the word "light-hearted" there was laughter from all sides of the House interspersed with cries of "optimistic". Sir James Grigg asked good humouredly whether the use of the word "lighthearted" was in order. The President said that it was in order and added that members could not cast reflection on the votes of the House.

Mr. Gadgil remarked that the grant of Rs. 1 crore for rural uplift which had been made during the past two years was conspicuous by its absence this year. The grant was first made at the time when the Congress started work in rural areas in 1935. It was continued next year and was spent to counteract the influence of the Congress. The Congress, however, succeeded better in the elections in rural areas than in the urban areas. Mr. Gadgil proceeded to deal with the costliness of Indian administration. He said that instead of raising the tax on sugar he had expected that the Government would come with a proposal of ten per cent cut in their salaries.

Dr. Ziauddin advised the Government to keep in mind the yearly remittance of Rs. 70 crores for foreign commitments at the time of signing any trade agreement with England or dominions. India could not afford any longer to drain away its gold resources. He favoured the grant of funds for rural uplift on condition that the money was spent for the spread of primary education and for distributing good seeds to agriculturists.

Mr. Avanashlingham Chettiar declared that the Finance Member had underestimated deficit. To the amount of Rs. 1 and three-fourth crores mentioned by him should be added portion of the 229 crores received from Burma for debt settlement.

Mr. C. B. Magargar (Bombay official) said that the increase in sugar excise was so small that it could hardly be said to impose any hardship on the masses. The increase in silver duty was also small and was of less controversial character.

Mr. Shamlal admitted that he had read the Finance Member's speech lightheartedly but earnestly (laughter). The speaker wanted Government servants to forego a portion of their salary but the latter would not agree. Why discuss the budget if the Government was not prepared to agree to what the House said? A high salaried Government official did not create round him an atmosphere of service.

*Sami Venkatachalam Chetty* suggested that the steel industry deserved better treatment than had been given to sugar which, next to salt, was the most commonly used commodity. Provincial Governments had given to the industry facilities and concessions which the new duty might adversely affect. Referring to income tax Mr. Chetty urged that assessing officers should take consideration of the actual expenditure which included the money spent on semi-religious occasions and such items as 'Divali' and other presents.

Mr. *Anantasayanam Iyengar* declared that the Finance Member had made repeated mistakes in calculation and had shown himself little better than a novice. It was wrong to build the expectation of increased exports. A shrinkage of the export of raw products was already evident. Recently India which produced rice in such abundances had to cry for imposition of restriction on Siamese rice. That showed how fast neighbouring countries were becoming Independent of India's raw products.

*Seth Mathradas Vasanji* thought the budget gave no cause for jubilation either on revenue or expenditure side. The cost of provincial autonomy was far more considerable than many might at first have believed. That of course was no reason to forego autonomy in the provinces but the point was relevant in criticising this year's budget in that hereafter many sources of income which was sort of a reserve for national needs would now not be available to the Central Government and that to that extent the general financial position must needs be regarded as being weaker than otherwise.

**3rd. MARCH:—**The Assembly continued general discussion of the budget to-day. Sir *Mohammed Yakub*, speaking first to-day, declared that the Finance Member's proposals would cause great hardship and resentment. An increase in the excise duty on sugar had already created a stir in the country, and he did not expect it would bring the estimated revenue. The imposition of an additional silver duty was not an unmixed blessing. Silver was now the only commodity which the people of India could look upon as their treasure to help them in times of need and they would not welcome a duty on it.

Mr. *N. M. Joshi* observed that the impression left by the Finance Member's budget speech this year was that he was in a slightly chastened mood in contrast to the two previous budget speeches, which breathed the spirit of a man who thought that he made no mistakes and needed no caution. He criticised the progressive restriction of the functions of the Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly, while the need was for enlarging their scope, so that all public expenditure might be scrutinised. He urged that the House should give its serious attention to this and to what he described as an attempt to curtail the functions of the Public Accounts Committee also.

Mr. *J. F. Sala*, (nominated official, U. P.), speaking in his private capacity as one who served this country not without honour for two or three generations, recognised that the coming changes were right in principle and was ready to work them with sympathy. There was prospect of the Congress party taking office in several provinces. If they took up the responsibility of office, as a few of them had had experience of administrative work, they would probably need such help as the Imperial services were able to give.

Mr. *Basanta Kumar Das* said that the Finance Member had played a hoax on the House last year when he had said that there would be a surplus budget this year. He had done so in order to get his rural grant of one crore in order to prepare the rural people against the Congress. The speaker was glad that the masses stood by the Congress in recent elections.

Mr. *Muthuranga Mudaliar* declared that India had been used as the dumping ground for the third rate and fourth rate experts from foreign countries. It was a notorious fact that the Indian Army was maintained primarily in the interest of the Britishers. In the name of efficiency large military hospitals were being maintained far beyond their requirements and the amount spent on the British personnel was disproportionately high as compared with that spent on the Indian personnel. The policy of bringing in English doctors, English nurses, English Chaplains and so on was very disgusting. Referring to the sugar duty, the speaker felt that the nascent industry would be hit thereby. He particularly emphasised discontinuance of the costly Simla exodus.

Mr. *M. S. Aney* declared that there was no further scope for enlargement of revenue. The only way open to make both ends meet was economy and retrenchment. Dealing with the military expenditure, Mr. Aney explained that the gross expenditure really amounted to fifty-five crores and eighty-five lakhs, including the loss on strate-

gio railway lines and the cost of tribal expeditions. The salaries for defence and Simla exodus were items which stood in need of drastic curtailment. The services were like fencing which was intended to protect the Indian cultivator, but had now become a wild growth, absorbing all water and manure and that should go to cultivation.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* referred to the absence from the year's speech of the usual explanations of principles and policies. The Finance Member had made his speech a matter of fact. He had to work under handicaps, one of which was the Constitution itself. He had no elected party to defend him but had the Opposition whose duty (Sir James Grigg interjected: "and pleasure") is to oppose. Referring to defence budget Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that credit was due to the Finance Member for the act that while other countries were spending more money on armament, India had kept expenditure on the Army stationary. Money was cheap and the Finance Member might consider ways and means for converting sterling debt into rupee debt.

*Pandit Govinda Vailabh Pant* opened by saying that it was not possible in the space of a few minutes available to do more than touch the fringe of the subject. Mr. Pant said that he found difficulty in describing the budget in a Parliamentary language but—(Sir James Grigg: "So did I" laughter and applause)—he characterised it as a barbarous budget such as no Finance Member presented in any civilised country. He thought that the Finance Member would agree with him but Sir James Grigg was the victim of circumstances from which he could not escape. Mr. Pant called it a barbarous budget because in these enlightened days no less than 63 p. c. of the entire revenue of the country was devoted to defence. Mr. Pant then adduced arguments to show that the budget statement on defence expenditure was misleading.

Sir *James Grigg*, who rose amidst cheers, said that the debate was confusing and contradictory. On the one side he was accused of being too optimistic while on the other he was criticised for under-budgeting. The Finance Member added that he had listened on the usual platform of accusations of exploitation on the part of Britain which had already been exposed times without number and he had therefore come to the conclusion that there was no prospect of cessation of this type of criticism until members who levelled them had to do things for themselves.

Sir James replied in detail to the criticisms of the budget. Referring to the arguments against the enhancement of the sugar excise duty, he said that these were mutually contradictory as the tax would not ruin the producer and also injure the consumer at the same time. Sir James concluding said that he had deliberately avoided answering more rhetorical and less factual speeches which he thought were more echoes of election speeches. Considering the tone of these speeches he ought to apologise for coming before the House in such a gentle mood. Sir James added, "I hope the House will appreciate my more light-hearted and less abandoned manner. (Applause). The Assembly then adjourned.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

**4th. MARCH :—**The Assembly had six official Bills before it when it met this morning. Mr. *J. A. Thorne* introduced a Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. The need for the amendment is explained as follows: One High Court has held that a guardian appointed by a Court for a minor defendant during the course of an original suit does not continue to be the guardian for the suit in execution of the proceedings without fresh appointment. The Bill now proposes to make it clear that the appointment endures throughout all the proceedings arising out of the suit, including those in the Appellate or Revisional Court and those in execution of the decree.

Mr. *G. R. F. Tottenham* introduced a Bill to amend the Indian Red Cross Society Act.

#### INDIAN LIMITATION ACT AMEND. BILL

Mr. *J. D. Anderson* moved consideration of the Bill further to amend the Indian Limitation Act, 1908. The object of the Bill is to reduce the period of limitation of sixty years for any suit by or on behalf of the Secretary of State for India in Council to six years. It is explained that article 149 of the Act, which prescribes this period, will in future govern the suits by a province against a province or between a province and the Federation.

When the Bill was considered clause by clause Mr. *Anantasayanam Ayyangar* moved an amendment to the effect that the period of limitation proposed by the Bill should be 12 instead of 6 years. He pointed out that if ministers slept over the

rights of a province the succeeding ministers would have sufficient time to find out flaws or Acts of omission and take them before the Federal Court. Six years would not give them sufficient time.

#### INDIAN TEA CESS ACT AMEND. BILL

The House then passed Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah Khan's* Bill to further amend the Indian Tea Cess Act of 1903. It is explained that in view of the small income likely to result from any duty imposed on comparatively unimportant tea exports from Burma and the fact that Burma is not represented on the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board which administers the funds accruing from the duty imposed under the Act, continued application of the Act to Burma after separation is not only unnecessary but is likely to lead to considerable friction over the distribution of the Board's efforts as between India and Burma's teas. It had accordingly been decided to exclude Burma from the operation of the Act and the Bill carried out this decision.

#### ARMY ACT AMEND. BILL

Mr. *G. R. F. Tottenham* moved consideration of the Bill to further amend the Indian Army Act of 1911. The objects of the Bill are explained as follows. Under section 175 of the Army Act officers of the British wing of the army in India reserve of officers are only subject to the military law when called out in the military capacity. There is no corresponding provision in the Indian Army Act for officers in the Indian wing of the Army in India reserve of officers. It is proposed, therefore, to amend the Indian Army Act of 1911 to put officers of the Indian wing in exactly the same position as officers in the British wing.

Mr. *Ghiasuddin* strongly objected to the Bill. He declared that the House had always opposed the distinction between Indian commissioned officers and British commissioned officers and the inferior position which Indian officers held.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* said that the Army Secretary had by means of a plausible speech, quietly tried to get the Bill passed but it contained cruel and insulting distinction between the Indian and the British wing of officers. The Bill was seeking to perpetuate a state of things under which British officers serving in India were governed by one law made in their own country and Indian officers were governed by another law made in India. He appealed to the House not to stultify itself by going back on its own consistent vote against such a racial distinction.

Sir *Cowaji Jahangir* said that the Bill apparently proposed to put Indian officers in the Indian army, but unfortunately there were two Acts, one for British officers and another for Indian officers. Even by interference the House did not want to be committed to this principle. The House wanted that British and Indian officers should be governed by the same Act.

Mr. *Tottenham*, Army Secretary, replying to the debate pleaded that by throwing out the Bill they could not alter whatever discrimination existed between the Indian and British reserve of officers. He contradicted *Sardar Mangal Singh's* statement that a British officer of the junior rank refused to take orders from a senior Indian officer. There was, on the contrary, complete reciprocity in these matters between British and Indian sections of the army. If the Bill was rejected it would be an example of cutting the nose to spite one's face.

Mr. *Tottenham's* motion for consideration of the Bill was pressed to a division and carried by 47 votes to 46.

In the course of the debate on the third reading of the Bill *Sardar Mangal Singh* observed that according to Army Secretary the racial discrimination might be a settled fact. But it might soon be unsettled.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* opposing the Bill declared that it asked for a vote of the House indirectly in favour of the Indian Army Act, as amended in 1934. "I refuse to be party to the Act. I may not be strong enough to fight the British and send them out of the country, but as long as I am in this House and my friends are in this House, I am not going to be party to any legislation, which seeks to stamp with a brand of inferiority the Indian officers in the Indian Army."

Mr. *Tottenham* replying to the debate said that discussions had strayed far away from the subject under discussion. Member after member had objected to the existing Army Act, but the Bill under consideration went some distance, however small, to meet the objections. The House divided on the Bill and passed it by 49 to 46 votes.

## VOTING ON BUDGET GRANTS

**5th. MARCH :—**The Assembly to-day began discussion on demands for grants which lasted five days. The first cut was moved on behalf of the European group by Mr. *F. E. James* who proposed that the demand under the Finance Department should be reduced by Rs. 1 to consider revenue duties. Mr. James explained that the cut was not intended as a censure on the Government but to provide an opportunity for the European group to express their views.

Mr. *James* emphasised that the purpose of the cut was to ascertain, firstly, what were the results of the departmental enquiry which the Finance Member was conducting as a preliminary to the reconstruction of the revenue tariff, secondly, what was the next step and thirdly to impress on the Government the importance of reconsidering the whole question of duties. The policy of India was discriminating protection while revenue tariff might have an effect of indiscriminating protection to industries which could never satisfy the canons laid down by the Fiscal Commission.

Sir *James Grigg* replying to the debate in full silent House said that the question raised by the motion was an important one on which in the past had been much controversy. He commented on the tendency towards a change of the viewpoint which he had noted during the course of the debate. Sir *James Grigg* then enunciated the principles on which Indian tariff should be based which he divided into three classes; firstly, that tariff on luxury articles should be pitched at a level yielding the highest revenue after taking into account the consumer's ability to pay; secondly, that tariff on articles of staple consumption should be as low as possible consistent with revenue needs and thirdly, that duty on instruments of production, including essential raw materials, should only be imposed if the optimum on luxury articles and moderate duty on staple articles failed to yield the exchequer requirements. The speaker assured the House that the question of duties was under close supervision. There are two aspects to be faced, firstly, immediate remedial action to protect revenue and secondly general revision in accordance with well defined principles. Sir *James Grigg* emphasised, however, that it would be a folly to put into operation any one or two separate principles in the advance of general scientific revision. When the possibility arose an investigation would require to be conducted exclusively by the Government.

The out motion was withdrawn.

The *Raja of Kollengoda* moved a cut under "Executive Council" to discuss the policy of protection. The *Raja* said that the Finance Member had made no secret of his strong views on the question of protection which, the *Raja* said, had created considerable uneasiness. India must seek greater economic scrutiny within her own borders. Instead of having to export raw materials India must try to convert them into goods at home. The *Raja* advocated protection of agricultural products and products of cottage industries.

Sir *Mohamed Zafrullah* replying said that in the matter of affording protection to industries it would be difficult to please everybody. Sir *Mohammed* continuing said that at present there already existed a fairly high tariff wall, though with regard to certain industries the degree of protection afforded by it must not be adequate. But it did not matter whether the protection was given by means of specific protective duties or by means of revenue duties. Collectively, both those categories of duties in effect created an atmosphere favourable for fostering industries.

The *Raja of Kollengoda's* cut motion was pressed to a division and was carried by 65 votes to 43. The Assembly then adjourned.

**6th. MARCH :—**The Assembly continued discussion on cut motions on the Budget. *Syed Murtaza Sahib*, on behalf of the Independents, wanted to move a cut of Rs. 100 under the Defence Department to discuss "the persistent refusal of the Government to listen to the opinion of this House in defence matters," but Mr. *Tottenham*, Army Secretary, on a point of order, said that the party had originally intended to move a different cut and he had come prepared to reply on that. Mr. *Tottenham* added that two days' notice, required by the standing orders, had not been given of the new cut and he had not sufficient time to prepare for it.

The *President* upheld the point of order and *Syed Murtaza Sahib* then moved that the demand under the Defence department be reduced by Rs. 100 to discuss Indianisation of the Army. Mr. *Murtaza Sahib* pointed out that the House had repeatedly urged the need of curtailment of the army expenditure and made constructive proposals towards that end. One of them was that the Army Department should be Indianised.



But that Indianisation should not be according to the whims of the War Council of England. The speaker declared that the British force of 60,000 stationed in India was not wanted. Indians themselves were in a position to defend their frontiers. They only wanted an opportunity to do so.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths (official) said that the cut motion on Indianisation had become a permanent feature year after year since last 15 years and it had been argued that the pace of Indianisation was too slow, that segregation of Indian commissioned officers in specific regiments was unfair and that the economic needs of the country did not warrant such a huge army. Mr. Griffiths put a question to himself; why must Indianisation proceed slowly, and proceeded to explain that Indianisation of commissioned ranks of the army in its present form was an experiment. The Government had always desired that Indianisation must necessarily proceed slowly. The army existed for only one job, namely defence and protection and it did not exist for vindicating any political theory. Mr. Griffiths maintained that there was considerable dearth of suitable candidates, and he compared England and India in this respect. Mr. Griffiths said that the real trouble was that Indians were only now beginning to realise the importance of the military career. Until there was sufficient supply of suitable candidates both by education and tradition to hold commissioned ranks it would not be possible that Indianisation would proceed faster than at present.

Mr. Satyamurthi in a vigorous speech declared that it had never been his misfortune to listen to more insulting or arrogant a speech than that of Mr. Griffiths. He asserted that Indians could defend themselves and if they wanted foreign assistance it should not be difficult to buy mercenaries on better terms than British mercenaries, now begin paid by India for her defence. It was an insult to say that Indianisation was being tried as an experiment. India existed before England came and India defended herself with her own soldiers. As for traditions, it was Napoleon who called the British a nation of shopkeepers. After speeches of the type of that of Mr. Griffiths, the British had no right to come to India for assistance in case of another war.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that Mr. Griffiths had stated that the independent party was a withered flower and it brought the same motion year after year. Sir Cowasji Jehangir's reply was the same that the late Sir Rash Behari Ghosh gave on one occasion to a District Judge. When the famous Bengali lawyer brought in a large number of books into the court the District Judge asked if Sir Rash Behari Ghosh had brought his library with him, and Sir Rash Behari Ghosh retorted "Yes your Honour, to teach you law." (Laughter). Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that the independent party brought a cut motion every year in order to teach the men with the mentality of Mr. Griffiths something about army.

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham gave details of the Indianisation scheme, which he had given last year and said that it was an experiment in the sense that it had not been done before and the Government must have time to see whether that experiment succeeded. He declared that there was no change of reconsidering or expanding that scheme until the results of the experiment were known.

Syed Murtaza Sahib's out motion was carried without a division.

Mr. N. M. Joshi moved a cut motion urging the Government to undertake uniform system of compulsory State insurance against risks incidental to the life of industrial workers. He said that experience had shown that voluntary experiments in schemes of social insurance had failed in every country and only a bold scheme undertaken by the State would be cheaper and would prove successful.

Sir Frank Noyce pointed out that Mr. Joshi had completely ignored the question of finance and the constitutional implications of this motion. Sir Frank Noyce quoted the opinion of the Whitley Commission which had said that no scheme of unemployment insurance placed before it was at all practicable and there was no basis on which a scheme could be worked out. The out motion was not pressed and was rejected without a division. The Assembly adjourned till the 8th.

8th. MARCH :—Mr. Joshi moved a cut to discuss the grievances of postal employees. Owing to the short time available he dealt with these briefly and referred to the non-compliance by the Government with the draft convention and forced or compulsory labour.

Mr. Giri gave a list of grievances under which lower scale employees had been labouring. These were insecurity of service, recent revision of rights of appeal, change in the procedure regarding adverse comments entered on service sheets, non-promotion of postmen to clerical posts and victimisation of trade unionists by certain

Superintendents. He said that these were among the grievances but time to mention all was not available.

Mr. L. Bewoor, Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, replying to the criticism of reduction of house allowance to postmen in Bombay said that the Government had considered this matter carefully before taking action. They had consulted not only the Bombay Government but also the Bombay Corporation and the Labour Commission and only thereafter was the reduction of two rupees monthly was made. He emphasised that the house allowance was not meant to cover full rent but to cover extra cost where the standard was high. Mr. Bewoor added that he would like to correct the impression that a few and isolated grievances suggested a tyrannical staff department. The staff department gave sympathetic consideration to every complaint and these were invariably remedied if justified.

Mr. Joshi, though he was not fully satisfied with Mr. Bewoor's reply, withdrew the cut motion.

Mr. Mohanlal Saxena moved a Congress Party out that the demand under the head Department of Education, Health and Lands should be reduced by Rs. 100 to discuss the question of treatment of Indians abroad. Mr. Saxena said that in most of the African colonies Indians were pioneer in having settled long before European settlers had begun to arrive and had played a great part in the economic, moral and material development of these colonies. Germany having butchered Britishers and others during the War was now demanding back her colonies and it seemed that the demand was being favourably considered. He asked the House to see how in contrast to this Indians who had sacrificed thousands of lives to defend the empire in the War were now being hounded out of these colonies.

Mr. F. E. James assured the House that the European group was hundred per cent with all those who pressed for the rights of Indians abroad. The question was not simply one of self-respect and honour of India but self-respect and honour of the whole of the British Empire and to such an extent as was possible for the European group to help they pledged themselves both individually and as a group. Referring to the position of Indians in the dominion, Mr. James pointed out that in this matter India had to deal with sovereign self-governing countries entitled to deal with people within their own borders as they thought fit. That did not relieve India of the necessity of pressing for better treatment for Indians within the dominions, but it meant that it was a problem which could be solved by strengthening the Government of India's hands and showing that everyone in this country was united on it.

Sir Girisia Bhankar Bajpai said that he would indicate by a reference to the action so far taken why the Government did not deserve to be condemned or accused of slackness in dealing with the question of Indians overseas. He reiterated that the object of the Government's policy had been equality both of entry and of status and settlement in every part of the empire, and he gave an account of the steps taken by the Government to carry out this policy. Preceding Sir G. S. Bajpai resolutely refuted the suggestion made in the course of the debate that the position of Indians overseas had deteriorated. Referring to Zanzibar, Sir G. S. Bajpai said that no one regretted more than the Government the hardships caused to Indians resident there by the clove legislation and the debts legislation, but the only consolation was a settlement regarding both these legislations was in sight. He appealed to the House to consider that, to the extent it was possible for the Government to strive for the Indian cause in these territories, they had striven and the question which the House had to consider was whether the Government deserved to be condemned for causes or circumstances over which they had no control.

Mr. Bhutabhat Desai said that he had hoped that the promises made of equality and citizenship in the empire would have some more meaning than sympathy. He could not accept patronising sympathy extended to Indians for a long period of time, which it had never been translated in practice on any critical occasion to any useful purpose. Indian settlers suffered privation, jail, segregation, exile and confiscation of property, but no help came from the Government either here or in England. Mr. Desai asked the Government why they did not take any retaliatory measure against those countries who had treated Indians badly under powers conferred on them on the Act of the Assembly passed in 1934. The fact remained that the Government of India did not wish to do anything. They dared not do anything.

Sir Jagdish Prasad, who specially attended the Assembly to-day, also appealed to the House to consider whether it was not in the interest of "our people" outside that there should be no division on the motion and also whether the Government did

not deserve some encouragement. Referring to the clove and debt decrees in Zanzibar, he said that a settlement was in sight. Sir Jagdish pleaded: "situated as we are, working under conditions which we do at present, I hope the House in its calmer moments will agree that the only weapon which we have at present is that of moral persuasion, justice of our cause, rightness of our reasoning."

The House unanimously adopted Mr. Saxena's cut motion and then adjourned.

**9th. MARCH :—**In the Assembly to-day the debate on Mr. Asaf Ali's cut motion to discuss the Frontier policy was continued. *Dr Khan Sahab* declared that the treatment of the people in the agency area had been inhuman. People had been tied up and made to bend and large stones had been placed on their backs. He described several other acts of a provocative character which, he alleged, the Government had been guilty of, such as fining the whole village because a few telegraph posts had been pulled down, burning of houses and putting 150 innocent men in Dera Ismailkhan jail. He described these to what he termed 'bideshi section of the Government who were full of spirits at nights and got up every morning with swollen heads to muddle in the affairs of this country. The tribesmen were sincerely anxious to live in peace and as friends, but the Government would not let them do so. If the Government themselves could not improve matters, let them hand the affairs over to Khudai Khidmatgars who would show them the way. The Government policy had resulted in making all the tribes united. They were going to establish a republic. They were not going to be frightened.

*Sir Aubrey Metcalfe*, replying to the debate, said that though it was the second successive year in which the Frontier policy had been discussed, he found a lot of misunderstanding. He, therefore, restated the more salient points. The wisdom of the Durand Line policy had been questioned, but he did not wish to go into it because they had to recognise it as existing fact. A member from Peshawar had stated that the Government pursued their policy in an aggressive and provocative manner. This, again, was not correct. There was no question whatever of aggressiveness on the part of the Government but on the contrary, the Government were forced to undertake the operations because of the hostility among the tribes.

*Mr. Bhulabhai Desai* moved a cut under Executive Council to discuss the general policy of the Government. *Mr. Desai* said that the policy followed was such that nemesis was certain to overtake not only the Government of this country but the British Empire itself. It had been said that an Englishman would do anything as long as he could coin a phrase or formula to suit his acts. The position in South Africa gave a clue to the mind of the Government in India. A bill had been passed under which within certain limited areas Indian settlers could own lands. This had been described by the Agent-General as epoch-making. What it really amounted to was the mitigation of a great wrong and yet it had been called epoch-making. Referring to the railways, *Mr. Desai* criticised the Government's reasons for refusing to start a locomotive factory in India. He declared that Rs. 1 crore that it would cost was nothing as compared to Rs. 800 crores sunk in the railways while the gain in the shape of training in applied arts it would give to young men was incalculable. *Mr. Desai* also animadverted to the dilatory method adopted by the Government regarding the termination of the Ottawa Agreement and replacing it by another and refusal of permission to Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan to enter the Frontier Provinces. Judged by every reasonable test Government's record had been one of failure.

Replying, *Sir M. Zafrullah* urged that the Government's motives should not be doubted. It was inherent in the present Constitution that the Government need not vacate office following an adverse vote, but it was not right to base upon it the accusation that they did not attach any value to the view of members opposite in the comfortable feeling that they would not be called upon to vacate office. Education, sanitation and efforts to increase the earning capacity were all spheres of activity in which the Central Government could only act as a co-ordinating authority. But there was none on this side of the House who would not agree that a great deal remained to be done, although they felt that to say that no progress had at all been made was a too sweeping and unjustifiable criticism.

*Mr. M. S. Aney*, supporting *Mr. Bhulabhai Desai's* cut motion, said that the Commerce Member had practically accepted the charges made by the Opposition. His only point was that there should be some tendency on the part of the Opposition to give credit to the Government for what they had done. The Commerce Member's own admission of the inherent defects of the Constitution was the very reason for lack of appreciation on the part of the Opposition. *Mr. Aney* next took up the rail-

way administration and said that seventeen years ago the railways had agreed to make contributions to the Central Government (A voice: Thirty-six crores) annually but to-day they were unable to meet their own demand, having wiped out even the reserve funds. Had the Government been responsible to the people, this state of affairs would not have happened. "We have been reduced to this state of insolvency and those responsible come and tell us that there should be a tendency among us to recognise what good they have done."

*Sir Frank Noyce*, speaking on behalf of the Government, said that he claimed to be neither an administrator nor a politician. He wished he had the qualities of a politician because a politician had the capacity of making the worse appear better. The Commerce Member had made it a good case of what the Government had done. He would add that the Government had done as could be done under the present constitution. He claimed the Government had done their utmost in the field of health, education and agriculture and referred to the large sums spent on the Agricultural Research Department, which has done really good work. He would ask the House to give credit wherever it was due.

*Pundit Govindbhai Pant* asked why should the Government encourage the export of gold and put on a duty, which hampered the imports of silver? India used to hoard silver and gold in ancient times and this attracted foreigners. Was it now the policy to wipe out all this precious metal before the foreigners went out of the country? He declared that unless there was some co-operation of Indian members in the Government of the country the wicked system could not stand, and he appealed to the Indian members to join the Opposition in putting an end to it. They had been asked to show their genius in the provinces, which would now be autonomous. But what could these provinces do when the fundamental and central fact was that the Government of the country amounted to an army of occupation. What could the provinces do until and unless the superior services, manned by the foreigners, were replaced by economically paid Indians, who would do their work in a missionary spirit? What was the good of tying them hand and foot and then asking them to run?

*Sir James Grigg* said that the party, who sought to censure the Government for manifold sins of commission and omission, were about to face a momentous choice. In six or seven provinces they were in a position to resolve a deadlock of irresponsible opposition and irresponsible Government. If they decided to accept office, they would take up the burden of that task, which men had up to now found most difficult of all, namely, governing himself and fellowmen wisely and well. It was a heavy burden, but it was also an endless adventure. They could expect no easy, or glib solutions. *Sir James* concluded: "The hour of choice is at hand. I often have been accused of selfishness and dishonesty. So have most of my fellow countrymen, who have tried to serve India. But I hope the House will believe when I say I pray, we all of us pray, that in the next few weeks Indians will make a wise choice. And if they make the choice they ought to make, I hope that in time they will regard with little more sympathy the efforts and mistakes of their predecessors."

The motion was pressed to a division and carried by 68 votes to 48, and the House adjourned.

**10th. MARCH**—The Assembly discussed the Nationalist Party's out motion to-day censuring the Government on its repressive policy, which was adopted by 61 votes to 55. At 6 p. m. the guillotine was applied and all the demands for grants were passed without any division.

#### PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSIVE POLICY

*Mr. Abhil Chandra Dutta* moved a out of Rs. 100 under the head Executive Council to discuss the Government's repressive policy. *Mr. Dutta* said that the Government's repressive policy had led to restrictions of freedom of speech, association, press and all other legitimate activities. He said that he had a long charge-sheet against the Government and enumerated the following among his counts of complaint (1) continuance of emergency repressive measures adopted to meet civil disobedience, (2) nearly two-thousand young men were still detained in jails without trial, (3) new orders of extermination and internment, (4) continued ban on Congress and other organisations, groups of persons and individuals, (5) non-return of property taken possession of during civil disobedience, (6) gagging the press, (7) crops of prosecutions for sedition, particularly in connection with the elections and (8) ban on the Independence Day resolution and consequent arrests and

house searches. His contention was that on the admission of the Bengal Government themselves the position regarding terrorism in Bengal had improved since 1932. Moreover, there was no civil disobedience in all these four or five years. Why were the Government then continuing these measures and refusing to release detenus whom they said they would release as soon as the situation had improved? Their plea now was that there would be recrudescence of terrorism if the detenus were released. It, in other words, meant once a detenu, ever a detenu.

Mr. N. V. Gadgil declared that to say that there was no repression was something that his side of the House could not believe. Mr. Gadgil said that the independence pledge which had been allowed in 1934, 35 and 36 was suddenly banned on January 26, 1937. This was a trap laid in the idea that Congressmen would break it and spoil their chances in the elections. "But the Government proposes and God disposes."

Mr. S. K. Som traced the genesis of the cult of the bomb and revolver in Bengal to the days of the partition and intense repression of the youth of Bengal ever since. Most respected and innocent persons at the instance of the police spies who were selected from the scum of society had been exterminated or detained without a trial. If such things would go on for any length of time, he would only say that the day of the bureaucracy was numbered.

Mr. P. N. Banerjee, supporting, declared that detention without trial, which was an emergency measure in other countries had become part and parcel of every day Government in India. It had resulted in untold misery and suffering of families and led to suicides and deaths. He referred to continued detention of Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose and said that it had completely shattered his health. He had no sympathy with terrorists, but he was constrained to state that Government methods were responsible for driving young men into the terrorist fold. The Government had tried repression but it had failed.

Mr. K. Santanam said that more than overt acts of repression was the atmosphere of repression in which the soul of the country was cramped and dwarfed. He illustrated this by reference to an incident during the salt satyagraha march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam under the leadership of Mr. Rajagopalachari when villagers had been terrorised by an order that any one who supplied food to the marchers would be abetting their crime.

Sir Srinivasa Sarma said that apart from those, who had been already detained during the last twelve months, there had been not a single case of fresh detention. He had on several occasions discussed the problem of terrorism in Bengal with His Excellency Sir John Anderson and he could say without fear of contradiction that there was no one to whom detaining person without trial was more hateful than the Governor of Bengal.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai said that it was usual with Governments whenever they wanted to restrict the liberties of individuals or groups to come forward with the justification that it was only in the interest of the State, one of the sponsors of the Civil Liberties Union he wanted to expose the manner in which the administration of the Home Department, as far as civil liberties of India were concerned, was being carried on. When discussing the question they could not but refer to Bengal. It had been argued that they were training detenus to some useful avocations, so that they would turn away from wrong mentality and become useful citizens. Mr. Desai asked why did it take so many years for his wisdom to dawn on those all-powerful trustees of British Indian Interests? He recalled an incident in the Nasik Central, in which he was imprisoned and his warder was a criminal with an accumulated sentence of fifty years to his credit. When Mr. Desai asked the warder the reason for his becoming an officer in the jail, the latter told him that after continuous flogging the Superintendent found him unmoved. A report was then made that the only way to reform this man of courage and fortitude was to make him an officer in the jail (laughter). Mr. Desai emphasised that it was clear from this that oppression was useless and he suggested to Sir Henry Craik to apologise for having pursued a policy of ruthless suppression and oppression in Bengal, which was teeming with intelligence and patriotism. Proceeding Mr. Desai claimed that whatever be the origin of terrorism these detenus were respectable young men, who under better circumstances and under a freer Government would be the best material for defence of this country. To call terrorists names almost unmentionable in decent society, was not the right method of treating patriotic men.

*Sir Henry Craik* related the suggestion that the Government interfered in elections, and he declared that from almost every province reports had been received that the majority of Government servants, who possessed votes voted for the Congress (laughter). As regards the Independence Day Pledge, the Home Member said that the language which accompanied the declaration of independence contained in the pledge was highly seditious and there was no inconsistency in having allowed it during previous years and banning it now, because the pledge was never repeated in any widespread or broadcast way during any of the previous years.

Referring to terrorism in Bengal, *Sir Henry* admitted the improvement in the situation, but it would be unjustifiably optimistic to take the view that the movement was completely wiped out. He claimed that the improvement in the situation was reflected by a steady policy of relaxation of restrictions now being pursued by the Bengal Government. He referred in conclusion to the tendency on the part of terrorists of Bengal to swing over from methods of individual assassination to methods of mass revolution. He informed the House that within the last two years some forty or fifty Indian students, trained in these methods in Russia and financed by the Communist International, had penetrated into this country and the Government should be armed with proper powers to deal with them. The House adjourned till the 12th.

#### DEBATE ON THE FINANCE BILL

12th MARCH :—*Sir James Grigg* moved to-day that the Bill (Finance Bill) to fix the duty on salt manufactured in or imported by land into certain parts of British India, to vary the excise duty on sugar leviable under the Sugar (Excise Duty) Act of 1934, to vary certain duties leviable under the Indian Tariff Act of 1934, to vary the excise duty on silver leviable under the Silver (Excise Duty) Act of 1930, to fix maximum rates of postage under the Indian Post Office Act of 1898 and to fix rates of income tax and super tax, be taken into consideration.

*Dr. Khars*, the first speaker of the Congress party, said that they had been asked to consider the Indian Finance Bill, the purpose of which was to find money for suppressive, repressive and oppressive operations of the Government of India. His submission was that it ought to be called not the Indian Financial Bill but Indian fleecing Bill. The moneys raised were intended for Indian Army and Indian Civil Services, the people of India coming hardly for any consideration. The army Moloch ate away half. It was not Indian army though it was called so. This army occupation was for the purpose of terrorising people so that exploitation of the people of India might go on merrily. The civil administration on which large sums were expended centred round the I. C. S. who were "burra sahebs" possessing arbitrary powers to be used to the detriment of the country and to the benefit of England. He drew attention of the House to the absence of any provision in the budget proposals for the village uplift work which the Government has started as a political stunt in previous years because of the elections. What had happened to their village uplift schemes? The villages remained where they were but the money meant for my purpose was lifted up (Laughter).

*Pandit Krishnakanta Malaviya* dwelt at length on the Government's currency ratio policy and their refusal to change the 1s. 8d. ratio and asked the Finance Member whether he knew how much loss the country had suffered on account of this. The Finance Member did this because he was the employe of the people who had sent him to India and he looked to their interests. *Pandit Malaviya* added that the Finance Bill was a consolidated demand for supplies or demand for a vote of confidence. He would ask the House to vote for it if it was satisfied that the administration of last year was carried out satisfactorily in the interests of the country if not to throw it out.

*Dr. Khan Sahab*, opposing consideration of the Finance Bill, detailed the grievances of the frontier people, laying special emphasis on what he termed official interference in the last elections.

When *Dr. Khan Sahab* was making allegations of corruption against officials of the Frontier Government, *Sir Aubrey Maitland* rose on a point of order and asked the President to give a ruling whether the speaker could make defamatory statements against a person, who was not in the House to defend himself. The President ruled that while members had the privilege of criticising the executive they should not make defamatory statements.

The speaker had not finished when the House adjourned.

13th MARCH.—General discussion on the Finance Bill continued to day. Mr. *Hussainbhai Lalji*, resuming his speech, strongly urged the Government to give greater attention to the improvement of agriculture and industry. Signor Mussolini, the Italian Dictator, whom he met, gave indication of his interest in Italian agriculture when, in spite of his pre-occupation with world events, he made enquiries about Italian potatoes imported into India. The speaker wanted the Finance Member to have similar solicitude for Indian agricultural produce. Again, when the speaker visited the Liverpool Salt Works, he found a variety of salt termed "Dutch Butter" because it had been exchanged for butter from Holland. Did the Indian Government do any thing similar to that? Many foreign banks were eager to advance money on agricultural produce and he wanted the Reserve Bank of India to follow that example. Agricultural produce, he declared, was better liquid assets than Government Paper.

Mr. *B. Das* said that the Indian delegation to the Imperial Conference, which would be led by Sir Mahomed Zafrullah, should earnestly take up with other empire countries the necessity of securing for India equality of status. Referring to the enhancement of postal rates between India and Burma, Mr. Das declared that the Government of India had deliberately introduced this mischief so that Indian businessmen should lose their custom in Burma. Mr. Das emphasised how lakhs of Indian workers in Burma would be hard put to carry on correspondence with their kinsmen in India out of their meagre income.

Mr. *L. K. Maitra* described the budget discussions in the Assembly as the annual "shradh ceremony", euphemistically called voting on demands, refusal of supplies etc. Even if there was any adverse vote, the Government took no notice of it and went on functioning as if nothing had happened. Referring to the Home Member's statement that there had been recently a relaxation in repressive policy Mr. Maitra declared that the claim too often advanced that much was being done for the reclamation of detenus by the Bengal Government was hollow. He said that this so-called reclamation scheme did not even touch the fringe of the problem and for the unpardonable sin of criticising this policy the Bengal Government had forfeited the security of the "Ananda Bazar Patrika." Mr. Maitra condemned the policy of segregating the detenus by sending them away to places where the climate did not suit them. He referred to individual cases of suicide which had recently occurred at Deoli and one or two other places owing to misery and privation. In particular, he pointed out how an operation for appendicitis was delayed for 6 months on the ground that the climate of Deoli was unsuitable with the result that a detenu committed suicide to end his suffering. In another instance a brilliant graduate, though theoretically released, was subjected to extreme persecution by the police. In many cases the allowances granted were too small to meet their own expenses and their dependents.

Mr. *Ramnarayan Singh* argued that the Government should be the supreme organisation of the people established according to law for the good of the people. In the absence of law there was no government and in the absence of government the question of the Finance Bill did not arise (laughter). The Government in India were merely agents of British exploiters.

*Lala Shamal* criticised the Government's sugar policy characterising it as one killing the weak and inefficient factories. Attacking the Railway Board the speaker said that if the Board considered the construction of a particular road as not to the interests of railways, no matter how necessary it was, it would not allow such a road to be constructed. The reason underlying such policy was that the railways provided Englishmen with means of exploitation. Similarly regarding the export of gold the Government were following an open door free trade policy because it suited British interests. Dealing with the proposed provincial autonomy the speaker compared it to a worn out garment and said that even if the Congress accepted offices, it would soon return this worn out garment to the Government.

Mr. *Muthuranga Mudaliar* said that the Finance Bill was designed for continued exploitation of the country. Urging revision of the salary scales the speaker challenged the Finance Member to prove that the number of European officers and their salaries were now less than ten years ago. As regards the Railway Board the solitary Indian had been replaced by a European. The speaker asked the Commerce Member why he did not extend the term of Sir Raghavendra Rao as had been done in the case of Sir Gurthrie Russell for two years, if no suitable Indian was available at present. The House at this stage adjourned till the 15th.

**15th. MARCH :—**Mr. *M. Mudaliar* resuming his speech on the Finance Bill to-day criticised the working of several departments of the Government and particularly referred to the plight of agriculturists, for whom, he said, the Government had done nothing. Unless the Government were prepared to revise their land revenue assessment, there could be no hope of emancipation of the agriculturist. The best method of doing this was to appoint special committee. He had many grievances against the Finance Department, the principal ones being, firstly, abrogation of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, secondly, abolition of the export duty on raw hides and skins, whereby the tanning industry of Madras had been ruined and thirdly, the method of assessing income was defective. He bitterly complained of what he called curtailment of the rights of members of the House by the Government passing the new question rules and by disallowing motions of adjournment.

Sir *H. P. Mody* said that for the first time the shadow of Federation had hung over the budget and was responsible for the introduction of several new features. Excise and Corporation tax had been put under separate heads, the Provincial loan fund would be done away with and a new head created under the title "payments to the Crown representative". While admitting the justification for the note of optimism in regard to the credit and revenue positions, Sir *H. P. Mody* reiterated his conviction that the economic condition of the masses had not materially improved. The problem was how wealth could be created. Sir *H. P. Mody* advocated more liberal protection policy among methods for economic development. The time had come, he said, for the clarification of the principles laid down by the Fiscal Commission. Sir *H. P. Mody* proceeded to urge for the appointment of a permanent Tariff Board on the lines of the import duties advisory committee and wanted to know what the Government of India's intention was regarding the Federal provincial laws which regulated the sphere of the Federal Government and provinces as to the development of industries and whether the Government had applied their mind to the question of setting up some machinery to co-ordinate the labour legislation.

Sir *Mohammad Yakub* advocated the cause of the Delhi people in the matter of Government appointments. He said that although attached to the Punjab Delhi did not get any favours from the Punjab Government. He then criticised the Government's policy in the sphere of education. The Government of India, he said, had done a thing to implement the recommendations of the Un-employment Committee of the United Provinces, though they had publicly admitted a good deal of substance in it.

**16th. MARCH :—**Mr. *A. C. Dutta* strongly criticised the "halfhearted and half-jing" policy of protection of the Government of India and the dilatory procedure adopted to carry out that policy. He said that protection in India had come to mean not only protection of Indian industry, but British industry as well, and the Indian consumer paid for both. But even this halting policy was now on its last legs, thanks to the present Finance Member, who not only did not believe in the main plank of the accepted fiscal policy of the country he served, but did not even believe in industrialisation. Mr. *Dutta* proceeded to examine in detail the views of the Finance Member, whom he characterised as an "economic rebel." For instance, the Finance Member's view that industrialisation was no cure for unemployment was a travesty of truth. Mr. *Dutta* urged that the goal of India must be maximum industrialisation and for this purpose the policy of protection should be overhauled and made into one bold theory and thorough going in operation. His exhortation was to industrialise or to perish.

Sir *Henry Sidney* dealt with the hardship caused by the provincial domicile qualification insisted upon by provincial governments for unemployment of Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans and strongly urged the Home Member to take immediate steps to remedy the position. He said that Indian domicile ought to be a sufficient qualification. He then referred to what he described as indignity, to which Seth Bhagchand Soni, a most respected member of the House, had been subjected recently. In his experience of public life of forty years the speaker had never heard of a case, such as this, of a member of the House being arrested without due enquiry.

Mr. *Ganga Singh* (Birma) said that as the representative of Burma he wanted to give expression to the views of the people of Burma for the last occasion. At the outset he would remind the House that the attitude of the British Government whatever it was, whether Burma or India, towards subject races, had always been step-motherly. A major part of the taxes collected was utilised for maintaining the army of occupa-



tion which had reduced the people to slaves. Referring to the indignities to which Indians overseas were subjected, Mr. Ganga Singh held that the British administration was responsible for it as its motto had always been "slaves at home have no right to be masters abroad." Mr. Singh complained that the Government had failed to listen to the request made to them that with the separation servants of the postal department of Burma should be given the option to be transferred to India and those in India should have the option to be transferred to Burma if they liked.

Dr. Ziauddin dealt with the elements of uncertainty in the existing system of examination, particularly of competitive examination. The American universities had been conducting research into this problem. Dr. Ziauddin declared that examinations did not decide the most fortunate candidate who happened to choose the subjects in which question papers were easy. Referring to the imposition of excise duty Mr. Ramsay Scott pointed out that what the Government had given with one hand they took away with the other and in other words the industry was now paying for its own protection. When protection was put on no excise was suggested by either the Government or the Tariff Board. He concluded that the Government seemed to be as much to blame for the present position as the industry and he felt that very close co-operation between the Government and the industry was required. He hoped that the Tariff Board would consider these points and recommend constructive and helpful proposals.

Mr. Arinashilingam Chetty compared Sir James Grigg's budget with the balance sheet of a business concern. Sir James Grigg's proposals, he contended, did not seriously tackle the problems before the country, namely, poverty, unemployment and raising the level of commodity prices. He accused the Government for not heeding to the wishes of the Opposition in the matter of the development of industries.

Dr. P. N. Banerji compared the budgets of the provinces with the Centre since the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He came to the conclusion that several of the provinces were much worse off than the Centre. A part of the trouble was due to the inequitous Meston Award. He said that uncertainty of Central finances and the fact that the new provinces had been created had prevented Sir Otto Niemeyer to do justice to Bengal. Dr. Banerjee demanded for Bengal the entire proceeds of the export jute duty and a substantial portion of the income tax proceeds. This, he said, was not an unreasonable demand. The speaker held that the financial difficulties of the various Governments were due to the lack of foresight.

**17th MARCH :—**In the Assembly to-day the Congress party's amendment that the salt duty of Rs. 1-4 be reduced to Re. 1 were rejected by 53 votes to 51.

The Assembly to-day took up consideration of the Finance Bill clause by clause. Mr. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar moved the Congress party's amendment to clause 2 to reduce the salt duty from Rs. 1-4 to Re. 1. Mr. Ayyangar said that considering that next to air and water salt was an article of universal consumption the duty on it should be entirely abolished, but the amendment was a moderate one and only wanted reduction. He argued that the salt tax went against the two principles laid down by the taxation enquiry committee, namely that duty should not restrict consumption and should not sit heavily on the poor consumer. He contended the average consumption of 12 lbs. per head was below even the jail ration of 17 lbs., which itself was wholly inadequate for the poor in a tropical country. He quoted figures to show that whenever the duty was decreased consumption increased and he was convinced that if the duty was wholly abolished consumption would go up four times. Any loss caused by the reduction of duty would thus be made up by an increase in consumption.

Mr. Latchand Navalrai said that attempts had been made several times to reduce or remove the salt tax. It was taxing the poor man's food. The tax was most reprehensible. Even opinion in England showed that nobody liked this tax, but that did not seem to influence the views of the Indian bureaucracy. He thought that the amendment was most reasonable.

Mr. Nirkanta Das said that the Finance Member had already utilised the emergency surcharge, but that did not bring any relief to the poor. The Council at this stage adjourned.

**18th MARCH :—**Discussion of amendments to the Finance Bill was continued to-day in the Assembly. After considerable discussion for and against the Assembly carried the Congress Party's motion for the deletion of the enhanced sugar excise duty by 74 votes to 41.

*Sir James Grigg* opposing the amendment said that at present the sugar industry received protection of over 200 per cent and the Government's proposal was to reduce it by 1-15th and he opined that this could hardly be said to be making the industry impossible. Referring the threat of closing down factories if the duty was not withdrawn, the Finance Member said that this threat if carried out would be political and not economic. The Government's view was that this duty would ultimately prove to be a blessing in disguise.

Mr. *Shamial* moved the next amendment reducing the price of postcard to half anna.

*Sir Frank Noyce* opposing the amendment said that acceptance of the motion would cost the department sixty-two lakhs of rupees on the assumption that the number of postcards sent in India in 1937-38 would be 400 millions against 310 millions in 1935-36, including Burma. He would have liked to declare special bonus and dividend in 1937 which was the centenary year of post office in India, but this could only be done by mortgaging the future. So long as the posts and telegraphs department remained a commercial department, it must itself meet its own cost of any reduction in the rate. *Sir Frank* paid a handsome tribute to the work done by Mr. *Bewoor*, Mr. *Pursell* and the late *Sir Thomas Ryan*. The Assembly then adjourned.

19th. MARCH :—*Babu Sri Prakasa* moved the next amendment to-day that in case of book patterns and sample packets for the first five tolas (instead of 2 and half tolas proposed in the bill) or a fraction thereof in the rate would be six pies and for every additional five tolas or a fraction thereof in excess of the five tolas the rate would be six pies. He said that the amendment was a modest one.

Mr. *Bajoria* supported the amendment. The amendment was rejected without division.

The House adopted the next amendment which was also supported by the Government the effect of which would be that registered newspapers weighing ten tolas (instead of eight proposed in the bill) would be charged quarter anna and for weight exceeding ten tolas and not exceeding twenty tolas the charge would be half anna.

There was some discussion on *Babu Sri Prakasa's* amendment suggesting that more than one copy of a registered newspaper of the same date shall be allowed to be sent at the rates fixed therefor if the total weight is within permissible limits.

Mr. *Bewoor* said that the rates for the carriage of newspapers were extremely low, in fact lowest in the world. The Government was already losing heavily on newspapers and were not prepared to make further experiments as it was not possible to estimate the loss.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* on the other hand opposed it, stating that newspapers would resort to print on flimsy papers, rendering the reading of such newspapers very difficult. Mr. *Saxena* said that concession would increase the circulation of newspapers among villagers who would be benefited. *Sir Frank Noyce* said that no further concession to newspapers was possible, as it was the Government which was losing about Rs. 12,50,000 annually on press telegraph rates. Mr. *Aasaf Ali* said that the acceptance of the amendment would result in stimulating the newspaper industry, indirectly encouraging mass education and increased commercial activity etc. *Sir A. H. Ghuznari* opposed the amendment which was negated without division.

The remainder clauses of the Bill having been adopted, the president called upon the Finance Member to move the final reading of the bill.

*Sir James Grigg* said that he did not propose to make a motion to-day.

Before the House adjourned till the next day, *Sir Frank Noyce* said that urgent requests had reached them to provide time for the remaining stages of the Arya Marriage Validation Bill which had, they were assured, become an agreed measure subject to the amendments and he had to inform the House that this item of business would be added to to-morrow's list at the end of Government business put down for the day. If the Government business was not disposed in time to admit this item being taken to-morrow, the Government would endeavour to provide time for it on March 30 or 31. The House then adjourned.

#### RESTORATION OF SUGAR DUTY

20th. MARCH :—The galleries were packed to full and a tense atmosphere prevailed in the Assembly to-day when the Finance Member presented the Finance Bill with the recommendation from the Governor-General restoring the additional sugar excise and the price of postcard. *Sir James Grigg* said that the amendments carried by the House would result in a loss of over two crores. Without entering into the

question the Finance Member said that the Government of India could not acquiesce in accepting the budget unbalanced.

There was a lengthy discussion on the constitutional propriety of the Government's action in which Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Mr. Aney, Sir Yamin Khan and Mr. Pant participated.

Mr. Desai declared that the best recommendation that the Governor-General could have made on this occasion was to dissolve the Assembly and adjourn it *sine die* until the Government came to its senses. Sir Cowasji Jehangir regretted the attitude of the Government. Mr. Aney said that the Governor-General's recommendation was defiance of public opinion. Sir Yamin Khan said that the action of the Government was sure to create an atmosphere of bitterness and hostility, specially at a time when the Congress was deciding to accept office. Mr. Pant condemned the despotism of the Government.

The House rejected the motion of Sir James Grigg by 67 to 40 votes.

Thereafter at the request of the Finance Member the President endorsed the Bill with certification to the effect that the Assembly had failed to pass the Bill in the form recommended by the Governor-General.

#### ARYA INTER-MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL

After lunch the House passed a number of supplementary demands for grants and also passed Dr. Khare's Bill to validate inter-marriages of a class Hindus known as Arya Samajists. The Assembly then adjourned till March 30.

#### BAN ON CALCUTTA PROCESSION

30th. MARCH :—In the Assembly to-day, after questions, the President stated that he had received notice of an adjournment motion from Mr. Mohanlal Saksena regarding the ban on processions and other demonstrations placed by the Police Commissioner of Calcutta.

Sir Henry Craik, objecting to the motion, pointed out that the order had presumably been issued under the ordinary statutory legal authority and as such, according to a previous ruling by the Chair it could not be made the subject of an adjournment motion.

Mr. Saksena wanted to know under what law the order had been issued.

Sir Henry Craik said that the Government of India had no information about the order. The notice of the adjournment motion had been received by him only five minutes ago and he had no time to make enquiries.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai observed that every single act of the Government of India would be in exercise of some statutory authority and if the Home Member's contention was correct then there was no order, however atrocious, which could be the subject of an adjournment motion. Mr. Desai added that if the Home Member wanted time to make enquiries he was willing to agree to an adjournment of consideration of the subject.

The President ordered the motion to stand over. In ordering Mr. Saksena's motion to stand over till after the adjournment, the President said that it was for the member who moved a motion like that to give all the facts in support of his motion, but sometimes it might not be possible for him to get access to the facts. There were two ways of dealing with this matter. One was that it was a matter of provincial concern and had nothing to do with the Government of India, but the Chair could not on that ground rule the motion out of order. But if it was shown that this order of the Police Commissioner of Calcutta was passed in the administration of the ordinary law then it had had been repeatedly held to be out of order. The Chair would, therefore, let this matter stand over till after the adjournment so that the Home Member, if possible, could give further information. Otherwise, he would decide it on the facts as they stood.

#### INDIAN OATHS ACT

Sir Henry Craik then moved consideration of the Bill to further amend the Indian Oaths Act, 1873. Sections five and six of the Act made it obligatory upon all persons who might be lawfully examined or might give evidence to make an oath or affirmation and section 118 of the Evidence Act made only such persons competent to testify who were not prevented from understanding question put to them and from having rational answers to those questions by reason of tender years etc.

Mr. Ananthasayanam Iyengar moved an amendment that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon by August 31, 1937.

There were several speeches for and against the Bill. *Sir Henry Craik* agreed to Mr. Ananthasayanam's motion for circulation which the House unanimously adopted.

#### BAN ON CALCUTTA PROCESSION (CONTD.)

When the House reassembled after lunch the *President* asked whether the Home Member had any further facts regarding the Calcutta ban on processions.

*Sir Henry Craik* stated that the orders had been issued under the Calcutta Police Act and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act. He also referred to a previous ruling by the Chair on a similar order relating to Calcutta.

*Mr. Saksena* pointed out that the orders, that were passed, whether judicial or executive, were certainly passed under some law, but had still been made the subject of adjournment motions. He added that hartal against which a ban had been imposed, was not a local affair, but an All India matter.

The *President* observed that it was a well-established parliamentary rule that an order passed in ordinary administration of law, whether by the judicial authority or a Magistrate or by another lawfully constituted authority, could not be the subject of an adjournment motion. As regards the facts the Chair had been furnished with information by the Home Member that the order was passed by the Police Commissioner of Calcutta under the Calcutta Police Act and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act. If there was any grievance in respect of an order like that the remedy must be sought under the law under which the order was passed or in a court of law, if there was any such remedy. But if there was not, that could not be the ground for moving a motion of adjournment of business in the Assembly. He, therefore, ruled the motion out of order.

#### CIVIL PROCEDURE CODE AMEND. BILL

*Mr. A. J. Thorne* next moved consideration of the Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. The object of the Bill is explained as follows. The code lays down that where a defendant is minor the court shall appoint a proper person to be guardian for the suit for such a minor. It has been held by High Courts that the appointment made during the course of the original suit endures during the proceedings on appeal. There is no provision in the code requiring fresh appointment of guardians for execution of the proceeding following the suits. The Bill proposes to make clear that the appointment endures throughout all proceedings arising out of the suit, including those in any appellate or revisional court and those in the execution of the decrees.

*Mr. Ananthasayanam Iyengar*, who had given notice of an amendment proposing circulation of the Bill for eliciting opinion, said that he did not propose to move it.

The House agreed to the Bill being taken into consideration and passed.

#### RED CROSS SOCIETY AMEND. BILL

*Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham* moved a Bill to amend the Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920. The Bill is intended for the following purposes. The Red Cross Society Act, 1938, transferred seven per cent of the corpus of funds vested in the Indian Red Cross Society to form the capital of a new Society to be set up in Burma. It has now been found necessary to pass the consequential legislation in respect of the Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920. Having received her share of the corpus Burma must be deleted from the second schedule to this Act and arithmetical changes must be made in percentages of shares of each subsidiary Society in India in the remainder of the corpus.

*Mr. Ananthasayanam Iyengar* moved an amendment urging circulation of the Bill for eliciting opinion. He objected to the Governor General being given the power to dismember the Society.

*Mr. Tottenham* referred to the admirable work of the Red Cross in peace and war, and said that it merited support of the House.

*Mr. Ayyangar's* amendment was rejected and the motion was passed.

#### INDIAN SOFT COKE CESS ACT

*Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan* moved consideration of a Bill to reconstitute the Committee constituted under the Indian Soft Coke Cess Act 1929. The Bill proposes certain readjustment of representation of non-official bodies on the Committee. *Sir Mahomed* stated that a number of amendments had been received for circulation of the Bill, but he suggested that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

## BILL TO AMEND &amp; REPEAL CERTAIN ENACTMENT

31st. MARCH :—The House continued discussion of Mr. *Bartley's* Bill to amend certain enactments and repeal certain other enactments.

Mr. *Sri Prakasa* moved an amendment that the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1935 be omitted. Babu *Sri Prakasa* pointed out that if this Act was repealed the naked fact that it was made by the Governor-General despite the vote of the House would be obliterated. He thought that it should continue to stand as a permanent blot on the statute book and as an indication that despite the verdict of the House some outside authority forced it on them.

Mr. *Bartley* confessed that he had been puzzled by the notice of the amendment and did not know whether Mr. *Sri Prakasa* wanted the act to continue on the statute book out of affection for it. Now he knew it was not affection. It was actuated by some such motive as underlay the exhibition of instruments of punishment in some parts of the world. He, however, thought it better to remove the Act and trust the people to know enough of the provisions of the Government of India Act without an artificial reminder of this kind.

The amendment was rejected and the Bill was passed.

## BILL TO AMEND LAW OF EVIDENCE

Sir *Henry Craik* moved that the Bill to amend the law of evidence in respect of certain commercial documents be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon. The need for the Bill explained as follows :—

Certain commercial documents of various kinds are by the practice of merchants accepted as evidence and taken as *prima facie* correct but in a court of law they cannot in the absence of consent by parties be admitted in evidence without testimony as to their genuineness or correctness of statements made therein. The result is that a party desirous of delaying the proceedings can often insist on the other side getting commissions issued to take evidence as to the facts which are for all practical purposes sufficiently established by the documents in question. The Bill is intended to provide that commercial documents which are accepted as *prima facie* correct in commerce circles may be admitted in evidence without formal proof. A list of such documents has been prepared in consultation with commercial associations and the local Governments and is included in the schedule to the bill, power being reserved to the Government of India to add to the list from time to time and to remove items therefrom.

Sir *Henry Craik* after explaining the Bill stated that the documents mentioned in the schedule were as full and comprehensive as possible but they might not be beyond criticism and the Bill was intended to be circulated in order that suggestions for additions and alterations might be made.

The House agreed to the motion.

## DEBATE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT

The House took up Sir *James Grigg's* motion moved on Sept. 26 that the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts of 1933-34 be taken into consideration.

Mr. *Satyamurti* dealt at length with the criticisms put forward by the Public Accounts Committee of 1933-34, particularly regarding civil works, railways, posts and telegraphs. There was a tendency, he said, for the railways to treat grants as lump grants given to them to spend at their sweet will so long as they did not greatly exceed the amounts. As regards reappropriation from one grant to another Mr. *Satyamurti* said that the committee had been told that there was no such reappropriation at all. One of the functions of the committee was to report to the House every reappropriation from one grant to another and if, as the financial Pandits of the Government of India assured him, this never took place, then this function should be taken away.

Sir *James Grigg* interjected: It is a very good safeguard.

Mr. *Satyamurti*.—We should like to hear from the Finance Member how it is a safeguard and I shall be glad if all the safeguards will remain, as this safeguard, wholly unused. (Laughter.)

Mr. *Satyamurti* proceeded to refer to cases wherein supplementary demands obtained from the House were proving to be unnecessary. There was no need to continue a separate London Stores department. The Indian Stores department itself could do work satisfactorily. He thought that Rs. 25,00,000 in the depreciation fund and Post and the Telegraphs department erred on a generous side. The fund

was really not a depreciation fund but a repairs and renewal fund and could be reduced and saving could be utilised for opening more post offices. There was even now considerable scope for retrenchment in the army expenditure without reducing a single British soldier. Referring to the proposal to write off 82 crores of debt from railways to general revenues and reserve fund, Mr. Satyamurti remarked that this was repudiation of debt and if the Congress resolution demanding a similar treatment of India's debt was reprehensible how was this justifiable?

Mr. B. Das urged the Government of India to bring the Indian Stores department under their proper supervision and devise a uniform policy between the Indian Stores department and the London branch. This would be welcome not only from the viewpoint of the Government but also the mercantile community of India. He felt that it was the duty of the Government to see that every branch of the Government especially the military and railway departments made the full quantum of purchase through the Indian Stores department. Though it was gratifying that the railways had begun to purchase stores through the Indian Stores department, the Defence Department still remained adamant. Continuing, Mr. Das criticised the Finance department in the matter of the capital expenditure without consulting the House. He urged that at least in future whenever the Government contemplated expenditure whether revenue or capital account it should be incurred after duly consulting the Assembly. In particular the speaker referred to the loan of eleven crores saddled upon the small state of Bahawalpur for the irrigation scheme of the Sutlej valley in the Punjab. Last year they had to write off two and a half crores interest charge and he wondered even after 50 years whether the State would be in a position to liquidate the entire debt. Mr. Das also criticised the extravagant electrification schemes of the G. I. P. and B. E. C. I. Railways which were not sound schemes. Referring to the Defence department the speaker strongly condemned the policy pursued in the matter of army contracts. Though the prices had fallen considerably the army authorities continued to pamper their few pet contractors who charged exorbitant rates. Considerable saving was possible by a revision of the prices. Concluding Mr. Das urged the Finance Member to see his way to find time each year promptly to discuss the report of the Public Accounts Committee.

Dr. Ziauddin referred to what he described as bad accountability on railways shown by the way in which bonus obtained from money invested in Government securities which matured was spent as if it was a gift from the gods and need not be accounted. He also alluded to the discrimination in freight rates, for example, from Bombay to Calcutta and Calcutta to Bombay which he said was intended to help imports. He urged that the Kalyan power house should be made full use of and power from it supplied to the B. E. and C. I. Railway so that the G. I. P. Railway might be able to make both ends meet. He suggested that the balance of expenditure in one year should be treated as the opening balance for the next year so that to that extent the taxation might be less.

Prof. Kanga wanted that the Public Accounts Committee should have a non-official chairman as in England where non-official Chairmen had been found of immense value to the Government also. It was tried in India too when the Finance Member went to Bombay and non-officials who occupied the chair in his absence had done extremely well. Prof. Kanga urged that the audited accounts of special funds, such as the rural development fund should be supplied to the committee. For, a strong man as the Finance Member was reputed to be, his control over military finance was not quite so strong. The speaker complained that money set aside for re-equipment for the army had been made use of in the campaigns on the North West Frontier. He criticised the policy of retrenchment followed by the Government particularly on the railway and he suggested the extension of railway lines and the provision of better and more adequate services and facilities. This he declared would be the better way of bringing about results that retrenchment was intended to achieve.

Sir Mahomed Yakub as an old member of the Public Accounts Committee pointed out that the peppery chairman of the committee with the hot Madras curry made whole thing too hot for Mr. B. Das to swallow (laughter). He regretted that the report of such an important committee should be discussed in the House after two years and that too at the fag end of the session. He criticised what he regarded as the general tendency of the different departments of the Government to over-budget and he thought the House should devise some means to check this tendency. He referred to the menace of supplementary grants and said that certain items which could easily have been put into the annual budget were not so put but were moved

as supplementary grants. He urged a prompt enquiry into the charges of embezzlements and defalcations so that there could be no complaints and now that the officer involved in the charge had gone out of India and was beyond reach of any punishment that might be suggested as a result of the enquiry. He also referred to the need for control of expenditure in the postal department.

#### RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN I. M. S.

At 4 p. m. Mr. *Ghiasuddin* moved the adjournment motion against 'the racial discrimination against Indian members in the I. M. S.' He referred to the Queen Victoria's proclamation which he declared had been flatly contradicted by the communique issued on March 25 reserving certain posts exclusively to the European members, however high their qualifications might be because they were the sons of the soil. It had been stated that European doctors were necessary because European officials wanted them. He had too much respect for the European officials in the country to believe that they would put forward such an unreasonable demand. If a man was ill he wanted to go to the best medical man. Personally the speaker would not object to go to an Eskimo doctor if he was a good doctor. Proceeding Mr. *Ghiasuddin* asked what about the Indian Ministers who had to take office eight hours from now. Were they to be entirely helpless in the matter of recruitment to the I. M. S.? Responsible people would think, twice before taking office under such humiliating conditions (hear, hear). Quoting figures the speaker stated the British personnel would remain at the same level while the Indian personnel would be reduced by 65. Englishmen had so many avenues of employment in the colonies, on ships and so on which were closed to Indians and yet the Government came forward to commit the crime of retrenching Indians in their own country. He appealed to the European group which had given support to abolition of racial discrimination across seas to support his motion which condemned racial discrimination nearer home.

Dr. *Deshmukh* in a withering condemnation of the Government's policy declared that the same spirit that ruled in regard to Indianization of the army ruled in the sphere of the I. M. S. also. What was begun as Indianization of the army came to Indianization of one unit and then dwindled down to an experiment (laughter). The army had turned itself into a research department (renewed laughter). Indianization was microscopic in extent and geological in point of time. Dr. *Deshmukh* declared that the Esher Committee held that the Indian Medical Service lamentably failed in the Great War. He did not know what this service was. Was it civil, or military or was it mere Kichdi service (laughter)? Thousands of young Indians came to the rescue of the empire when the great crisis of war overtook it. Then the talk of martial and nonmartial classes was not heard. All became martial, while now that the crisis was past the Government forgot its obligations. It was fortunate that they did not make a distinction between medical and non-medical races (laughter). With one stroke the Government had stabbed Indianization and provincial autonomy. Dr. *Deshmukh* declared that the service only deserved to be called the Indian Mercenary Service. There was nothing noble about it.

Sir *Henry Gidney* stated that Dr. *Deshmukh* was entirely wrong in condemning the I. M. S. to which they had much to be grateful for. The Esher Committee did not condemn the whole service. Its remarks applied only to that part of the service which was engaged in the Mesopotamian campaign. Having said that, he supported the adjournment motion. He himself was a sufferer from the perpetration of racial discrimination. He thought all talk of a whiteman wanting a whiteman as a doctor was nonsense. What he wanted was a skilled man. The speaker could understand a Britisher wanting a Britisher to attend to his womenfolk and children.

Continuing, Sir *Henry Gidney* said that he would not care if the whole service was manned by Europeans, but he did not want racial discrimination. It was an insult to lay down that an Indian might be treated by a Britisher but an Indian might not treat a Britisher.

Mr. *G. R. F. Tottenham* replying, said that he would only deal with the broader aspect of the motion. He characterized Dr. *Deshmukh's* speech as an unworthy attack on a very fine service and as unrelated to the subject-matter of the motion. The crux of the matter was that it was necessary to have British officers in the I. M. S. and if so, how many. With those who asked that British recruitment should cease at once, he did not wish to argue. But there was a body of opinion which recognised as the Round Table Conference had recognised that the service would continue to require British officers. (Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant interrupting contradicted the

statement and declared that the Round Table Conference did not recognize this). Referring to the term 'racial discrimination', Mr. Tottenham said that he was prepared to accept it as a convenient description of the doctrine that British officers had some right to accept medical treatment from their countrymen, but he contended that racial considerations did not come into the matter at all. If they did, they were on both sides. The communique had not made the so-called racial discrimination worse nor was the principle of reservation of posts to British officers a new one or of a recent occurrence. The only new fact was a reduction in the number of such posts and that was not the subject for the motion of censure. They were introducing a short service system for Indian officers. There was nothing new in that either. The fact of recent occurrence was the differentiation of pay. The basic pay of future Indian entrants had been reduced but after the talk of the need for reducing the standards of pay it was not right to make this matter on which to censure the Government. He denied that the scheme necessarily implied any reduction whatever in the number of Indians. What the communique meant was that any province could employ any number of Indian I. M. S. officers it liked and all that the communique was concerned with was that a province should not employ anything less than a certain number of British officers. After quoting a series of comparative figures, Mr. Tottenham claimed that far from reducing Indians in the I. M. S. the communique had rendered it possible for the number to be increased. The Government consulted all provincial Governments and the unanimous view of Ministers was that provincial Governments should have the greatest latitude in the employment of I. M. S. officers. The scheme gave discretion to provincial Governments in this matter.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant in an impassioned speech said that it was difficult to speak with restraint on a subject of this nature. It was unthinkable, it was an insult, it was an ignominy to say that it was necessary to import people from outside to treat foreigners, who were imposed upon this country, who came unwanted and unasked and who were paid by this country. No Indian could hear this without agony. He reiterated that the Services Sub-committee of the Round Table Conference unanimously accepted the principle that no recruitment of Britishers should be made for the I. M. S. Mr. Pant proceeded to state that they had seen the mockery of provincial autonomy during the last week. The change made in the I. M. S. was in accord with the spirit of that provincial autonomy. The number of Indians in the service were to be reduced from 109 to 54 and that was called Indianization.

Mr. Tottenham, interrupting, pointed out that the Ministers could increase that number.

Mr. Pant retorted: Ministers? What great care you take to have good Ministers?

Continuing Mr. Pant asked: Did the Army Secretary realize what principle of racial discrimination introduced by the communique meant? It meant that Indians should not allow themselves to be treated by Britishers. They should not buy anything from Britishers. That would cut at the root of foreign exploitation in this country and the country should be thankful to the Army Secretary for teaching that lesson. Even in a matter in which humanity alone should count and which was the noblest art on the earth racial cancer had a place and the British wanted to be exclusive.

A closure was applied at this stage and the motion was pressed to a division and carried by 60 votes to 35. The House then adjourned.

#### HARTAL DAY INCIDENT IN DELHI

2nd. APRIL:—The Assembly to-day carried by 61 votes to 40. Mr. Asaf Ali's adjournment motion regarding 'the rough handling of a respectable Congress woman by two European policemen, deliberately insulting the National Flag and other acts of grave provocation calculated to disturb the peaceful demonstration of the citizens of Delhi.'

Strong speeches were made from Congress benches, but the allegations made against police officials were denied by Government spokesmen.

The House carried by 44 to 36 votes a resolution moved by Mr. Ghiasuddin for the introduction of the homoeopathic system of treatment in Government hospitals. Another resolution moved by Seth Sheodass Daga, urging that India should cease to be a member of the League of Nations and discontinue the payment of her annual contribution evoked a lively and animated debate which had not concluded when the adjournment motion was taken up for discussion.

Mr. Asaf Ali, making the motion, gave what he described as a plain and unvarnished account of the happenings. After quoting a newspaper's account of the



preparations made by the police to prevent people suspending their business on April 1. Mr. Asaf Ali said on the day in question he learnt that 12 arrests had been made by 8 a. m. He tried to get into touch with the Home Member but could not. At the Congress office somebody came up and showed a flag which had been trampled under foot by a policeman in the presence of the police chief and also the metal rod to which the flag had been attached. The rod with the flag had been broken off from the bonnet of a car and trampled under foot. (Cries of 'shame'). Mr. Asaf Ali showed the torn flag and the rod to the House. He said thereafter he went to the superintendent and without formality told him how provocative such acts were and how difficult they made the task of leaders who wanted a peaceful demonstration.

Mr. Asaf Ali later saw that a number of mottoes and flags had been wrested from volunteers and thrown on the ground. This had been done in different parts of the city. Mr. Asaf Ali referred to Mr. Thorne's objection in the morning that the matter was not of urgent public importance and declared that a majority of Indians were prepared to work to the gallows for the sake of the National Flag.

Referring to the arrest of Srimati Satyawati, Mr. Asaf Ali said that two Europeans put their hands on her shoulder so heavily as to tear her blouse. (Cries of 'shame, shame'.) It was an indecent assault and no Indian could tolerate it, least of all from foreigners who pretended to be civilized human beings.

Mr. M. S. Aney said he could not find adequate expression to indicate the depth of his feeling at the misbehaviour of the officers of Delhi. In his view the pettiness exhibited by them was uncalled for over a legitimate demonstration against the unwanted new constitution. It was no use denying the allegations when several of them were eye-witnesses themselves.

Referring to the insult to the National Flag, Mr. Aney declared that it was a symbol of hope and cheer to millions and reminding the Government of the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha some years ago, said that they would not tolerate any insult to it.

Continuing, Mr. Aney said that if the incident went off peacefully yesterday it was not due to any order of the Government or the policeman present there, but it was the triumph of the preachings of Mahatma Gandhi. The Government must be thankful to him.

Mr. Chattopadhyaya appealed to every section in the House to support the motion and thus express their indignation at the police atrocities and get the officers responsible therefor punished.

Maulana Shaukat Ali said that he was an old Congressman but he did not join yesterday's demonstration as his party had decided to work the constitution for whatever it was worth. As for the alleged police violence, if the facts were true the Government deserved censure. He had known Srimati Satyawati for long and he was sure she would not have resisted or evaded her arrest. The treatment accorded to her was a disgrace to any Government.

Mr. J. A. Thorne, speaking on behalf of the Government, said he was at a loss to know what case the Government had to answer. (Cries of 'don't answer'.) After describing the situation before April 1 he referred to the incidents of that day and said he had in this reply had to rely on the text of Mr. Asaf Ali's motion and such statements as were made in support of it.

As regards the rough handling of Srimati Satyawati, Mr. Thorne said there must be some mistake as to what had actually happened (Cries of 'no, no'). A statement had been made that this lady was assaulted in an indecent fashion. He agreed that if that happened not only would Mr. Aney's blood boil but that of almost all gentlemen in the Assembly. But he could not believe that this statement which was made for the first time had any foundation. Mr. Thorne read a statement made by the officer responsible for her arrest. That statement reported that she was inciting in a loud voice the mill hands to cease work and so it was considered necessary to arrest her. A crowd swarmed round her and there was the possibility of an ugly scene. She was pushing some workers who were trying to enter the mill and the assistant superintendent laid his hand on her shoulder and told her that she was under arrest. On this some of her followers ran forward and the traffic inspector placed his hand on her shoulder and indicated that she should stand near the gate until a lorry arrived. She told him not to touch her and he left her alone. The crowd was then pushed back but portions of them began throwing bricks. The police party was a small one and no further action was taken until a reinforcement arrived. Meanwhile the crowd continued to stone the police. On the arrival of the lorry the crowd was pushed back and the prisoner was taken away in the lorry. Mr. Thorne

said that this did not show that the technical requirements of arrest had been exceeded. As regards the charge of insulting the National Flag Mr. Thorne read the report of the superintendent of police who denied knowledge of how the flag was removed from the bonnet of the car. The superintendent added that no violence had been used and on any ordinary day no notice would have been taken of the incident. Mr. Thorne said he did not understand how Mr. Asaf Ali could assert positively that anything which might be interpreted as an insult to the Congress Flag done by Mr. Scott in his presence or with his connivance. He had Mr. Scott's authority to say that it was untrue that the flag was removed at Mr. Scott's instance or that it was trampled upon by his orderly or that his orderly dragged the pole of the national flag. Mr. Thorne concluded, declaring that the Government could not admit that the local authorities had acted otherwise than in the manner that had done them great credit.

Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* expressed considerable surprise at the manner in which the Government case had been put forward. None of the material facts had been denied by the Government. To understand the significance of the happening in Delhi the House had to consider the background. The newspapers this morning had reported peaceful *hartals* throughout the country. Three days ago Mr. R. A. Butler in reply to a question in the House of Commons said that the Government were aware that a *hartal* had been ordained by the Congress and added that a *hartal* was the method by which protest was usually expressed against wrong measures in India. Mr. Desai added that officialdom in this country, dressed in brief authority, wanted to make it appear that this form of protest was not successful or peaceful and that people bagged the constitution. Mr. Desai referred to the flag incident and said that the National Flag was more than a mere political symbol. It was the sacred symbol of faith in methods of peace by which the world would be ruled in times to come. The Congress flag was taken off the bonnet of a Congress worker's car and the superintendent of police was idly looking on. That was the account the superintendent gave, but he could not and dare not contradict what Mr. Asaf Ali had told the House.

Proceeding, Mr. Desai narrated an incident in which an assistant superintendent of police went to a highly respectable citizen owning several shops in Delhi and asked if he was closing his shops. The citizen said 'yes' and the officer asked 'why should you? You have a whole police force at your back.' The citizen, however, said he had decided to close the shops. The incident explained what was the purpose of the display of the police force. Not far from there a most magnificent meeting was held in Delhi that evening. Such force was displayed in order to give freedom to commit treacherous acts against the Congress and the country.

Mr. Desai referred to the account that Mr. Thorne had coldly given of the manner in which two men had behaved—it did not matter to what race they belonged. The police officer would have known, if he had cared to enquire, that she was the grand daughter of Swami Shradhdhanand, a most respected citizen of Delhi and this land. She had been five times to jail and was not going to run away from arrest. She was prepared for the consequences of her action. Two men, one after the other, had put their hands upon her and kept her in that condition and it was seriously stated it was not an act of outrage. He disliked to say it; but Mr. Thorne must understand that even if a hundredth part of that had occurred to any woman in his land, or for that matter to any Englishwoman in this land, then even the cold Mr. Thorne would be boiled up to a point at which he would not have been able to speak. The Government could not take credit for the fact that other parts of the city had been peaceful. It was due to the spirit by which the country was moved and inspired, the spirit of forbearance which even hosts of *agents provocateurs* who roamed in the city on April 1 could not disturb. They wanted blood, but they did not get it. That was their disappointment.

Mr. *Chapman Mortimer* (European group), speaking amidst constant interruptions, and heckling, said that in no other country was there a precedent to what was happening in this country. If Mr. Gandhi was to be congratulated for his preaching non-violence, he claimed the Government of this country also deserved some credit for tackling very delicate situations especially when women were among the crowd. Referring to the tri-colour flag he declared that it represented only a particular party and their friends and it would not be called the National Flag. There was uproarious interruptions when the President asked the members not to interrupt.

Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* declared it would be difficult to keep themselves in restraint when such a violent distortion of truth was uttered on the floor of the House.

Continuing, Mr. *Chapman Mortimer* strongly refuted the allegation that Englishmen in India lacked chivalry. When women went into public life they must face the consequences; but if they felt strongly against any intervention for keeping the peace, the wise course was for them to withdraw from the public arena.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* said that the tri-colour flag was not the national flag of the entire nation. The speaker himself did not recognize it, but inasmuch as it was respected by millions in this country it was inadvisable for the Government to hurt the feelings of such large numbers of the population. He appealed to the Government that in these critical times such actions on the part of their officers should be strongly condemned, and unless such condemnation came from the Government such act would be often repeated and much more damage would be done in the future. Having known what intimidation was, he realized the difficulty of the police in protecting peaceful citizens. Personally Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* disapproved of the *hartal*, but if, as was stated, a tri-colour flag was wantonly snatched from the bonnet of a car and trampled under foot it should be stopped. He had seen women participating in politics in western countries like France and England picked up and thrown away and he entirely agreed with the previous speaker that women participating in politics must be prepared to face the rough and smooth thereof, but any deliberate rough handling of them must be condemned.

Sir *Frank Noyce*, referring to Sir *Cowasji's* speech, said it was based entirely on a wrong assumption. The senior superintendent of police had denied most of the specific allegations mentioned in the motion and in the speeches. In particular the superintendent of police had denied that the flag was deliberately snatched and trampled upon. The Government felt themselves justified in accepting the denial. At the same time he was quite prepared to agree that, if flags were wantonly snatched and treated in the manner described by any member of police, specially at a time like the present one, such acts required real refutation. He entirely endorsed the view that women agitators must be prepared to run the risks incidental to public life. He would concede that no undue force should be used against them.

Continuing Sir *Frank Noyce* advised the House to view the matter in a realistic spirit and think before attempting to censure the Government on mere hearsay evidence of incidents which after all were minor. Far from censure the Government ought to be congratulated on their successful handling of yesterday's demonstration.

Closure was accepted and the House divided on Mr. *Asaf Ali's* motion which was carried by 61 votes to 40. The announcement of the result was received amidst waving aloft of Congress flags and shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki-jai". The House then adjourned.

#### INDIAN TARIFF ACT AMEND. BILL

3rd. APRIL:—Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah Khan* moved to-day a bill to amend the Indian Tariff Act 1934 in order to continue for another year the existing protective duty of annas 12 per maund on broken rice. Sir *Zafrullah* stated that the protective duty in a large measure fulfilled the purpose for which it was imposed, namely, to prevent the inrush of broken rice so as to compete with the Indian product, particularly the cheap varieties. In certain directions, there had been improvement in the situation and the prices of better qualities of Madras and Bengal rice had risen. An amendment had been given notice of suggesting extension of the duty to rice and paddy. That amendment, it might be argued, was not in order and therefore could not be moved, but he pointed out that there was no case for such extension.

Mr. *K. Santanam*, speaking in favour of extending the duty to rice and paddy, said that this would act as a stabilising factor in market conditions and would give moral support to the paddy growers. Nor would the revenues be affected by the extension proposed by him.

Mr. *Avinashilingam Chetty* also supported the suggestion for putting a protective duty on rice and paddy also. He declared that the rise in the price of rice had been very little as far as Madras was concerned, and cultivators were sticking to paddy growing merely out of love of land. If the present rate of imports continued and if, as was expected, there was a bumper crop this year the position of the cultivators would deteriorate. It was, therefore, necessary for Government to do something to increase the prices of rice.

*Prof. Ranga* complained that so little had been done to help paddy growers in this country. The existing duty was only a small part of what was necessary and paddy growers were dissatisfied with it.

The bill was put to the House and carried.

## PAYMENT OF WAGES ACT AMEND. BILL

*Sir Frank Noyce* moved a bill to amend the Payment of Wages Act 1936 so as to lay down that an employed person shall be deemed to be absent from the place where he is required to work, if although present in such place he refuses to carry out his work. *Sir Frank Noyce* said that this was the last of the series of labour measures brought by him to the House. He hoped the House would accord him support that it had so generously given during the last five years. Section 9 of the Act though relieving the employer from payments to workmen who were not present for work appeared to render him liable to pay wages to persons who though present declined to work. This bill was intended to remedy this defect and to enable the employer to withhold wages from such workmen.

*Mr. V. V. Giri* complained that Government always desired to prevent strikes and industrial disputes by penal measures and by refusing to encourage trade unionism. Lightning strikes and sit-down strikes could be prevented by a tactful handling and by introducing the conciliation machinery proposed by the Labour Commission and not by penal measures of this character. Striking a personal note, *Mr. Giri* said that this was his last speech in the House, as he was going to the Madras Assembly and he expressed personal regard to *Sir Frank Noyce* for his courtesy. If *Sir Frank* had not been able to do much for the workers it was because of the soulless Government representing imperialistic and capitalistic interests. When India had a government of the people, by the people and for the people she would be able to do everything to safeguard the workers' interests.

*Mr. N. M. Joshi* said that *Sir Frank Noyce* had always given a sympathetic hearing and consideration to the workmen's point of view and the working classes were grateful to him. The speaker was glad that *Sir Frank Noyce* was going to Geneva and he hoped that he would be able to bring about a better understanding between the labour organisation at Geneva and the Government of India. *Sir Frank Noyce* was one of the few Englishmen to whom one could frankly express himself without fear of loss of friendship.

*Sir Frank Noyce*, replying, expressed sincere thanks for all the kindness and courtesy he had received from the members, particularly *Mr. Joshi* who represented labour interests.

*Mr. Joshi* moved an amendment to the effect that the new clause shall apply to an employed person who though present in his place refused to carry out his work without any cause. *Mr. Joshi* said his amendment was intended to provide not that a workman who though present in a factory yet refused to do work should be paid but that if there was sufficient justification for the worker to refuse to work the employer should be bound to pay. For instance, the employer might make a sudden change in the conditions of work to which the worker was accustomed. If the employer wanted to make such a change he must give sufficient notice.

*Prof. Ranga* moved an amendment for the addition of the words 'without sufficient cause.' He said that he had a suspicion that the bill was brought forward at the instigation of capitalists. Not a single trade union would support such a measure. It was designed to make the grip on the workers stronger. It was *Sir Frank's* parting gift to the capitalists.

*Sir H. P. Mody* said that the bill merely sought to rectify a defect in the Act. When it was becoming a fashion to have stay-in strikes the situation had considerably changed and the Government measure was a plain and straightforward way of facing the situation. The trade union principles advocated by *Prof. Ranga* would plunge industry into disorder. It was against trade union principles to go into a factory and refuse to work and claim wages.

*Sir H. P. Mody* joined in the expression of good wishes to *Sir Frank Noyce*.

*Mr. Gadgil* supported *Prof. Ranga's* amendment.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* said that if the bill was not passed it would do considerable injustice to the employers. There was no part of the world where workmen went in for a stay-in strike and demanded wages.

*Mr. Joshi*—I never wanted that.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir*—That will be the effect of your amendment if accepted.

The speaker strongly opposed the amendment which if accepted would create an impossible situation. He, however, did not object to protection being given to the employee but he objected to a distinction being made between a stay-in strike and a stay-out strike.

*Mr. Bhulabhai Desai* stated that both sides were under a misapprehension. What

was intended to convey by the amendments was that without being on stay-in strike a man might still be on the premises and be unable to work for sufficient reason. Prof. Ranga need not be afraid that it took away the right of stay-in strike, nor need the employers be afraid that labourers could remain on the premises for the purpose of a stay-in strike and claim wages if the amendment was made.

Sir Frank Noyce opposed both the amendments. The bill, he said, was merely intended to rectify a lacuna in the Act. He denied it was his parting gift to the employers. Mr. Joshi's amendment led them nowhere. The contingency of an employer changing conditions of work need not be provided against because the words 'his work' could only mean the work that the workman was to do under the terms of employment. Sir Frank Noyce also sounded a note of warning against stay-in strikes which resulted in damage to means of production in other parts of the world and said that Government wished to prevent similar consequences in India. Both the amendments were put and rejected.

Mr. Joshi opposing the whole clause said a prejudice has been created by bringing in the stay-in strike. The clause was not restricted to preventing stay-in strikes but was hundred times wider in scope. In fact, it enabled an employer to change conditions of work and then if the man refused to do that work the employer had a right to deduct his wages. None could agree to such a provision.

Mr. B. Das suggested an adjournment of the debate to allow time to both sides to agree upon an amendment which would satisfy both.

When the House reassembled after lunch Mr. Bhulabhai Desai moved an agreed amendment that the explanation to clause 9 of the bill as amended would read as follows: For purposes of this section an employed person shall be deemed to be absent from the place where he is required to work if although present in such a place he refuses, in pursuance of a stay-in strike or for any other cause, which is not reasonable under the circumstance, to carry out the work.

Before the bill was passed Mr. Aney expressed good wishes to Sir Frank Noyce and referred in appreciative terms to his courtesy.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, associating himself with Mr. Aney's words, said that it had been said of another English friend of his in Bombay that it was impossible to accuse him of malice. It was difficult to pay a higher tribute than that and this tribute could be applied equally to Sir Frank Noyce. Mr. Desai also referred to Sir Frank Noyce's sweet reasonableness in dealing with labour questions.

The President added a word of his own by way of personal appreciation of the manner in which Sir Frank Noyce had discharged his duties in the Assembly, particularly his absolute courtesy. The President joined in the good wishes expressed by the other members of the House.

Sir Frank Noyce said he was not prepared for the kind things which had been said of him and he could not adequately express his gratitude to those who had spoken. The bill was passed.

#### AMENDMENT OF LEGISLATIVE RULES

Mr. G. H. Spence stated that the amendment to the legislative rules regarding the questions of privilege would be, in deference to the general wishes of the House, taken up in the Simla session.

Sir Raghavendra Rao announced a similar postponement of the resolution regarding the writing off of the balance of the railways' debt to the depreciation fund and contributions to the general revenues.

In reply to Mr. Satyamurti, Sir Raghavendra Rao said that the Wedgwood Committee report would be available in a month or two so that the resolution could be discussed in the light of the committee's recommendations.

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT

The House next took up further discussion of Sir James Grigg's motion that the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts of 1933-34 be taken into consideration. Mr. Sahebrao Rao, replying on behalf of Government, said that he did not know whether this House while discussing the report of the committee should spend the limited time at its disposal in finding out what action had been taken on each and every recommendation made by the committee. This work was done by the committee itself. He did not suggest that the House should not discuss any of the important recommendations of the committee to which effect had not been given by Government.

Mr. Rao then replied to the points made during the debate. The President then adjourned the House *sine die*.

# The Bengal Legislative Assembly

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M. AHSUL HAQUE  
*Deputy Speaker*—MR. M. ASHRAFALI

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THE HON'BLE MR. NALINI RANJAN  
SARKAR (*Finance*)  
THE HON'BLE KHWAJA SIR NAZIMUDDIN  
(*Home*)  
THE HON'BLE SIR BIJOY PRASAD SINGH  
ROY (*Revenue*)  
THE HON'BLE NAWAB K. HABIBULLAH  
BAHADUR (*Agr. and Industries*)  
THE HON'BLE MAHARAJA SRIS CHANDRA  
NANDY (*Communications and Works*)  
THE HON'BLE MR. H. S. SUHRAWARDY  
(*Commerce and Labour*)  
THE HON'BLE NAWAB MUSHARRAF  
HOSSAIN, KHAN BAHADUR  
(*Judicial and Legislative*)  
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ALI (*P. H. & L. S. - G.*)  
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RAIKHAT (*Forest & Excise*)  
THE HON'BLE MR. MUKUNDA BEHARY  
MULLICK  
(*Co-operative & Indebtedness*)

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13. MAHARAJKUMAR UDAY CHAND  
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21. MR. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL
22. MR. NIKUNJA BEHARI MAITI
23. SRIJUT GOBHARI SOM
24. MR. SUKUMAR DUTT

25. MR. MANMATHA NATH ROY
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28. MR. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY
29. MR. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL
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BARTY
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68. BABU UPENDRANATH BARMAN
69. MR. PURPAJIT BARMAN
70. BABU KSHETRA NATH SINGHA
71. BABU MADHUSUDAN SARKAR
72. MR. DHANANJOY ROY
73. MR. AMRITA LAL MANDAL
74. MR. MONMOHAN DAS
75. MR. BIRAT CHANDRA MANDAL
76. MR. PRAMATHA RANJAN THAKUR

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 NAKIMUDDIN  
 80. MR. M. A. H. ISPAHANI  
 81. MR. K. NOORUDDIN  
 82. MAULVI MD. SOLAIMAN  
 83. MR. H. S. SUREWARDY  
 84. NAWAB K. HABIBULLAH BAHADUR  
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 86. MAULVI MD. ABDUR RASHEED  
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 116. NAWAB MUSHARRAF HOSAIN  
 KHAN BAHADUR  
 117. KHAN BAHADUR A. M. L.  
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 120. KAZI EMDADUL HAQUE  
 121. MR. ABDUL HAFIZ  
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 125. MAULVI MOHAMMED ISHAQUB  
 126. DR. MAFIUDDIN AHMED  
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 137. MR. S. A. SALIM  
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 HAKIM VIKRAMPORE  
 139. MR. RAZAUR RAHAMAN KHAN  
 140. MAULVI AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN  
 141. MAULVI ABDUL LATIF BISWAS  
 142. MAULVI MOHAMMED ABDUS  
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 143. KHAN BAHADUR SYED ABDUL  
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 146. MR. GHASUDDIN AHMED  
 147. MR. ABDUL KARIM  
 148. MAULVI ABDUL MAJID  
 149. MAULVI ABDUL WAHED  
 150. MAULANA SHAMSUL HUDA  
 151. MAULVI ABDUL HAKIM  
 152. MAULVI MASUD ALI KHAN PANHI  
 153. MAULVI MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ  
 154. MR. SYED HASAN ALI  
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 UDDIN KHAN  
 156. MR. ABDUL HOSSAIN AHMED  
 157. MAULVI MOHAMMED ISRAIL  
 158. MAULVI ABDUL HAMID SHAH  
 159. KHAN SAHIB HAMIDUDDIN AHMED  
 160. MR. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED  
 KHADANKAR  
 161. MAULVI AHMED ALI MURTHA  
 162. MAULVI TAMIUDDIN KHAN  
 163. MR. YUSUF ALI CHOWDHURY  
 164. MR. MAHAMMAD ABUL FARL  
 165. MAULVI GHASUDDIN AHMED  
 CHOWDHURY  
 166. MR. A. K. FAELUL HUQ  
 167. MR. ABDUL KADER SHAS LAL  
 MEAH  
 168. KHAN SAHIB HATMALLY  
 JAMADAR  
 169. MAULVI SYED MUHAMMAD AFZAL  
 170. KHAN BAHADUR MAULVI HASHEM  
 ALI KHAN  
 171. MR. SADARUDDIN AHMED  
 172. MAULVI ABDUL WAHAB KHAN  
 173. MAULVI MOHAMMAD MAZAMMEL  
 HUQ

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| 174. HAJI MAULVI TOFKI AHAMED CHOWDHURY      | 211. MR. R. H. FERGUSON                      |
| 175. MAULVI DEWAN MUSTOFA ALI                | 212. MR. W. O. PATTON                        |
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| 178. THE HON'BLE NAWAB SIR MOHIUDDIN FAROQUI | 215. DR. H. C. MUKHERJI                      |
| 179. MR. RAMIZUDDIN AHMED                    | 216. MR. S. A. GOMES                         |
| 180. MR. AHMUDDIN AHMED                      | 217. MR. ERIC STUDD                          |
| 181. MAULVI MAHAMMAD HABANUZZAMAN            | 218. MR. DAVID HENRY                         |
| 182. MAULVI JONAB ALI MAJUMDAR               | 219. [VACANT]                                |
| 183. KHAN BAHADUR ABIDUR REZA CHOWDHURY      | 220. MR. I. A. CLARK                         |
| 184. MR. SHAHEDALI                           | 221. MR. R. M. SASSOON                       |
| 185. MAULVI MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM                 | 222. MR. A. P. BLAIR                         |
| 186. MAULVI AMINULLAH                        | 223. MR. W. C. WORDSWORTH                    |
| 187. MR. SHAH SYED GOLAM SARWAR HOSAINI      | 224. MR. K. A. HAMILTON                      |
| 188. MR. SYED AHMED KHAN                     | 225. MR. H. R. NORTON                        |
| 189. MR. SYED ABDUL MAJID                    | 226. MR. C. G. COOPER                        |
| 190. MAULVI ABDUR RAZZAK                     | 227. MR. T. B. NIMMO                         |
| 191. KHAN BAHADUR MAULVI JALAUDDIN AHMED.    | 228. MR. H. C. BANNERMAN                     |
| 192. MAULVI AHMED KAMR CHOWDHURY             | 229. MR. C. W. MILES                         |
| 193. MAULANA MAHAMMAD MANIRUZZAMAN ISLAMADI  | 230. MR. J. B. ROSS                          |
| 194. AL-HAJ MAULANA DR. SANAUULLAH           | 231. SIR HARI SANKAR PAUL                    |
| 195. KHAN BAHADUR MAULVI FAZLUL QUDIR        | 232. MR. NALINI RANJAN SARCAR                |
| 196. MISS MIRA DUTTA GUPTA                   | 233. MR. DEBI PRASAD KHAITAN                 |
| 197. MRS. HEMAPROVA MAJUMDAR                 | 234. RAI MUNGTOLAL TAPURIA BAHADUR           |
| 198. MRS. HASINA MURSHED                     | 235. MR. ABDUL RAHAMAN SIDDIQI               |
| 199. BEGUM FARHAT BANO KHANAM                | 236. THE HON'BLE SIR BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY  |
| 200. MRS. ELLEN WEST                         | 237. MAHARAJA SRIS CHANDRA NANDY             |
| 201. MR. J. W. CHIPPENDALE                   | 238. KUMAR SHIB SHEKHARESWAR ROY             |
| 202. MR. L. T. MAGUIRE                       | 239. MAHARAJA SASHI KANTA ACHARJYA CHOWDHURY |
| 203. MR. C. GRIFFITHS                        | 240. RAI KHIROD CHANDRA ROY, BAHADUR         |
| 204. MR. W. L. ARMSTRONG                     | 241. MR. J. N. CUPTA                         |
| 205. MR. J. R. WALKER                        | 242. MR. AFTAB ALI                           |
| 206. MR. C. S. MACLAUCHLAN                   | 243. DR. SURESH CHANDRA BANERJEE             |
| 207. MR. F. C. BRASHER                       | 244. MR. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR            |
| 208. MR. C. MILLAR                           | 245. MR. SHIBANATH BANERJEE                  |
| 209. MR. W. W. K. PAGE                       | 246. MR. A. M. A. ZAMAN                      |
| 210. MR. G. MORGAN                           | 247. MR. B. MUKHERJEE                        |
|  | 248. BABU LITTAJ MUNDA SIRDAR                |
|  | 249. MR. SYAMAPRABAD MOOKHERJEE              |
|  | 250. MR. FAZLUR RAHMAN                       |

## Proceedings of the Council

The first session of the Bengal Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution (Government of India Act 1935) met in Calcutta on the 7th April 1937 to elect a Speaker and Deputy Speaker with Mr. Eric Studd, leader of the European group, in the chair. Almost all members, including five women, were present, while the galleries were packed to capacity by visitors including a large number of Hindu and Moslem women.



A noticeable feature was the absence of the police guard at the main gate of the Chamber.

#### Adj. Motion—JUTE MILL STRIKE

Immediately after Mr. Studd took his seat, Dr. N. Sanyal (Congress) wanted leave to move an adjournment motion in order to discuss alleged interference by executive authority in connection with the jute mill strike in the vicinity of Calcutta." As the requisite number stood up in support of leave being granted, the Chairman announced that the motion would be taken up as soon as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker were elected. One Muslim member opposed the motion.

The motion which was tabled by Mr. Shibnath Banerjee (Labour Congress) but moved by Mr. Sanyal read: "The House do adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the situation created by the interference of the local executive authority in connection with the jute mill strike in the vicinity of Calcutta."

There was another motion of a similar nature in connection with the cotton mill strike at Kuthia but it was not pressed in view of the fact that two adjournment motions cannot be moved at the same sitting.

Mr. P. Banerjee and Khan Bahadur Hasemali Khan having withdrawn from the contest for the Speakership, there were only three candidates in the field. Of these Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque obtained 116 votes, Kumar Shibsahkhareswar Roy 83 and Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan 42. By process of elimination, Mr. Tamizuddin went out and the contest lay between the other two. Votes were again polled and Mr. Azizul Haque obtained 159 votes against Mr. Roy's 81. The former was declared elected.

Mr. Azizul Haque, who was the Ministerial candidate, was formerly Education Minister. Mr. Roy was a former President of the Bengal Council and was also Minister for Local Self-Government. His candidature was supported by the Congress Party.

The House reassembling, Hon. Mr. Fazlul Haq, on behalf of the Ministerial Party, felicitated the new Speaker and said that in all countries Legislatures rightly assigned the place of honour to the Speaker. He hoped that in the discharge of his duties, the Speaker would receive co-operation from all parties in the House.

Mr. Sarat Bose, Leader of the Congress Party, said that the Congress Party in the House was out to combat and end, if possible, the Constitution. They intended to carry on their work with that objective but in that work, he did not expect or rather had no right to expect that the Speaker would take sides with them but he hoped and expected that the Speaker would give assistance by giving rulings in a manner which would be consistent with justice and fairplay.

Mr. Azizul Haq, replying, said that he was conscious of the enormous responsibility of his office. He believed that the future shaping of the Constitution would depend to a great extent on how the proceedings of the House would be conducted. He would always be impartial to all parties. Above all, he would always try to be honest. He appealed for co-operation from all parties in the House.

#### ELECTION OF DT. SPEAKER

The Assembly then took up the election of the Deputy Speaker.

The candidates were: Mr. Maguire, Maulvi Abdul Majid, Mr. Asraf Ali Khan Chaudhury and Mr. Pulia Behary Mullick, the remaining eight having withdrawn.

The result of the first ballot in which the Congress Party did not participate was Mr. Maguire 10 votes, Mr. Majid 33, Mr. Chaudhury 64 and Mr. Mullick 53. The name of Mr. Maguire was eliminated while the ballot for the remaining three candidates was taken up on the next day when Mr. Asraf Ali Khan Choudhury was declared elected as Deputy Speaker. The House then adjourned.

#### BENGAL GOVERNOR'S POSITION

8th. APRIL:—The Congress Party sprang a surprise when the Assembly met this afternoon, under the chairmanship of the Speaker, Khan Bahadur Azizul Haq.

Mr. J. C. Gupta, Chief Whip of the Congress Party, rising on a point of order, maintained that His Excellency Sir John Anderson had not been validly appointed Governor of the Province under the new regime and therefore all acts done by him in respect of the Assembly, including the nomination of a temporary Speaker yesterday and the summoning of the House, were *ultra vires* and illegal.

Mr. Gupta's ground for making this contention was that in other provinces, the Governors before they entered upon the duties of office under the new Constitution

had been appointed by a Royal Commission which was duly published in the Gazette and took the oath before one of his Majesty's Judges. But in Bengal, they found no such Royal Commission appointing him as Governor of the province nor did they know whether he had taken any oath before any Judge. In these circumstances, Mr. Gupta maintained that further proceedings of the House would be illegal and *ultra vires* and it would mean sheer waste of public money and time to continue such proceedings.

Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, another Congress member, said that there was no point in the point of order raised by Mr. Gupta.

The Speaker asked the Home Minister Sir Kwaaja Nasimuddin whether he could enlighten the House upon the subject.

Sir Nasimuddin said that he did not know how the Governor was appointed and, therefore, asked for time to consider the point.

When the House reassembled, Sir Nasimuddin said that the Governor, who was in office before the introduction of the new Constitution, was not appointed by commission. As such, he could continue to be in office and no commission was required nor was there any need for taking a fresh oath.

The Speaker, Mr. Asisul Haq, held that under Sec. 321 of the Government of India Act, Governors could continue in office. As such, he ruled the point out of order.

#### ADJ. MOTION—JUTE MILL STRIKE

Immediately thereafter, the House took up the adjournment motion moved yesterday to discuss the situation arising out of the executive interference in connection with the jute mills' strike.

Moving the adjournment motion Dr. Sanyal narrated the condition of labourers in the Jute Mill areas and referred to the promulgation of the order under Section 144, Cr. P. C. in various places where the strike was going on against persons engaged in Labour work. Several members of the House were not allowed to go to their constituencies by the promulgation of the order. Dr. Sanyal wanted to draw the attention of the Ministers to the state of affairs prevailing in the Jute Mill areas and added that executive interference was part of the general policy of the Government.

Mr. Shibnath Banerjee, Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, (Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar and Mr. A. R. Siddiki also spoke in support of the motion. Mr. Siddiki, however, appealed to the Opposition to give the Cabinet time to study the situation and come to a decision. He also asked the Cabinet to take the matter into their hands, instead of leaving it in the hands of the executive.

Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister of Labour and Commerce, said that the Government was moving in the matter and would soon come out with its policy for bringing closer contact between the employer and the employed.

Sir Nasimuddin, Home Minister, said that while the strike was a legitimate means for labour to get their grievances redressed in all countries, in India, it was resorted to with political objects in view. Regarding the promulgation of the order under Section 144 Cr. P. C. on April 1, he said that the Government had received information that there was going to be a militant hartal on April 1 as declared by the Congress Socialist Party, which aimed at stopping ordinary business and public utility services and he thought that the Government was justified in taking action to prevent such a situation.

The Chief Minister, who wanted to offer the olive branch, said that he would call a conference of leaders of the strikers, at which he, with the Labour Minister, would discuss the various points of view in order to arrive at a settlement.

The adjournment motion was talked out and the House was prorogued.

# THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## LIST OF MEMBERS

*President* :—THE HON. MR. SATYENDRA CHANDRA MITRA

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. DR. RADHA KUMUD MUKHERJEE                               | 15. MR. MERBAHADDIN AHMED                    |
| 2. KHAN SAHIB SUBID ALI MOLLA                              | 16. MR. KADDER BAKSH                         |
| 3. MR. KAMINI KUMAR DUTT                                   | 17. MR. SAILESWAR SINGH ROY                  |
| 4. MR. MUHAMMAD HOSSAIN                                    | 18. MR. NAGENDRA NARAYAN ROY                 |
| 5. THE HON'BLE MAHARAJA SIR<br>MANMATHA NATH ROY CHOWDHURY | 19. MR. SATYENDRA CHANDRA MITRA              |
| 6. RAI RADHIKA BHUSAN RAI BAHADUR                          | 20. KHAN BAHADUR SYED MUAZZAMUDDIN           |
| 7. MR. M. T. LAMB  | 21. MR. NARENDRA CHANDRA DUTTA               |
| 8. SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL                                     | 22. MR. HUMAYUN Z. A. KABIR                  |
| 9. SETH HANUMAN PRASAD PODDAR                              | 23. RAJA BHUPENDRA NARAYAN SINGHA<br>BAHADUR |
| 10. MR. BANKIM CHANDRA DATTA                               | 24. MR. KAMRUDDIN HAIDER                     |
| 11. MR. NARESH NATH MOOKHERJEE                             | 25. MR. E. U. ORMOND                         |
| 12. MR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM KHAN                                | 26. MR. M. SHAMSUZZOHA                       |
| 13. MR. SACHINDRA NARAYAN SANYAL                           | 27. RAI SURENDRA NARAYAN SINHA<br>BAHADUR    |
| 14. MR. HAMIDUL HAQUE CHOWDHURY                            |  |

## Proceedings of the Council

The first Session of the Bengal Legislative Council (Upper House) under the new Constitution met at Calcutta on the 8th. April 1937. Mr. *Satyendra Chandra Mitra* was elected President of the Council with 30 votes. His rival the Maharaja of Santosh received 20 votes.

Mr. *Mitra* was the leader of the Congress Party in the Council of State. The Maharaja of Santosh was the President of the last Bengal Council.

Sir *George Campbell* presided over the meeting.

Of the four candidates, Mr. Lalit Chandra Das had already withdrawn. Of the remaining three, Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim said that as Moslems had been elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, he would like to withdraw his candidature. He was permitted to do this. The House was then *pro rogued*.

## The Punjab Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

THE HON'BLE CHAUDHRI SIR SHAHAB-  
UD-DIN

### Deputy Speaker

SARDAR DASAUNDA SINGH

### Ministers

THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR MAJOR  
SIRDAR SIR SIKANDER HYAT KHAN

THE HON'BLE SARDAR BAHADUR DR.  
SARDAR SIR SUNDAR SINGH  
MAJITHIA

THE HON'BLE RAO BAHADUR CHAUDHRI  
SIR CHHOTURAM

THE HON'BLE MR. MANOHAR LAL  
THE HON'BLE NAWABZADA MAJOR  
KHIZAR HYAT KHAN TIWANA  
THE HON'BLE MIAN ABDUL HAYE

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 ABDUL AZIZ, MIAN                                    | 55 GHULAM SAMAD, KHAWAJA                               |
| 2 ABDUL HAMID KHAN, SUFI                              | 56 GIRDHARI DAS, MAHANT                                |
| 3 ABDUL HAYE, MIAN                                    | 57 GOKUL CHAND NARANG, DR. SIR                         |
| 4 ABDUL RAB, MIAN                                     | 58 GOPAL DAS, RAI SAHIB LALA                           |
| 5 ABDUL RAHIM, CHAUDHURI                              | 59 GOPAL SINGH, SARDAR                                 |
| 6 ABDUL RAHIM CHAUDHURY                               | 60 GOPI CHAND BHARGAVA, DR.                            |
| 7 AFEZALI HASNIR, SYED                                | 61 GURBAHLAN SINGH, SARDAR SAHIB SARDAR                |
| 8 AHMAD BAKSH KHAN, MR.                               | 62 HABIB-ULLAH KHAN, MALIK                             |
| 9 AHMAD YAR KHAN, CHAUDHURI                           | 63 HAIBAT KHAN DAHA, KHAN                              |
| 10 AHMAD YAR KHAN DAULATANA KHAN BAHADUR MIAN         | 64 HANS RAJ, BHAGAT                                    |
| 11 AJIT SING, SARDAR                                  | 65 HARI CHAND, RAI                                     |
| 12 AKBAR ALI, PIR                                     | 66 HARI SINGH, SARDAR                                  |
| 13 ALI AKBAR, CHAUDHURI                               | 67 HARJAB SINGH, SARDAR                                |
| 14 ALLAH BAKSH KHAN, KHAN BAHADUR NAWAB MALIK         | 68 HARNAM DAS, LALA                                    |
| 15 AMJAD ALI SHAH, SYED                               | 69 HARNAM SINGH, LIEUTENANT SODHI                      |
| 16 ANANT RAM, CHAUDHURI                               | 70 HET RAM, RAI SAHIB CHAUDHURI                        |
| 17 ANHIQ HUSSAIN, CAPTAIN                             | 71 INDAR SINGH, SARDAR                                 |
| 18 ATMA RAM, RAI SAHIB LALA                           | 72 JAGJIT SINGH, SARDAR                                |
| 19 BADAR-MOHY-UD-DIN, MIAN                            | 73 JAGJIT SINGH, TIKKA                                 |
| 20 BALDIE SINGH, RAO BAHADUR CAPTAIN RAO              | 74 JAHAN ARA SHAH NAWAZ                                |
| 21 BALDEE SINGH, SARDAR                               | 75 JAHANGIR KHAN, CHAUDHRI                             |
| 22 BALWANT SINGH, SARDAR                              | 76 JALAL-UD-DIN AMBER, CHAUDHRI                        |
| 23 BARKAT ALI, MALIK                                  | 77 JOGINDAR SINGH MAN, SARDAR                          |
| 24 BABAKHA SINGH, RAI BAHADUR SARDAR                  | 78 JOGINDAR SINGH, SARDAR                              |
| 25 BHAGAT RAM CHODA, LALA                             | 79 JUGAL KISHORE, MR.                                  |
| 26 BHAGAT, RAM, PANDIT                                | 80 KABUL SINGH, MASTER                                 |
| 27 BHAGWANT SINGH, RAI                                | 81 KAPOOR SINGH, SARDAR                                |
| 28 BHIM SEN SACHAR, LALA                              | 82 KARAMAT ALI, SHAIKH                                 |
| 29 BINDA SARAN, RAI BAHADUR                           | 83 KARTAR SINGH, CHAUDHRI                              |
| 30 CHAMAN LALL, DIWAN                                 | 84 KARTAR SINGH, SARDAR                                |
| 31 CHAHAN SINGH, SARDAR                               | 85 KHALID LATIF GAUBA, MR.                             |
| 32 CHHOTU RAM, RAO BAHADUR CHAUDHURI                  | 86 KHIZAR HAYAT KHAN TIWANA                            |
| 33 DABAUNDHA SINGH, SARDAR                            | 87 KISHAN DAS, SRTH                                    |
| 34 DEEHBANDHU GUPTA, LALA                             | 88 KRISHNA GOPAL DUTT                                  |
| 35 DINA NATH, LIEUTENANT                              | 89 LAL SINGH, SARDAR                                   |
| 36 DUNI CHAND, LALA                                   | 90 MANOHAR LAL, MR.                                    |
| 37 FAIZ MUHAMMAD KHAN, RAI                            | 91 MAQBOOL MAHMOOD, MIR                                |
| 38 FAIZ MUHAMMAD, SHAIKH                              | 92 MAZHAR ALI AZHAR, M                                 |
| 39 FAQIR CHAND, CHAUDHURI                             | 93 MOHY-UD-DIN LAL BADSHAH                             |
| 40 FAQIR HUSSAIN KHAN, CHAUDHURI                      | 94 MUBARIK ALI SHAH, SYED                              |
| 41 FARMAN ALI KHAN, SUBEDAR MAJOR                     | 95 MUHAMMAD ABDUL RAHMAN KHAN, CHAUDHRI                |
| 42 FATRH KHAN, RAJA                                   | 96 MUHAMMAD AKRAM KHAN, MR.                            |
| 43 FATRH MUHAMMAD MIAN                                | 97 MUHAMMAD ALAM DR.                                   |
| 44 FATRH SIEB KHAN MALIK                              | 98 MUHAMMAD ABHRAF, CHAUDHRI                           |
| 45 FAZAL ALI KHAN, KHAN, KHAN BAHADUR NAWAB CHAUDHURI | 99 MUHAMMAD FAIYAZ ALI KHAN NAWABZADA                  |
| 46 FAZAL DIN, KHAN SAHIB                              | 100 MUHAMMAD HASSAN, MR.                               |
| 47 FAZAL, KARIM BAKSH, MIAN                           | 101 MUHAMMAD HASSAN KHAN GURCHANI, KHAN BAHADUR SARDAR |
| 48 FEW, MR. E.  | 102 MUHAMMAD HASSAN KHAN BAHADUR MAKHDUM SYED          |
| 49 GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN RAJA                            | 103 MUHAMMAD HAYET KHAN NOON NAWAB SIR MALIK           |
| 50 GHULAM HUSSAIN, KHAWAJA                            | 104 MUHAMMAD HUSAIN, SARDAR                            |
| 51 GHULAM MOHY-UD-DIN, M.                             |  |
| 52 GHULAM MURTAZA, KHAWAJA                            |  |
| 53 GHULAM QADAR KHAN, KHAN SAHIB                      |  |
| 54 GHULAM RAISUL, CHAUDHRI                            |  |

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| 105 MUHAMMAD HUSSAIN, CHOUDHURI                                 | 138 PRITAM SINGH SIDPHU, SARDAR                          |
| 106 MUHAMMAD IPTIKAR-UD-DIN, MIAN                               | 139 RAQHIB KAUH, SHRIMATI                                |
| 107 MUHAMMAD JAMAL KHAN, LEGHARI,<br>KHAN BAHADUR, NAWAB SHH.   | 149 RAI, MR. C.  |
| 108 MUHAMMAD NAWAB KHAN, MAJOR<br>SARDAR                        | 141 RAM NARAIN ABORA, SETH                               |
| 109 MUHAMMAD RAZA SHAH JEELANI,<br>MAKHDOMZADA HAJI SAYED       | 142 RAM SARUP, CHAUDHRI                                  |
| 110 MUHAMMAD SAADAT ALI KHAN, KHAN<br>SAHIB NAWAB               | 143 RANPAT, CHAUDHRI                                     |
| 111 MUHAMMAD SARFRAZ KHAN, CHAUDHRI                             | 144 RASHIDA LATIF, MRS.                                  |
| 112 MUHAMMAD SARFRAZ KHAN, RAJA                                 | 145 RIASAT ALI, KHAN SAHIB CHAUDHRI                      |
| 113 MUHAMMAD SHAFI ALI KHAN, KHAN<br>SAHIB                      | 146 RIPUDAMAN SINGH, THAKUR                              |
| 114 MUHAMMAD WILATAY HUSSAIN JEELANI,<br>MAKHDOMZADA HAJI SAYED | 147 ROBERTS, MR. WILLIAM                                 |
| 115 MUHAMMAD YASIN KHAN, CHOUDHURI                              | 148 RUP SINGH, SARDAR                                    |
| 116 MUHAMMAD YUSUF KHAN, M.                                     | 149 SAHIB DAD KHAN, CHAUDHRI                             |
| 117 MUKAND LAL PURI, RAI BAHADUR MR.                            | 150 SAIF-UD-DIN KITCHLEW, DR.                            |
| 118 MULA SINGH, MR.   | 151 SAMPURAN SINGH, SARDAR                               |
| 119 MUNI LAL KALIA, PANDIT                                      | 152 SANTOKH SINGH, SARDAR SAHIB<br>SARDAR                |
| 120 MUSHTAQ AHMAD GURMANI, KHAN<br>BAHADUR, MIAN                | 153 SANT RAM SETH, DR.                                   |
| 121 MUZAFFAR ALI KHAN, SARDAR                                   | 154 SHAHAB-UD-DIN, CHAUDHRI SIR                          |
| 122 MUZAFFAR KHAN, KHAN BAHADUR<br>CAPTAIN MALIK                | 155 SHAHADAD KHAN, SAHIB RAI                             |
| 123 MUZAFFAR KHAN, KHAN BAHADUR<br>BAHADUR NAWAB                | 156 SHAH NAWAZ KHAN, NAWAB KHAN                          |
| 124 NARENDRA NATH, DEWAN BAHADUR<br>RAJA                        | 157 SHAM LAL, RAI BAHADUR LALA                           |
| 125 NAROTTAM SINGH, SARDAR                                      | 158 SHIV BYAL, LALA                                      |
| 126 NASIR-UD-DIN, CHOUDHRI                                      | 159 SHRI RAM SHARMA, MR.                                 |
| 127 NASIR-UD-DIN SHAH, PIR                                      | 160 SIKANDAR HYAT KHAN, KHAN<br>BAHADUR MAJOR SIRDAR SIR |
| 128 NABULLAH KHAN, RANA   | 161 SINGHA, MR. S. P.                                    |
| 129 NAU NIHAL SINGH, LIEUTENANT<br>SARDAR                       | 162 SITA RAM, LALA                                       |
| 130 NAWAZISH ALI SHAH, SYED                                     | 162 SOHAN SINGH JOSHI, SARDAR                            |
| 131 NUR AHMAD KHAN, KHAN SAHIB<br>MIAN                          | 164 SUDARSHAN, LALA                                      |
| 132 NURULLAH, MIAN  | 165 SULTAN MAHMUD HATIANA,<br>MIAN                       |
| 133 PARBATI JAI CHAND, MRS.                                     | 166 SUMAR SINGH, CHAUDHRI                                |
| 134 PARTAB SINGH, SARDAR  | 167 SUNDAR SINGH, SARDAR<br>BAHADUR DR SARDAR SIR        |
| 135 PIR MUHAMMAD, KHAN SAHIB<br>CHOUDHRI                        | 168 SURAJ MAL, CHAUDHURI                                 |
| 136 PREM SINGH, CHAUDHRI  | 169 TALIB HUSSAIN KHAN, KHAN                             |
| 137 PREM SINGH MAHANT   | 170 TARA SINGH, SARDAR                                   |
|   | 171 TIKA RAM, CHAUDHURI                                  |
|   | 172 UJJAL SINGH, SARDAR SAHIB<br>SARDAR                  |
|   | 173 UMAR HAYAT KHAN, CHAUDHURI                           |
|   | 174 UTTAM SINGH DUGAL, SARDAR                            |
|   | 175 WALI MUHAMMAD SAYYAL HIRAJ,<br>SARDAR                |

## Proceedings of the Council

1st Session—Lahore—5th to 12th April 1937

The Punjab took the lead in the inauguration of the new legislatures when its Assembly met at Lahore on the 5th April 1937 under the presidency of *Raja Narendranath*. The House was full. In the place of one solitary Congress member in the last Council there were present to-day over 30 Congress and allied group members, all wearing *kyadi* clothes or white caps. A visual demonstration of the introduction of the new order was the disappearance of both the official block and the nominated members. The Congress and allied groups occupied the former Opposition benches.

with Dr. M. Bhargava, leader, Lala Dul Chand Ambalavi and Chaudhuri Krishna Gopal Dutt, the Congress chief whip, on the front bench. On a bench alongside were Dr. Mohammad Alam and Dr. S. D. Kitchlew, with Malik Barkat Ali and Mr. K. L. Gauba just behind them.

At the outset the secretary read a message from the Governor nominating Raja Narondranath to occupy the Speaker's chair pending regular election of the President of the House. With the exception of the Congress members and a few others, who remained seated, the House received the message all standing, as required in the order.

*Dr. Alam* on a point of order inquired what authority the secretary had to ask the members to stand up on that occasion.

The *President* said that it was a matter of ordinary courtesy. 'I have noticed with regret' said Raja Narondranath, 'that some members remained seated when the Governor's message was read. It was a matter of showing respect to his Majesty the King-Empperor.'

*Dr. Alam*.—What I want to know is whether the secretary has power to require the members to stand on such an occasion.

The *President*.—He only followed the usual routine. There is no authority. (Cheers.)

*Dr. Alam*.—Thank you, sir.

Administering of oaths was then taken up. After the Ministers the first member called up was Mrs. *Rashida Latif* (Lahore Muslim women's constituency), who wearing a dark *burqa* took the oath and then declared that as she was a *pardanashin* Muslim lady she could not take her seat alongside the men members nor could she shake hands with the President after reading the oath. This ceremony was accordingly waived in her case and she took a detached seat outside the members' ring.

There was no other business except oath-taking to-day.

#### ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

**6th. APRIL** :—The election of the president was held to-day, the two candidates being *Choudhri Sir Shahabuddin* and *Dr. S. D. Kitchlew*. Choudhuri Shahabuddin was elected president by a large majority. Congressmen together with the Nationalists and some Independents staged a walk-out on the ground that the secrecy of ballot had been violated.

*Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*, leader of the Congress party, on a point of order before the result was declared, stated that the number of each seat was written on the respective ballot paper and hence secrecy had not been observed. Therefore he and his party had decided to walk out of the House. All the members of the Opposition thereupon walked out amidst ironical demonstration from the Unionist party. The House then adjourned.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

**7th. APRIL** :—His Excellency the Governor addressed the Assembly for the first time to-day. In the course of his speech, His Excellency said:—"We, in this province, believe that the Constitution can and will be successfully worked. But the ultimate test of success is the happiness of the people. I would ask that irrespective of party you also should keep the essential principles of good government steadfastly in view so that we may bring to the people of the Punjab unity, prosperity and contentment."

A feature of the speech was the exposition of the Governor's constitutional position *vis a vis* the Ministry and His Excellency laid stress on the fact that even as Ministers receive the fullest measure of confidence from him, the Governor, under the Constitution, was equally entitled to the Minister's confidence. This thread of confidence, said His Excellency, runs through the warp of the Constitution.

His Excellency pointed out that none could give indefinite guarantees for the future. At some time or other circumstances might arise compelling the Governor to assume responsibilities which the Government of the day would be unable or unwilling to bear but it would be his own constant endeavour and his Ministers to prevent such circumstances arising.

Striking a personal note, His Excellency said that they were bound together in a common task. The good name of the province and of each and all of them was at

stake and any departure from the goal on which they were set would be a reflection on all of them. "Feeling as I do," said His Excellency, "you may be certain that within human limits, I shall do all that is possible to assist my Ministers in a spirit of sympathy, co-operation and understanding."

Earlier in his speech, the Governor stressed the wide field of responsibility attaching to Ministers which was no less important than that imposed upon the Governor by Parliament and the Instrument of Instructions, responsibilities of which the Governor could not divest himself. But far from assuming to himself responsibilities which were not his or exercising those imposed on him without cogent reasons, it was the instruction of His Majesty the King that he (the Governor) should be studious so to exercise his powers as not to enable his Ministers to rely upon his personal responsibilities and to relieve them of responsibilities which were properly their own.

Congress members, also Akalis and several Independents, were absent from the House.

Until ten minutes before the arrival of His Excellency, the whole left wing comprising thirty-five seats were empty but Sir *Sikandar Hyat Khan* leader of the House, directed some of the Unionist members to occupy the vacant seats and when the Governor took his seat no gap was conspicuously noticeable. After the Governor's speech the House adjourned.

#### THE MINISTERS' SALARIES BILL

8th. APRIL :—The Assembly passed the Ministers' Salaries Bill to-day. A keen debate took place on the Bill which fixed the Chief Minister's salary at Rs. 48,000 yearly and that of each of the other Ministers at Rs. 36,000.

The first division of the session occurred on the official Congress amendment moved by Mr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, reducing the Chief Minister's salary to Rs. 6,000 yearly. This amendment was defeated by 95 votes to 35, the Ministers remaining neutral.

Mr. *Bhargava* explained the Congress view-point on salaries and said that Ministers being servants of the people, should set an example to the I. C. S.—whose salaries the legislatures could not touch—so that the latter may be induced to follow suit.

*Dewan Chamanlal* and Mr. *Ch. Krishnagopal Dutt* quoted figures obtaining in other countries, contrasting the poverty of the people with the high pitch of salaries which were most extravagant.

Unionist Party speakers were in favour of "decent salaries enabling Ministers to maintain the dignity of their position."

*Raja Ghaznafarali Khan* alluded to the Congress silence when high salary was paid to the late Mr. V. J. Patel as President of the Assembly.

*Dr. Alam* (Congress), moving for circulation until May 31, 1937, for eliciting public opinion, urged that salaries should be fixed as much in the light of the view of the electorate as proposals for balancing the budget. In a sarcastic vein, *Dr. Alam* reminded the Ministerialists that their main promise to the electorate like the Congress was to bring relief to the masses but whereas the Congress throughout India was prepared to offer the most capable brains for not more than Rs. 500 monthly, the Punjab Ministers wanted a salary which was actually much higher than even such a dictator as Sgr. Mussolini gave to himself, namely 10,000 lire yearly. And the people of India were the poorest in the world. *Dr. Alam* compared the salaries of Bombay and U. P. with those proposed for the Punjab Ministers and contrasted the incomes of the respective provinces. He deprecated the proposals being rushed with this unseemly haste as though the Ministerialist Party was uncertain of the future and assured them that the Opposition would be generous and not parsimonious.

*Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*, leader of the Congress Party, supported the motion and said that as representatives of the people, they should not accept more than Rs. 500 per month.

*Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan* pointed out that they had wished that the Governor should not fix their salaries as had been done at present and the Bill had been brought up in order to fix salaries through the legislature at the earliest moment. It was an impossible proposition that every item should be referred to the electorate. As regards the contrast in salaries, *Sir Sikandar* pointed out what was done in Bengal where eleven Ministers, eleven Secretaries and eleven Under-Secretaries were provided.

The motion for circulation was defeated. All amendments were rejected and the original ams were passed.

An interesting change made in the Bill was the official Unionist amendment moved by the Party's Chief Secretary as a result of which Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan will be styled Premier, instead of Chief Minister.

The Congress Party supported the amendment amidst cheers and the House adjourned.

**9th. APRIL :—**The President fixed 2-30 p. m. in the afternoon to consider the adjournment motion to discuss the position of agriculturists of the provinces following the recent disastrous hailstorm. Two other adjournment motions to discuss the situation in Kot Bhaithan Singh, where acute Sikh-Muslim tension prevailed, and the failure of the Government to solve the problem there, were either withdrawn or rejected.

The Congress adjournment motion was withdrawn after an hour's discussion in which the mover urged that at least Rs. 500,000 as Takavi loan were needed to afford relief. The Premier assured the House that all possible relief, including a revenue remission of Rs. 100,000 was already being distributed and the Government was taking a most sympathetic view of the disaster.

#### PRESIDENT'S SALARY BILL

The debate on the bill fixing the President's salary to Rs. 30,000 yearly was taken up. Mr. Krishna Gopal Dutt, its mover, said: 'Are we to be squeezed dry by our own people. I tell you that you are sowing seeds of revolution as the people can not afford to pay salaries 343 times of their own per capita income'.

After rejecting all the amendments the House agreed for Rs. 30,000 yearly for the Speaker and Rs. 6,000 for the Deputy Speaker. The Premier next moved for the addition of a new clause to the bill that the expenditure on the salaries of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker be an expenditure charged on the revenues of the Punjab, thereby ensuring that the salaries of those two shall not be discussed on the floor of the House. The Premier said that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker were above party, hence their salaries should not be discussed.

A Congress member objected that no new clause could be added at that stage.

The President deferred ruling on the point and the House adjourned till the 12th.

#### DEBATE ON ZETLAND SPEECH

**12th. APRIL :—**The adjournment motion of Mr. K. L. Gauba to discuss the recent statement of Lord Zetland "and the grave implications thereof on Provincial Autonomy and Responsible Government purported to have been established by the Government of India Act" was talked out to-day after two hours' discussion.

The main feature of the debate was a statement by the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, who said that if there was mass action in other Provinces followed by repression, there was sure to be mass action in this province too. He had already heard that the police of all the provinces had been told to be in readiness. He appealed to all, irrespective of other differences, to signify their dissatisfaction not only with the Constitution but also the interpretation sought to be given of Responsible Government in India by Lord Zetland's speech.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier, replying to the debate said that he had no doubt that had the position been as stated "by our revered leader, Mahatma Gandhi" and as quoted by Lord Zetland in his speech from Mr. Gandhi's statements, then in his opinion an agreement would be quite possible (cheers) and he would urge the well-wishers of the country to move again in that direction. Sir Sikandar regretted that while demanding an assurance from the Governors in the terms of the A. I. O. C. resolution, the Congress leaders had not themselves made it clear to the Governors that they, on their part, would not allow a situation arise to make the Governor's reserve powers for maintaining the tranquility, the rights of services and the interests of minorities to be brought into use. Had this been made clear, he thought the present constitutional situation would not have arisen.

Congress members repeatedly heckled the Premier, but he said that that was his view of the matter and he hoped there was still a chance for settlement on the basis of Mr. Gandhi's statement in which he said, "We wanted nothing more."

Mr. Gauba, at the outset, said that although he did not belong to the Congress, he thought that the Congress was right in describing the new Constitution as a humbug and farce. The main question to-day was the formation of interim Minis-



tries and their constitutional position, even more than the Governor's refusal to give the assurance asked for by the Congress. Mr. Gauba thought that Mr. Rajagopalachari had correctly stated the position in his statement. Concluding, Mr. Gauba said that all circumstances pointed to the fact that Provincial Autonomy, as interpreted by Lord Zetland, had completely broken down.

Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava* related how this Act came to be forced upon India and what part the Congress played in 1931 through its sole representative Mr. Gandhi, at the Round Table Conference, in winning freedom for the country. Mr. Gandhi had made it clear that all that India wished was association on terms of equality, with freedom to sever connection if that was considered desirable. He even made it clear to Lord Irwin that safeguards demonstrably in the interests of India, could be framed. Lord Zetland had said in one place that if Mr. Gandhi wished, he could see the Viceroy and in another place that now matters rested with the Governors. Lord Zetland referred to period of six months. "But I believe the Parliament can prolong this democracy of puppet Ministries for two years under its discretion", concluded Dr. Bhargava. "In other words we are told, either you join the Constitution as slaves or get out. The position is galling to the self-respect of any Indian, to whatsoever school he may belong and I hope the unanimous vote of this House will be cast against the Act and against Lord Zetland's statement."

*Begum Shah Nawas* told Congressmen that everyone admired their sacrifices but now the time had come for them to make still greater sacrifices in the toilsome paths of working the Constitution. She recalled the message sent through her to Indians by a prominent Irish leader that India would never attain what she wanted until she worked the Constitution.

*Dewan Chamanlal* gave instances in which conventions were actually set up in other Dominions by actually overriding the Constitution. There was thus no point in saying that the hands of the Governors were tied. "I believe," said Dewan Chamanlal, "that even as Lord Zetland said that Mr. Gandhi had not read the Government of India Act, Lord Zetland has not read his own constitutional history."

The *Advocate-General*, discussing the constitutional aspect, said that as the Congress had announced that they were out to wreck the Constitution and if weight were to be attached to their declarations made with other items in their manifesto, then they were clearly out to wreck the Constitution with constitutional activities and knowing this position, it would be illegal on the Governor's part to bind his own hands and say he would look on while the Congress were doing so.

*Malik Barkat Ali* countered this by stating that as long as the Congress had stipulated that they wanted an assurance only for their constitutional activities, not all the prestige in the world could make the action of the Governor constitutional. Such an attitude might be perfectly legal on the Governor's part but it was equally perfectly illegal, because anything sought for within the Constitution, could not be denied by the Governor within the Constitution. Mr. Barkat Ali quoted English constitutional practice on the subject and contended that the so-called interim Ministries, without any backing of the electorate, were *ultra vires* in terms of the Instrument of Instructions and the spirit of the Act.

*Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan* said that he regretted that the Congress had exposed themselves to the charge that they had been attempting to see how far the Government would go.

Mr. *Krishna Gopal Dutt* retorted: "Then the Government themselves did not want us by the way they have drafted the Act."

*Sir Sikandar* said that if he were a Congress leader he would have immediately accepted office and forced the issue on the Governor and made the Governor face the consequences. The Premier did not touch the constitutional aspect of the issue.

As two hours had by then been taken up, the motion was talked out.

#### LEO. ASSEMBLY ( REMOVAL OF DISQUALIFICATION ) BILL

The Assembly finished its legislative programme, after passing the Punjab Legislative Assembly (removal of disqualifications) Bill which is a technical "enabling" bill in respect of election of certain class of public servants performing quasi-Governmental functions and the appointment of elected members as Parliamentary Secretaries.

The announcement that he would take the earliest step to resign from the Zaildarship (village official) was made by *Miā Iftakharuddin*, Secretary of the Congress Party in the Punjab Assembly, in the course of his speech opposing the Bill.

Lambardars, he said, were hereditary. The same was the case with him. Speaking from his personal experience, he said that these village officials rendered help to the police to carry out repressive measures. (Cheers.)

In the course of his reply to the motion for circulation of the Bill, Sir *Sikandar Hyat Khan*, Premier, made the following statement: "If ever we find that the Governor disagrees with what we believe is the right thing to do in the interests of the people, we shall not hesitate to resign offices and go to the Opposition benches."

A Congress member: Have you obtained an assurance from the Government?

The Premier: We need no assurance. We are sure of ourselves.

#### SPEAKER'S AND DE. SPEAKER'S BILLS

The House passed the Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's Salaries Bills.

The Premier offered to insert a new clause (making the Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's salaries non-votable) if the Opposition agreed to follow the convention by not moving cuts in their salaries. The Opposition gave the assurance and the Bill was passed and the House adjourned *sine die*.

### Budget Session—Simla 17th to 29th June 1937

#### BUDGET FOR 1937-38

The first of the Provincial budgets under the Reforms was presented by Mr. *Monohar Lal*, Finance Minister of the Punjab, in the Punjab Assembly held at Simla on the 17th. June 1937. The Minister announced a small estimated surplus of Rs. 1,72,000 for 1937-38 and a realised surplus of Rs. 23 lakhs as against the budgeted deficit of Rs. 10 lakhs for 1936-37.

Mr. Monohar Lal began with a reference to the previous complete dependence of provincial finance on Central authority and its gradual separation by a series of steps and how in consequence of the introduction of Responsible Government by the Montford Reforms, expenditure in the provinces on benevolent departments rose from Rs. 170 lakhs in 1931-32 to Rs. 290 lakhs in 1936-37. The year 1935-36, for which a trifling surplus was budgeted but which gave strong indications of heavy deficit of over Rs. 20 lakhs when last year's budget was presented, ended due to certain favourable circumstances with only a small deficit of about Rs. 2 lakhs. For 1936-37, already closed, revised figures show that instead of a deficit of over Rs. 16 lakhs indicated in the budget last year, the year was likely to yield a surplus of about Rs. 23 lakhs, showing a net improvement of more than Rs. 39 lakhs over the budget figures. This improvement had occurred in several sources of provincial revenue but more particularly in Land Revenue Rs. 21 and one-fourth lakhs, Irrigation Rs. 12 and two-fifth lakhs, and Hydro-Electric Rs. 5 lakhs. There was also improvement due to the fall, because of economy, in working expenses under Irrigation of about Rs. 3 lakhs.

It was proposed to devote this surplus to the extent of Rs. 15 lakhs in relieving the hydro-electric scheme of certain expenses made out of capital that should have been normally met from revenue. This would also afford a permanent relief in the burden of interest charge on the hydro-electric scheme to the extent of Rs. 75,000. The Finance Minister said that it would be noted that the hydro-electric scheme, after defraying working expenses, was bringing net receipts of Rs. 14 lakhs. Against this, there was an annual interest charge on capital of little over Rs. 30 lakhs. As net receipts were now expanding at the rate of about Rs. 2 lakhs yearly, it was hoped that this great commercial enterprise of the Government might, within a calculable period, begin completely to pay for itself.

As regards 1937-38, revenue receipts were estimated at Rs. 10,90,39,000 and revenue expenditure Rs. 10,88,67,000. The estimate provided for a very small surplus of Rs. 1,72,000. But unless certain items of income showed marked improvements in the upward direction, the small surplus was likely to be absorbed in certain additions to the budget directly consequent on the introduction of the present Reforms, such as the appointment of two committees, one on resources and retrenchment and the other on unemployment, which were being constituted almost at once, as also the increased provision that should have to be made for the salary and allowances of members of the Assembly.

The Ministry started office on the morrow of terrible hailstorms that devastated rabi crops in large parts of Multan division and before they had been many days in

office, several parts of the province were visited by heavy, unseasonal rains and cyclones with grave effects on crops. The widespread gram blight had also caused great harm to the general agricultural position. The income under land revenue and irrigation had suffered in consequence to the extent of Rs. 25 lakhs. Despite this fall in revenue, the provision under beneficent departments had been increased by Rs. 20 lakhs. During the year, a famine relief fund had been constituted and revised scales of pay came into effect. Also the Haveli Project entered the stage of actual construction. The Project would make large areas in the district of Multan, now dependent on inundation canals, secure and portions of Muzaffargarh and Jhang districts, which were now arid wastes, would be converted into flourishing colonies.

Continuing Mr. *Manohar Lal* said that a close study of the budget revealed the following possibilities of improvement in future of provincial finance: (a) the Haveli Project, where it is expected that irrigation would commence within four years was expected to yield, when in full operation, Rs. 7.8 per cent on the capital expended; (b) increasing net receipts from the hydro-electric scheme; (c) annually increasing savings, because of the introduction of new scales of pay over an extensive field of services; (d) possibilities of further retrenchment as a result of investigation of the Committee on Resources and Retrenchment; (e) possibility of saving in interest by utilising the strong credit position of the province—a position built up by careful husbanding of resources in the past. In addition, while provincial finances were necessarily inelastic, the Committee referred to above might be able to decide upon fresh resources of income. Reference must also be made to the probability, in the remote future, of a contribution from income-tax now wholly appropriated by the Central Government. While these definite possibilities of improvement could only be achieved gradually, as the years passed, the budget had shown the essential soundness of the finances of the province and the Finance Minister emphasised in this connection the broad facts during the year 1937-38 of Rs. 25 lakhs on the one side and increased expenditure on beneficent departments of Rs. 20 lakhs on the other and to this increased expenditure had to be added Rs. 3 or 4 lakhs more because of the circumstances connected directly with the present reforms. The Ministry had laid special emphasis on economy but this was to be practised consistently with increasing provision for nation-building activities and it was recognised that the efficiency and integrity of services must be borne in mind. Mr. *Manohar Lal* referred to a courageous but sound finance as the proper policy for the Government. Now that the province was going to be the complete master in its own house, both with allocated sources of revenue and powers of future borrowing, the Ministry had stressed its solicitude to study, and as far as possible, to carry out the least wish of the Punjab Popular Assembly. The Government was, he said, alive to the idea of progress in the country. The Minister referred to the saying of the great political philosopher, Montesquieu, how in a republic, as liberty advanced, the citizen was ready to pay more heavily in taxes because he believed that he was paying himself of his free will. While it was trusted that that would be the attitude of the Assembly, should the unofficial committee recommend fresh sources of income the Minister ended by saying "that strict economy is to be the watchword in all our departments. We regard public money to be a trust to be administered with the utmost care but are fully determined within the funds the House allows us, to build up the highest measure of beneficent service for the province, for therein we believe lies not only the prosperity of the province but also the welfare and happiness of its people."

#### STATE PRISONERS IN PUNJAB JAILS

21st JUNE:—At question time to-day Sir *Sikandar Hyat Khan*, Premier, informed Mr. *Hari Singh* that there were at present seven persons detained in the Punjab jails as state prisoners by orders issued by the Governor-General in Council under Regulation III of 1918. Of the prisoners convicted by the Martial Law tribunals in 1918, 12 were still in confinement. Of these six were in the Andamans serving their sentences of transportation for life and the remainder in the Punjab jails.

Sir *Sikandar Hyat Khan* informed Mr. *Kartar Singh* that the number of prisoners in the Punjab jails classed as terrorists was 49. Many of these were undergoing life sentences and it was not possible to mention the date when they were likely to be released. The terrorist prisoners were kept in cells at night and were not allowed to mix with other prisoners in day time. The Government had no intention of making a general release of all political and terrorist prisoners. The number of persons at present interned in their villages under section 3 of the Punjab Crimi-

nal Law Amendment Act of 1935 was 15. They had been interned for having acted in a manner prejudicial to the public safety or peace. The Government did not intend to remove the restrictions on such prisoners.

In the course of a supplementary question *Lala Duni Chand* asked the Premier whether the Government had decided on any particular policy with regard to the release of political prisoners.

The Premier replied that orders had been issued that the Martial Law prisoners should be released immediately (applause). With regard to other political prisoners, their cases were being examined periodically with a view to see whether they could be released without jeopardizing public tranquillity.

#### ACTION TAKEN AGAINST NEWSPAPERS

Interesting figures were given by Sir *Sikandar Hyat Khan*, Premier, regarding the action taken by the Government against the numerous newspapers under sections VII and IX of the Press Emergency Powers Act of 1931. During 1934 securities were demanded totalling several thousands from 69 newspapers all over the province; in 1935 from 76 newspapers, while in 1936 securities were demanded from 136 newspapers. Most of these were vernacular newspapers. Since 1930 the securities deposited by eight newspapers and printing presses had been forfeited. In two cases an appeal was preferred to the High Court. One of them was rejected and the other was still pending. A majority of these actions against these presses was based either for sedition or for publishing articles desired to stir up communal hatred.

#### COMMUNAL RIOTS—PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Sympathy for the victims and regret at the unfortunate communal riots in Gujrat and Amritsar were expressed by the Premier, Sir *Sikandar Hayat Khan* in the course of a lengthy statement to the Assembly. The situation upto last night was that one more Muslim died in the hospital and his funeral would take place to-day and he hoped that better sense would prevail among either communities and any untoward incident on this occasion might be avoided.

Another unfortunate incident quite unconnected with the recent communal tension occurred at Amritsar, namely, the horse of a tonga driven by a Sikh got out of control and ran over three children who all happened to be Muslim, two of whom died in the hospital and one is undergoing treatment. The Premier regretted that this incident should have happened at this moment as it was likely to be misunderstood and might further inflame feelings. Sir *Sikandar* expressed profuse thanks to the leaders of both communities who willingly and sincerely co-operated with the authorities in easing the situation. The position with regard to investigation, the Premier said, was that 98 cases had so far been registered under various sections of the Indian Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes, 22 arrests had been made and two were still absconding. The total number of injured at Amritsar was 54, the number of those admitted in the hospital 23 and that of the discharged 6. Two persons had died since their admission therein.

The Premier suggested the advisability of setting up a small committee of the House consisting of members of all parties and all communities to keep watch over the communal situation all over the province and if unfortunately any untoward incidents happened one or more members of this committee might proceed to the spot and help to bring about conciliation and get first hand information of the causes of the incidents. The most unfortunate experience at present in some cases was that some members in their zeal and anxiety, to show their solicitude to their constituency or their community rushed to the scene and after seeing or hearing one-sided version of the occurrence issued statements to the press which practices was not in the interest of any community and should be stopped forthwith. He hoped that he would have the sympathy and support of the House in any action he found advisable to take to stop a repetition of the unfortunate incidents of the kind which occurred at Amritsar. He made a personal appeal to individual members not to rush to the press with an incomplete statement of facts or information without proper verification. (Applause).

Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, on behalf of the opposition, welcomed the Premier's statement and assured him that the Government would have their fullest support in the measures taken to put a stop to communal riots in the province.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

22nd. JUNE :—General discussion on the Budget commenced to-day. About a dozen speakers participated in the debate including three out of four women

members. There was severe criticism of the budget from the Opposition benches, who characterised it as a creature of the bureaucracy inherited by the so-called popular Ministry. On the other hand, Unionist members claimed that under the very limited scope of the Constitution with the major portion of revenue reserved and non-votable Mr. Manoharlal's was an admirable budget, better than even the Congress Ministry could have produced. Mr. Ghaznafarali remarked that the Congress Ministry, if in office, would have perhaps created some spectacular political statements to catch the public eye.

The House gave a sympathetic hearing to speeches by three women members. *Begum Shaw Nawaz* said that women, representing one half of India's population, received very little facilities for education, the expenditure being only 12 to 14 per cent. The provision for sickness, child-mortality and maternity were quite inadequate. She urged that the Government should do all in their power to mitigate sufferings in a humane and generous manner. The House then adjourned.

**24th. JUNE :—**The Assembly concluded general discussion on the Budget. Several front benchers participated in the discussion to-day.

*Mr. M. Abdul Haye*, Education Minister, in a forceful speech, declared that the Government intended to nationalise the system of education in the Punjab. He discouraged denominational institutions giving communal or religious instruction, which proved very harmful to the Province.

*Dewan Chamanlal* welcomed the laudable sentiments expressed by the Education Minister and wondered if within the meagre funds provided, he would be able to put them into practice.

Speakers saw no large scale planning in the Budget to make the Province civilised or prosperous.

*Sir Sudersingh Majithia*, Revenue Minister, explained the various schemes of irrigation that have been under serious consideration. The Haveli Project has been sanctioned, the Thal Project was now under consideration and as an alternative to the Bhakra Dam scheme, the Government was investigating possibility of sinking tube-wells.

*Dr. Gopichand Bhargava*, Leader of the Opposition, severely criticised the Government for giving the cold shoulder to members of the Opposition on several occasions. He referred in particular to the practice of the Governor presiding over Cabinet and draw attention to the report that the Governor had appointed an officer against the wishes of the Minister.

*Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan*, vigorously defending the Government, refuted the serious allegations made against him and the Government. After quoting instances of the kind of co-operation given by the Congress Opposition, the Premier declared: "We are prepared to help the Congress and seek their help but the Government will not allow them to interfere in the executive side of the Government". Referring to Cabinet proceedings, *Sir Sikandar* said that he was surprised that the Leader of the Opposition who professed to know parliamentary practice referred to Cabinet meetings, which were secret. As for the Governor's interference, the Premier said: "I see no objection in the Governor presiding over Cabinet meetings. He has been extremely helpful to the Government not only in advising us in several matters in which he has got more experience than many of us but there has not been a single occasion where the Governor has interfered in the administration. I think this will dispel any misapprehension. I can assure the House again that if the Governor interferes with our work in any way, we will resign. (Cheers.)"

*Mr. Manoharlal*, Finance Minister, winding up the debate, said that changes in currency and tariff policy could not effect lasting prosperity. What was most important for industrial advance was determination on the part of those who subscribed to capital to see that the management of companies was in proper hands. A good system of government and good finances were interchangeable and he was satisfied that the present Government was insisting on strict treasury control.

The House at this stage adjourned.

#### VOYING ON BUDGET DEMANDS

**28th. JUNE :—**The Assembly discussed to-day out motions on demands for grants. The debate was confined to the land revenue on which several cuts were moved, all of which were either withdrawn or rejected.

The opposition members raised points of order with regard to procedure to be adopted with regard to the order in which the demands should be taken up and it

was claimed that the Opposition Party had the privilege to select particular demands they wished to discuss.

Before the House adjourned, the Premier announced that the Government had conceded the request and accordingly Mr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, Leader of the Opposition, had selected the demands under General Administration, Police, Education and Agriculture for discussion, urging that eight days be allotted for the purpose.

**29th. JUNE :—**The dull proceedings of the Assembly were enlivened by another scene which culminated in the walk-out of the Opposition consisting of the Congress, Hindu Sabhites and Ahrars.

While discussions on out motions were proceeding, the leader of the Opposition, *Dr. Gopichand Bhargava* started making a statement concerning the powers of marshal of the House, since to-day the marshal was sitting next to the Speaker. He was a police officer named Mr. S. Sadiq.

The *Speaker* said that the subject could not be introduced when another subject was under consideration.

*Diwan Chamanlal*, raising a bulky volume in his hand, informed the Speaker that under parliamentary practice a stranger could not sit in the House (referring to the marshal).

The *Speaker* thereupon asked Mr. S. Sadiq to sit in the adjacent Viceregal gallery. A few minutes later, however, the Speaker said that he had considered his decision and allowed him to sit on the marshal's chair by his side.

*Diwan Chamanlal* again rose to say something but the Speaker said before *Diwan Chamanlal* had an opportunity to speak 'for the present I have allowed him to come back. The point is that I have yet to decide finally what should be done. He being my marshal has a right to sit in the House'.

*Diwan Chamanlal* : 'I regret,.....'

He was not allowed to finish the sentence by the Speaker who said 'I am not going to consider the comments on my action'.

*Diwan Chamanlal* : I want to make a statement. (Cries of 'order' from the Ministerial benches.)

*Diwan Chamanlal* said loudly 'ordinary courtesy'.....(renewed and angry cries of 'order' 'order' from Ministerial benches).

The *Speaker* : 'I have given my ruling'.

*Diwan Chamanlal* : 'On behalf of the Opposition I want to make a statement'.

The *Speaker* : 'If the hon. member stands I will have to ask him to leave the House'.

*Diwan Chamanlal* : 'I will withdraw. We will all withdraw'.

The *Speaker* : 'Very good'.

Thereupon the majority of the Opposition members withdrew from the house.

#### PREMIER'S EXPLANATION

When the Assembly reassembled after lunch with empty Opposition benches, the Premier, *Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan*, made a statement in regard to the unfortunate incident in the morning which resulted in the walk-out of the Opposition members. He said : Unfortunately I was not present in the House when the incident happened. With your permission I wish to make the position clear as to how this appointment of the marshal of the Assembly was made. You will remember, Sir, some days ago you spoke to the Governor asking him that he might be pleased to appoint a marshal on the analogy of the Central Assembly; You subsequently asked the head of the Government to make such an appointment. On that occasion I had to inform you it was not possible to make a permanent appointment immediately but would be prepared to appoint a temporary marshal pending the formal sanction of the Governor. The gentleman who sits next to you as marshal has been appointed in accordance with that decision.' 'I regret', continued the Premier, 'that the Opposition members should have thought fit to stage a walk-out. It may be there might be other reasons. It is not for me to impute motives and take an uncharitable view of things. But I wish they had not taken the action which they had. I trust in view of my explanation they will now see their way to come back. In conclusion, I may point out that the precedent of the Central Assembly is that the appointment of marshal was made by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Speaker and here also you took the initiative.

#### OPPOSITION LEADERS' STATEMENT

The following statement was issued by 41 members of the Assembly who had staged a walk-out to-day :—

'Without any previous warning or intimation this morning, we found a gentleman in mufti seated to the left of the Speaker. On enquiry by us as to who this gentleman was, the Speaker stated that he should apologise to the House for not having informed the House earlier that the gentleman was the marshal of the House and he had been appointed by the Government and that he himself had no hand in the appointment. Further, the Speaker stated that the gentleman was appointed as marshal of the House, apparently last night and that his duties were comparable to those of the serjeant-at-arms in the House of Commons. Thereupon the Speaker was informed that it appeared that apart from the speaker not having had a hand in this appointment no member or leader of the opposition had been consulted. The Speaker said that his duties had not been defined. The Speaker was requested to name the person concerned as a stranger whereupon the Speaker ordered him to remove himself to the Viceroy's box which he did. While certain Opposition leaders were consulting among themselves in the lobby regarding this appointment of which the incumbent appeared to be a police officer, the Speaker contradicted his own previous ruling and stated that the police officer concerned was like his own assistant and that he would allow him to come back to his original seat on the floor of the House and said that he might be taken as marshal, serjeant-at-arms or his assistant. On Dr. Gopichand, Diwan Chamanlal and Sir Gokulchand Narang returning to the chamber they were amazed to find the police officer again on the floor of the House. Diwan Chamanlal raised a point of order regarding this matter but the speaker would not allow him to proceed. Diwan Chamanlal rose to announce that since the police officer remained on the floor of House the Opposition would register its protest by not participating in the proceedings, but the Speaker in common courtesy instead of allowing Diwan Chamanlal to make his statement took the most amazing and unprecedented step of asking the hon. member to withdraw. Nor did the Speaker allow the leader of the Opposition to suggest as he wanted to that the police officer should not sit on the floor of the House for the next few minutes till luncheon interval so that he could discuss the matter with the speaker. The opposition walked out with Diwan Chamanlal led by the leader of the Opposition.

We desire to register our protest in no unmistakable terms against the flouting of the right and privileges of members and the appointment of a policeman as a guard over members who obviously could not act as the marshal being still in service. In the Central Assembly the marshal appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the President of the Assembly is a retired official. His duties are purely formal such as announcing the entry of the Speaker, carrying messages for the Speaker and carrying messages from the Assembly to the Council of State. But the duties of the serjeant-at-arms are statutory and most serious—removal of members and removal and arrest of strangers. No such statutory provision exists in the rules and standing orders of the Punjab Assembly or its procedure or under any authority that we are aware of. And yet we are told that the position of the police officer in question will be comparable to that of the serjeant-at-arms of the House of Commons.

The manner in which the Opposition had been treated, the varying and contradictory rulings given by the Chair, the tone and manner of the Speaker adopted towards the Opposition, the quick change of attitude on the part of the Speaker on occasions when the Premier had intervened, the reasonable motions ruled out arbitrarily—all these issues and others have brought the patience of the Opposition to the breaking point. We did not realize that the Speaker would add to this by the attitude adopted by him towards the Opposition and the humble manner in which he accepted the orders of the Government in the appointment of a police officer in service as marshal and allowed himself to attribute most serious powers and authority to the said police officer which powers are unwarranted by law. Such action is an insult to every member of the House whose rights, privileges and dignity are menaced in this most glaring and objectionable fashion. We had no other option but to register our protest most emphatically by withdrawing from the chamber.

Since issuing this statement we have learnt that the Premier has made a statement on the floor of the House definitely stating that not the Government but the Speaker asked for the appointment of the said policeman. This again is the most serious incident since the Speaker originally denied any hand in the appointment. We leave the public to judge the manner in which this business had been conducted.'

# The N. W. F. Pr. Legislative Assembly

## LIST OF MEMBERS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 <i>Speaker</i> —MALIK KHUDA BAKHSH KHAN                       | 24 KHAN FAIZULLA KHAN GHAENI           |
| 2 <i>Deputy Speaker</i> —KHAN MUHAMMAD SARWAR KHAN, TAHIR KHALI | 25 M. FAQIRA KHAN                      |
|   | 26 DR C C. GHOSH                       |
|   | 27 LALA HUKUM CHAND                    |
|   | 28 RAI BAHADUR LALA ISHAR DASS SAWHNEY |
|   | 29 MAIN JAFFAR SHAH                    |
|   | 30 SARDAR JAGGAT SINGA NARAG           |
|   | 31 PIR SYED JALAL SHAH                 |
|   | 32 LALA JAMNA DASS                     |
|   | 33 RAI SAHIB LALA KANWAR BEAN BAGAI    |
|   | 34 DOCTOR KHAN SAHIB                   |
|   | 35 KHAN MALIK UR RAHAMAN KHAN          |
|   | 36 KHAN MUHAMMAD ABBAS KHAN            |
|   | 37 KHAN MUHAMMAD AFZAL KHAN            |
|   | 38 KHAN SAHIB MUHAMMAD ATAI KHAN       |
|   | 39 SARDAR MUHAMMAD AURANGZEB KHAN      |
|   | 40 PIR MUHAMMAD KAMRAN                 |
|   | 41 NAWABZADA MUHAMMAD SAID KHAN        |
|   | 42 KHAN MUHAMMAD SAMIN JAN             |
|   | 43 NAWAB MUHAMMAD ZAFFAR KHAN          |
|   | 44 LIEUTENANT M. MUHAMMAD ZAMAN KHAN   |
|   | 45 KHAN NASRULLAH KHAN                 |
|   | 46 RAI SAHIB PARMA NAND                |
|   | 47 M. PIR BAKHSH KHAN                  |
|   | 48 RAI BAHADUR LALA ROCHI RAM KHATTAR  |
|   | 49 KHAN ZARIN KHAN                     |
|   | 50 MIAN ZIAUDDIN                       |
- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 3 THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR NAWAB SIR SAHIBZADA ABDUL QAIYUM KHAN |  |
| 4 THE HON'BLE RAI BAHADUR MEHR CHAND KHANNA                      |  |
| 5 THE HON'BLE KHAN BAHADUR SADULLAH KHAN                         |  |
| <i>Members.</i>  |  |
| 6 KHAN ABDULLAH KHAN   |  |
| 7 KHAN ABDUL AZIZ KHAN   |  |
| 8 KHAN ABDUL GHAFUOR KHAN  |  |
| 9 ARDAB ABDUL GHAFUOR KHAN                                       |  |
| 10 ABDUR RAB KHAN NISHTAR  |  |
| 11 KHAN SAHIB RAJA ABDUR RAHAMAN KHAN                            |  |
| 12 ARDAB ABDUR RAHAMAN KHAN                                      |  |
| 13 KHAN SAHIB ABDUL MAJID KHAN                                   |  |
| 14 S. AJIT SINGH   |  |
| 15 KHAN AKDAR ALI KHAN   |  |
| 16 NAWABZADA ALLAH NAWAZ KHAN                                    |  |
| 17 KHAN AMIR MUHAMMAD KHAN                                       |  |
| 18 KHAN SAHIB SARDAR ASADULLAH KHAN                              |  |
| 19 QALI ATTA ULLAH KHAN  |  |
| 20 KHAN AZIZULLAH KHAN   |  |
| 21 CAPTAIN NAWAB BAZ MUHAMMAD KHAN                               |  |
| 22 LALA BHANJU RAM   |  |
| 23 RAI BAHADUR LALA CHIMAN LAL                                   |  |

## Proceedings of the Council

1st Session—Peshawar—14th & 15th April 1937

### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS DISALLOWED

The first session of the N. W. F. Pr. Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution met at Peshawar on the 14th April 1937 for the administration of oaths. Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid whom the Governor had appointed as Chairman presided.

The Ministerial Party consisted of 16 members of the United Muslim Nationalist Party, while the Opposition comprised 19 Khadi-clad Congressmen, led by Dr. Khan Sahib. Three Muslim Independents and four members of the Democratic Party occupied the centre block. All the 50 members of the House were present.

After the oath-taking ceremony, the speaker ruled that owing to the limitations imposed on his powers, he was unable to admit Dr. Khan Sahib's adjournment motion regarding interference of Government officials in Ministry formation. He



said that his appointment took effect at the time of occupation of the chair. Until then he was not possessed of any powers. According to the Assembly Rules, a written statement on the subject-matter of adjournment motion should be in the hands of the Speaker, half an hour before the Meeting of the Assembly. As half an hour before the sitting he was not the speaker, he was, therefore, unable to take notice of the adjournment motion.

The same ruling was applied to Pir Baksh's (Independent) adjournment motion relating to Lord Zetland's speech.

Pir Baksh had tabled the following adjournment motion :—“This Assembly adjourns its business to discuss a matter of definite urgent public importance, namely the recent statement of Lord Zetland regarding Provincial Autonomy and Responsible Government established under the India Act.

Pir Baksh and Mr. Abdul Rab Nishtar rose on a point of order but the Speaker stuck to his decision, adjourning the House till the next day.

Earlier, the Speaker read the Government message regarding his appointment as Speaker. Congress members and Muslim Independents remained sitting as the Governor's message was read.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

15th. APRIL :—H. E. Sir George Cunningham, Governor of the Frontier Province addressed the Assembly to-day. Congress members and two Independent Muslim members were absent.

After congratulating the members on their success in the recent elections and recording his appreciation of the way in which the candidates for various constituencies assisted the authorities in carrying out polling peacefully and successfully, His Excellency said :—

“Ever since the inception, 10 years ago, of the gigantic task of revising the India Act, I have watched with constant interest the stages by which the Frontier Province has been brought within the ambit of the new Constitution. It is not necessary to recall the reasons why until five years ago the Province was excluded from the Reforms of 1919. More important is the fact that since 1912, it stood constitutionally on a level with other provinces of India. The result, however, has been our experience of constitutional forms and the methods have been shorter here than in most provinces. The people of this province and their representatives start in this respect at a disadvantage. It makes it the more important that they should strive to show that they are capable of working the new Constitution in a way which will bring credit to the North-West Frontier. As we are now bidding farewell to the older order of things, it is fitting that I should here pay a tribute to those on whose shoulders rested the administrative and legislative responsibilities of the last five years for the public service they rendered and for the traditions of dignity and fairdealing which they established in this House.

“Of the great changes wrought by the Constitution I propose to say little. Members of this House appreciate, as clearly as I do, both the weight of their new responsibilities and the scope of their new opportunities. Never before in the history of India have her peoples held in their own hands such power as they have to-day to direct her fortunes. That power is enshrined in the Provincial Legislatures and I earnestly hope that members of this house and those who come after them will endeavour to prove themselves worthy of the confidence thus placed in them and achieve for this Legislature an honoured place among her sister Assemblies in India.

“I do not propose to touch public affairs or any political questions of the day. The business of this session is of a formal character and no legislation has been placed before the House. I, however, offer congratulations to the well-known distinguished member of the House, Hon'ble Malik Khuda Baksh on his election as Speaker and wish to say that I am confident that he will carry out his duties with the same dignity and impartiality which his predecessor in this high office has shown.

“My concern at the moment is directed chiefly to the task which immediately confronts us and to the practical working of the new Constitution. The carrying on of the administration by my Cabinet Ministers is, as members are aware, the first duty imposed upon the Government. The Ministry has been formed and assumed office on April 1. In forming my Council of Ministers, I acted after full and frank discussion with those primarily concerned and in accordance with the Instrument of Instructions which directs me to appoint those persons including so far as practicable members of the important minority communities who will best be in a position collectively to command the confidence of the Legislature. This is my constitutional

duty to carry on the Government of this province in collaboration with whatever party may, from time to time, be in power. I will adhere to that principle without prejudice or favour and trust those who are now or in future placed in executive authority as my Council of Ministers will assist me and guide the progress of this province in the best interests of the people.

"No purpose would be served by my disguising the fact that during the last five years the Governments of which I was a member had been on some occasions in conflict with certain elements in the province now strongly represented in this House. I believe myself that the spirit of antagonism has disappeared from the minds of the vast majority of people. It certainly has vanished from mine and it can find no place in the Constitution. I trust, therefore, that no person or party will doubt my readiness to co-operate with them in the Government of this province, if they are ready, to co-operate with me."

Analysing conception of Party Government, His Excellency said: "The formation of the Cabinet rests upon a conception which is largely not familiar to this Legislature and to most others in India. Party Government in the sense we now know it is something new in the country. For under the late Constitution, with its dual system of government and its official representation in the Legislature, the development of parties in the full parliamentary sense was hardly possible. Under the new conditions, however, parties will have the reality which they did not possess before and it is very necessary, therefore, for those who intend to enter this sphere of public life to have a clear idea both of what the party system gives and what it demands. It provides the only practical way in democratic institutions of carrying out the policy or programme. It provides individual members with the focus of their energies and the means of achieving their personal aspirations. It assures to its members security in the tenure of their seats which, as individuals, they would hardly have the right to expect. But the party system also makes demands. It demands sacrifice, in many cases, of individual desires and ambitions. It demands the cessation of personal feelings which might destroy the unity of the whole body. It demands loyalty to the party and, in particular, to its leader. In no other way can the purpose of the party be achieved, whether that party is founded on a common election programme or by the coalition of separate groups. I say this not with any particular reference to the existing parties in the present House but because these are principles which apply to every party, either now or in the future."

His Excellency said that he felt no doubt of the general desire to make a success of the Constitution. "I feel less certain that it is generally realised that only by co-operation and cohesion can successful working be attained. I would add further that the common purpose of a party can only be effective if it is expressed not in vague formulae but in a concrete programme, whether it be of social or economic reform or improvement in the general system of administration. A further requisite of the successful working of executive government is a reasonable degree of stability and continuity of Cabinet. Constant changes will defeat the whole purpose of the Constitution, for the inevitable result will be that the administration will virtually be carried on by permanent officials of the Government. That is no doubt a feasible method of procedure but it is not a method intended by the Constitution nor is it a method which, either I or members of this House would desire. I would, therefore, emphasise the importance of securing so far as possible a reasonable continuity of the executive. I do not mean on serious issues any party should surrender its principles. From time to time there will inevitably and properly be fundamental disagreements but if the advantage is to be seized, let it be on an issue of real importance. Let not matters, in themselves unessential, be used as an occasion for gaining a transitory triumph or for causing unnecessary embarrassment to a group or individual. Those who do so when important matters affecting the welfare of the province are in issue will rightly forfeit the support or any sympathy of the people they represent."

Concluding, the Governor said, "It remains for me only to wish you well, gentlemen, in the labours you have undertaken. In the first few years of its life, this Assembly will bear a particularly heavy responsibility. For, it will have in its hands the moulding of traditions and the setting of standards which may influence its whole future. I pray that with God's guidance, you may prosper in your work."

The Speaker, *Maitik Khuda Baksh*, then *prorogued* the Assembly,

# A Brief Analysis of the Election Results

Issued by the Political & Economic Information Department  
of the

## All India Congress Committee

The Political and Economic Information Department of the A.I.C.C. intended to bring out a detailed analysis of the election results sometime before the meeting of the All India Convention. Full particulars of the results were therefore called for from the Provincial Congress Committees immediately after the elections, but very few Provinces responded and even those who did so, supplied unsatisfactory information. The original scheme had therefore to be postponed till more comprehensive data was available, but it was considered desirable that something in the nature of a general picture of the success of the Congress in the elections and its present position in the legislatures of different Provinces should be placed before the members of the Convention. With this object in view the following analysis has been attempted. It is based mainly on figures collected from daily newspapers, which do not always give complete particulars, and is therefore not very detailed and might in some cases show a small margin of error. But, good care has been taken to make the figures and percentages given below as accurate as possible and they may be safely taken to present a true picture of the situation.

### Position of the Congress Party in the Legislative Assemblies

The Congress has been able to secure an absolute majority in the Legislative Assemblies of 5 provinces, namely, Madras, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bihar & Orissa. The Congress is the biggest single party in 4 provinces, namely, Bombay, Bengal, Assam and North Western Frontier Province. In the Assemblies of Sind and Punjab the Congress is in a comparatively smaller minority.

The following table shows the number of seats won by the Congress in different Provincial Assemblies and the percentage of votes secured by the Congress.

Province	Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly	Seats won by the Congress	Percentage of total seats won by the Congress	Approximate percentage of the total votes (cast) secured by the Congress
Madras	215	159	74	65
Bihar	152	98	65	75
Bengal	250	54	22	25

21(a)

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

C. P.	112	70	62.5	61
Bombay	175	86	49	56
U. P.	228	134	59	65
Punjab	175	18	10.5	13
N. W. F. P.	50	19	38	—
Sind	60	7	11.5	12
Assam	108	33	31	—
Orissa	60	36	60	—

**Muslim Seats**

The total number of Muslim seats in the Legislative Assemblies of the 11 provinces is 482. Out of this number the Congress contested only 58 and won 26, that is 45 per cent of the seats contested.

**Labour Seats**

The total number of Labour seats in the 11 Provinces is 38. Of these the Congress contested 20 and won 18, that is, 90 percent of the seats contested.

**Landholders' Seats**

The total number of seats reserved for Land-holders in the Assemblies of the 11 Provinces is 37. Out of this number the Congress contested 8 and won 4.

**Commerce and Industry**

The total number of seats reserved for Commerce and Industries in the Assemblies of the 11 Provinces is 56. Of these the Congress contested 8 and won only 3.

**OVERWHELMING VICTORIES OF THE CONGRESS**

It is noteworthy that in all the Provinces Congress candidates have defeated their rivals by very big majorities. This can be seen from the following figures :

**United Provinces**

Number of Congress Candidates	Won by a majority of
1	Over 40000 votes
1	" 32000 "
1	" 30000 "
1	" 25000 "
1	" 24000 "
1	" 23000 "
2	" 22000 "
2	" 20000 "
3	" 19000 "
2	" 18000 "
1	" 17000 "
3	" 16000 "
6	" 15000 "
6	" 14000 "
3	" 13000 "

No. of Congress  
Candidates7  
6  
9  
2  
8  
14  
5  
5  
7  
3  
7  
1

## Won by a majority of

over 12000 votes  
" 11000 "  
" 10000 "  
" 9000 "  
" 8000 "  
" 7000 "  
" 6000 "  
" 5000 "  
" 4000 "  
" 3000 "  
" 2000 "  
" 1000 "

## Madras

No. of Congress  
Candidates1  
1  
1  
3  
1  
1  
1  
2  
2  
2  
1  
5  
3  
3  
4  
6  
3  
6  
5  
6  
9  
10  
8  
7  
4  
5  
10  
5

## Won by the majority of

Over 54000 votes  
" 35000 "  
" 34000 "  
" 32000 "  
" 29000 "  
" 28000 "  
" 25000 "  
" 24000 "  
" 23000 "  
" 20000 "  
" 18000 "  
" 17000 "  
" 16000 "  
" 15000 "  
" 14000 "  
" 13000 "  
" 12000 "  
" 11000 "  
" 10000 "  
" 9000 "  
" 8000 "  
" 7000 "  
" 6000 "  
" 5000 "  
" 4000 "  
" 3000 "  
" 2000 "  
" 1000 "

## Bihar

No. of Congress  
Candidates1  
1

## Won by a majority of

over 56000 votes  
" 23000 "

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

8	over 20000 votes
2	" 19000 "
1	" 17000 "
2	" 15000 "
1	" 14000 "
2	" 13000 "
5	" 12000 "
6	" 11000 "
4	" 10000 "
7	" 8000 "
2	" 7000 "
4	" 6000 "
4	" 5000 "
4	" 4000 "
3	" 3000 "
8	" 2000 "
10	" 1000 "

## Central Provinces

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

1	over 26000 votes
1	" 21000 "
2	" 19000 "
2	" 18000 "
1	" 16000 "
1	" 18000 "
1	" 12000 "
3	" 11000 "
4	" 10000 "
2	" 9000 "
3	" 8000 "
4	" 7000 "
5	" 6000 "
5	" 5000 "
4	" 4000 "
3	" 3000 "
3	" 2000 "
6	" 1000 "

## Bombay

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

1	over 32000 votes
1	" 30000 "
2	" 23000 "
2	" 19000 "
1	" 17000 "

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

1	over 16000 votes
3	" 15000 "
2	" 14000 "
3	" 13000 "
3	" 10000 "
4	" 9000 "
2	" 8000 "
2	" 7000 "
7	" 6000 "
4	" 5000 "
2	" 4000 "
5	" 3000 "
5	" 2000 "
5	" 1000 "

Bengal

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

1	over 64000 votes
1	" 31000 "
2	" 23000 "
1	" 22000 "
1	" 17000 "
1	" 16000 "
4	" 15000 "
3	" 5000 "
1	" 4000 "
1	" 2000 "
2	" 1000 "

Punjab

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority

1	over 15000 votes
1	" 12000 "
1	" 10000 "
2	" 6000 "
3	" 5000 "
1	" 4000 "
3	" 3000 "
2	" 1000 "

Orissa

No. of Congress  
Candidates

Won by a majority of

1	over 12000 votes
2	" 8000 "
2	" 6000 "

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

No. of Congress Candidates	Won by a majority of
4	over 5000 votes
1	" 4000 "
6	" 3000 "
3	" 2000 "
5	" 1000 "

## Position of the Congress Party in the Legislative Councils

The following table shows the number of seats contested and won by the Congress in the Legislative Councils of different provinces :

Province	Total No. of seats in the Legislative Council	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
Madras	46	33	26
Bihar	26	12	8
Bombay	26	15	13
U. P.	52	19	8
Bengal	57	12	9
Assam	23	1	—
	<hr/> 229	<hr/> 92	<hr/> 64

As shown above, of a total of 229 seats in the Legislative Councils of 6 Provinces, only 92 were contested by the Congress and 64 were won, that is, the Congress secured 28 per cent of the total seats and 60 per cent of the seats contested by it.

## PROVINCIAL RESULTS

## Madras Legislative Assembly

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress .

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Madras	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General (Urban and Rural)	116	114	111
Scheduled Casts	90	26	26
Mohamedan (Urban and Rural)	28	9	4
Women's Constituency	8	7	7
Indian Christian	8	7	3
Anglo Indian	2	—	—
European	3	—	—
Backward Tribes	1	1	1
Commerce and Industry	6	4	—
Landholders' Constituency	6	4	—
Labour	6	6	6
University	1	1	1
	<hr/> 215	<hr/> 178	<hr/> 159



The Congress secured approximately 65 per cent of the total votes cast and 74 per cent of the total seats in the Madras Assembly.

As seen from the above table the Congress contested 173 out of 215 and won 159.

In the general constituencies it contested 114 seats out of 116 and won 111.

In the Scheduled Caste constituencies the Congress captured 26 seats out of 30.

The Congress contested 9 out of a total of 28 Mohamedan seats and won 4.

The Congress secured 7 out of 8 seats in the Women's constituencies.

3 out of the 8 seats reserved for Indian Christians were secured by the Congress.

The Congress was able to win the one seat reserved for the Backward Tribes.

The Congress contested 4 out of the 6 seats reserved for land-holders but lost all of them.

The Congress captured all the labour seats and the 1 University seat.

The position of parties in the Madras Legislative Assembly is as follows:

Congress	159
Justice Party	17
Independents	15
People's Party	1
Muslim League	11
Muslim Progressive P.	1
European Commerce	3
Europeans General	3
Madras Planters	1
Nattu Kottai Nagaratharu Association	1
Anglo Indians	3
Southern India Chamber of Commerce	1
<b>Total Strength</b>	<b>215</b>

### MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

No. of seats in the Council	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
General	35	26
Mohamedan	7	—
European	1	—
Indian Christian	3	—
<b>46</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

The Congress secured approximately 58 per cent of the total votes cast and 56.5 per cent of the total seats in Madras Assembly.

The Congress contested 33 seats out of 35 allotted for the General constituencies and won all.

The Governor is entitled to fill not less than 8 and not more than 10 seats in Council.

## BIHAR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Bihar	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General Urban	5	—	5
General Rural	73	2	68
Scheduled Caste	15	9	14
Mohamedan (Urban and Rural)	39	7	5
Women	4	3	3
Anglo Indian	1	—	—
Europeans	2	—	—
Indian Christians	1	—	—
Commerce and Industry	4	—	—
Landholders	4	1	1
Labour	3	3	2
University	1	1	—
	<u>152</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>98</u>

The Congress secured approximately 75 per cent of the total votes cast and 65 per cent of the total seats in Bihar Assembly.

As seen from the above table the Congress contested 107 out of 151 seats and won 98 or 92 per cent of the total seats contested. In the General Urban constituencies the Congress captured all the 5 seats while in the General Rural constituencies the Congress was able to secure 68 out of total of 73 seats.

In the Scheduled Caste constituencies also the Congress achieved remarkable successes by capturing 14 out of 15 seats, 9 being unopposed.

The Congress contested 7 out of a total of 38 Muslim seats and won 5.

The Congress secured 3 out of 4 seats reserved for Women.

The Congress succeeded in winning 2 Labour seats out of 3, and 1 Landholders' Seat.

The position of parties in the Bihar Legislative Assembly is as follows :

Congress	98
Muslim Independents	15
Muslim United	6

Europeans	2
Constitutionals	2
Anglo Indians	1
Indian Christians	1
Loyalists	1
Ahrars	3
No Party	24
<b>Total Strength</b>	<b>152</b>

### BIHAR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Council of Bihar	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General	9	—	—
Mohamedans	4	—	—
European	1	—	—
Seats to be filled by Assembly	12	—	8
	<u>26</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>8</u>
	6	—	8

From the above table it will be seen that the Congress contested 6 out of the 9 general seats but lost all. It contested no seat from the Mohamedan constituencies.

The Congress having an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly was able to secure 8 out of the 12 seats to be filled by the Assembly. The Governor will fill 3 to 4 seats in the Council by nomination.

### BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Bombay	Seats Contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General Constituencies (Urban and Rural)	92	84	3
Mohamedan	29	2	—
Marbattas	7	6	—
Scheduled Caste	15	8	1
Backward Tribes	1	—	—
Indian Christians	3	1	—
Anglo Indian	2	—	—
Europeans	3	—	—
Commerce & Industry	7	1	1
Labour	7	2	2
Landholders	2	—	—
Women General	5	5	2
Women Mohamedan	1	—	—
University	1	1	—
	<u>175</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>8</u>
			<u>86</u>

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

The Congress secured about 56 per cent of the total votes cast, and won 49 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

The above table shows that the Congress contested 84 out of 92 seats in the general constituencies and won 69.

The Congress contested only two seats in the Muslim constituencies and lost both. Of the Scheduled Caste constituencies the Congress contested 8 out of 15 seats and won 4, while for the Maratha seats the Congress put up 6 candidates of whom 4 were successful. The Congress did not contest the Backward Tribe seat.

One Indian Christian seat was contested by the Congress but lost.

Out of the 7 seats reserved for Commerce and Industry the Congress secured one. Of the seven Labour seats two were won by the Congress.

The Congress succeeded in winning all the 5 general seats for Women while the one seat reserved for Mohamedan Woman was not contested. The one seat reserved for the University was also secured by the Congress. Position of the parties in the Bombay Legislative Assembly is as follows :

Congress	86
Muslim League	20
Independent Muslims	10
Democratic Swaraj Party	5
Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians	7
Independents (including Ambed- kar's Party and non-Brahmin)	41
Labour	5
Nationalist	1
	<hr/>
Total Strength	175

## BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Council of Bombay	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General Urban 4	2	—	2
General Rural 16	13	—	11
Mohamedan 5	—	—	—
European 1	—	—	—
	<hr/>		<hr/>
26	15		13

The Congress secured 38 per cent of the total votes cast and captured 50 per cent of the total seats in the House.

From the above analysis it will be seen that out of 20 seats 15 seats were contested by the Congress in the General Constituencies and 13 were won. No seat was contested in Mohamedan and European constituencies.

Party position in the Bombay Legislative Council is as follows :

Congress	13
Independent	1
Democratic Swaraj Party	2
Muslim League	2
Liberal	1
European	1
	<hr/>
Total	26

Three or four members have to be nominated by the Governor. Then the total strength of the House will be of 29 or 30 seats.

### UNITED PROVINCES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the U. P.	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress	
General Urban (Women included)	14	14	1	14
General Rural (Women included)	110	109	2	100
Scheduled Castes (Urban)	4	4	—	4
Scheduled Castes (Rural)	16	13	2	12
Muslim Urban	13	2	—	—
Muslim Rural	53	7	—	—
Labour	3	3	—	3
Landholders	6	—	—	—
Indian Christians	2	—	—	—
Anglo Indians	1	—	—	—
Europeans	2	—	—	—
European Commerce	2	—	—	—
Indian Commerce	1	—	—	—
University	1	1	—	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	228	153	5	134

The Congress secured approximately 65 per cent of the total number of votes cast and won 59 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

From the above table it will be seen that the Congress won all the 14 seats in the General Urban Constituencies while in the General Rural Constituencies, it contested 109 out of 110 seats and succeeded in capturing 100 seats. In the Scheduled Caste Constituencies the Congress contested 17 out of 20 seats and captured 16 seats.

In the Muslim constituencies the Congress contested 9 out of 66 seats and lost all. In the Special Labour constituencies the Congress secured all the 3 seats. The Congress did not put up any candidates

from the Special constitutencies of Landholders, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indian and Commerce. It contested and won the University seat Congress captured all the four seats reserved for Women.

The position of different parties in the U. P. Legislative Assembly is as follows :

1. Congress	134
2. Muslim League	27
3. National Agricultural Party	16
4. Independent Muslims	30
5. Independent Hindus	10
6. Rest	11

Total strength— 228

### UNITED PROVINCES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and Won by the Congress

	Total No. of seats in the Legislative Council	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
General	34	19	8
Mahomedan	17	—	—
European	1	—	—
	<u>52</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>8</u>

The Congress contested 19 out of 34 seats in the General constituencies and captured 8 seats. The Congress contested no seat either from the Mohamedan or European constituencies.

Position of the Parties in the U. P. Legislative Council is as follows

Congress	8
Independents (Muslims and Hindus)	39
Nationalist: Agricultural Party	4
European	1

Total strength— 52

The Governor will nominate 6 to 8 members.

### BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Bengal	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General	48		43
Scheduled Caste	30		6
Mohammedan	117	—	—
Anglo Indian	3	—	—
European	11	—	—

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Indian Christian	2	—	—
Commerce	19	—	—
Landholders	5	—	—
Labour	8	5	5
University	2	—	—
Women	5	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	250	70	54

The Congress secured roughly 25 per cent of the total votes cast and 22 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

The above table shows that the Congress captured 43 out of 48 seats in the General constituencies. Of the 30 Scheduled Caste seats 13 were contested by the Congress and 7 were won.

### BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Total seats in the Bengal Legislative Council	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
General	10	3
Mohamedan	17	—
Europeans	3	—
To be elected by L. Assembly	27	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	57	9

The Governor is empowered to fill 6 to 8 seats by nomination.

The above table will show that the Congress was able to secure 9 seats of a total of 57 seats.

### CENTRAL PROVINCES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the C. P.	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
General Urban	9	9
General Rural	56	49
Scheduled Caste	19	5
Mohamedan Urban	2	—
Mohamedan Rural	12	—
Landholder	3	2
Labour	2	1
Commerce	2	1
Women	3	3
Backward Tribes	1	—
European	1	—
Anglo Indian	1	—
University	1	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	112	70

The Congress secured approximately 61 per cent of the total votes cast and 62.5 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

It will be seen from the above table that the Congress contested 85 out of 112 seats and won 70. In the General Urban constituencies the Congress contested and won all the 9 seats, and in the General Rural constituencies the Congress succeeded in capturing 49 out of 56 seats. In the Scheduled Caste Constituencies the Congress contested 9 out of 19 seats and won 5. Two Mohamedan seats were contested by the Congress but both were lost. The Congress won 1 out of the 2 Labour seats and 2 out of the 3 Landholders seats. It captured all the three seats reserved for Women.

The position of the parties in the C. P. Legislative Assembly is as follows :—

Congress	70
Mohamedans	14
Non-Brahmins	3
Ambedkarites	4
Nationalists	2
Others	19

Total Strength 112

### PUNJAB LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab	Seats won by the Congress	Total seats contested
General	10	42
Sikh	4	31
Muslim	2	84
Anglo Indian	—	1
European	—	1
Indian Christian	—	2
Commerce	—	1
Landholders	—	5
University	—	1
Labour	—	3
Women	2	4
	18	175

The Congress secured 13 per cent of total votes cast and captured 10.5 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

### N. W. F. PROVINCE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the N. W. F. Provinces	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
Muslim	29	36



Sikh	3		
General	9	8	4
Landholders	2	—	—
	<hr/> 50	<hr/> 37	<hr/> 19

The Congress secured 38 p. c. of the total seats in the Assembly.

As seen from the above table the Congress contested 37 out of a total of 50 seats and won 19. In the Muslim constituencies the Congress contested 29 seats and won 15, while in the General constituencies, the Congress contested 8 seats and was able to capture 4.

The position of the parties in the North Western Frontier Province is as follows :

Congress	19
Hindu Sikh Nationalist	7
Muslim Independent Party	2
Independent Muslims	21
Independent Hindus	1
	<hr/>
Total Strength	50

#### ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. of seats in the Assembly	Seats contested by the Congress	Seats won by the Congress
60	43	36

The Congress secured 60 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly. The position of the Parties in the Legislative Assembly is as follows :

Congress	36
United Party	5
National Party	4
Independents	11
Nominated	4
	<hr/>
Total Strength	60

#### ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

For the Assam Legislative Assembly the Congress contested only 41 seats out of 108 and secured 33 seats. Position of parties in the Assembly is as follows .

Congress	33
Independent Hindus	10
Muslim Proja Party	1
United Peoples Party	3
Assam Valley Muslim	5
Surma Valley "	5
Europeans	9
Backwards tribes	4
Labour	4
Independent Muslim	14

## ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

Others	20
Total strength	108

## ASSAM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

There are 22 seats in the Assam Legislative Council out of which 3 to 4 are to be filled by the Governor by nomination. The Congress contested only one, which it lost.

## SIND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Table showing No. of seats contested and won by the Congress.

Total No. seats in the Legislative Assembly of Sind	Seats contested by the Congress	Unopposed Congress Returns	Seats won by the Congress
General Urban	8	—	3
General Rural	15	—	2
Muslim Urban	2	—	—
Muslim Rural	31	—	—
Women	2	1	1
Europeans	2	—	—
Commerce	2	1	1
Landholder	2	—	—
Labour	1	—	—
	60	13	2
		7	

The Congress secured roughly 12 per cent of the total votes cast and 12 per cent of the total seats in the Assembly.

The above table shows that the Congress contested 3 seats from the General Urban constituencies. In the General Rural Constituencies the Congress contested 8 out of 15 seats and won only two.

The Congress did not contest any Muslim seat.

The Congress secured one of the two seats reserved for Commerce.

The position of parties in the Assembly is as follows :

United Party	28
Congress	7
Azad Party	3
Muslim Party	3
Hindu Sabha	4
Independents	17
Europeans	3
	60

## UNITED PROVINCES

## Bye-Elections in Muslim Rural

Total number of seats vacant	6	Seats contested	6	Seats won	2, the one uncontested, & the other with a majority of about five thousand votes.
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Proceedings of  
The Working Committee  
The All India Congress Committee  
and  
The National Convention  
of  
The Indian National Congress

Members of the Working Committee, All India  
Congress Committee and Provincial Office-bearers of

# The Indian National Congress

1937

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11. Shri Narendra Dev
12. Shri Shankarrao D. Deo
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22. Shri Kala Venkatarao
23. Shri Alluri Satyanarayana
24. Shri. Kalluri Subbarao
25. Shri. Gudlavalleti Subbarao
26. Shri. Karunakaram Subbarao

**Assam—4**

1. Shri Bishnuram Medhi
2. Shri Kuladhar Chaliha
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4. Shri Lladhar Baruah

**Bengal—45**

1. Shri Abala Kanta Gupta
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3. Moulvi Ashrafuddin Ahmed Choudhury
4. Shri. Kriahnabinode Roy
5. Shri Debendra Nath Sen
6. Shri Nagendra Nath Ghosh
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10. Shri Purshottam Ray
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19. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose
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42. Shri Hemanta Kumar Bose
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**Bihar—34**

1. Syt. Shri Krishna Singh
2. " Anugrah Narayan Sinha
3. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
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5. " Sarangdhar Sinha
6. " Both Narayan Misra
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22. Syt. Mathura Prasad
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32. Syt. Shivashankar Singh
33. Syt. Ramchirshan Singh
34. Syt. Bapu Bahari Varma

**Bombay—4**

1. Shri K. P. Nariman
2. Syt. Bhulakshmi J. Desai
3. Shri M. R. Masani
4. Shri S. K. Patil

**Burma—4**

1. Shri Ganga Singh
2. " B. K. Dadachanji
3. " Rameshnath Gowtum
4. " N. B. Jasani

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1. Shri Pearay Lal Sharma
2. " Indra
3. " Satyawati, Meerut
4. " Satyawati, Delhi
5. " Jugal Kishore Khanna

**Gujarat—12**

1. Shri Morarji R. Desai
2. " Kanaiyalal N. Desai
3. " Chandulal M. Desai
4. " Gopaldas A. D-sai
5. " Laxmidas M. Shrikant
6. " Kamalabankar L. Pandya
7. " Hariprasad P. Mehta
8. " Bhaktilaxmi A. Desai
9. " Mridulabhai A. Sarabhai
10. Shri Dahyabhai Manordas Patel
11. " Ramray Mohanray Munshi
12. " Goculdas Dwarikadas Talati

**Karnatak—16**

1. Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande
2. " Narayanrao Joshi
3. " Jeevaji Venkatesh Yalagi
4. " Mahadevappa Shivappa Mend-  
gudli
5. Shri Balakrishna R. Sonthanakar
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13. " B. N. Gupte
14. Shrimati Kamala Devi
15. Shri U. Srinivas Mallya
16. Shri M. N. Baidé

**Kerala—4**

1. Shri A. K. Pillai
2. " K. Raman Menon
3. " S. K. Kombrabail
4. " A. V. Kattimala Amma

**Maharashtra—15**

1. Shri Ravishanker Shukla
2. Thakur Pyarelalisingh
3. Seth bhivdas Daga
4. Mahant Laxmi Narayandas
5. Shri Dwarikprasad Misra
6. Seth Govindias
7. Shri Durgashanker Mehta
8. " Randaman Singh
9. " Kamtaprasad Babelé
10. Shri Makhaniál Chaturvedi
11. Sardar Amarsingh
12. Thakur Chhedulal
13. Cap. Lal Avdheshpratsapsingh
14. Shri Syed Ahmad
15. Dr. George Da Silva

**Maharashtra—18**

1. Shri A. S. Patwardhan
2. Shri G. V. Patwardhan
3. Shri Dhanaji Nana Chodhury

4. Shri Purshottam Kanji
5. Shri Ramnikrai Mehta
6. Shri Rambhau Bhoge
7. Shri V. V. Kirtane
8. Shri S. V. Thakur
9. " S. M. Joshi
10. " D. K. Kunte
11. " Govindlal Shivlal
12. " S. D. Deo
13. " N. V. Gadgil
14. " P. H. Patwardhan
15. " B. C. Lagu
16. " Atmaram Nana Patil
17. " V. J. Takte
18. " S. K. Bhawe

**Nagpur—4**

1. Dr. Narayan Bhasker Khare
2. Seth Jammaal Bajaj
3. Shrimati Anasuyabai Kale
4. Seth Khushalchand Khajanchi

**N. W. P.—4**

1. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan
2. Khan Mohammad Raza Khan
3. Khan Arbab Abdul Ghaffoor Khan
4. Sardar Ram Singh

**Punjab—18**

1. Dr. Satyapal
2. Lala Duni Chand
3. Master Nand Lal
4. Lala Aobint Ram
5. Shri Virendra
6. Lala Das Raj Mahajan
7. S. Sardul Singh Caveeshar
8. Shri Bagnubansh Singh Chopra
9. Sardar Sardul Singh
10. Lala Shamlal
11. S. Gopal Singh Qomi
12. Lala Bhaat Ram Chhanna
13. Master Mota Singh Anandpuri

**Sindh—4**

1. Dr. Choitram P. Gidwani
2. Shri Jaramdas Daolatram
3. Shri R. K. Sidhwa
4. Shri Pararam V. Sahilramani

**Tamil Nad—28**

1. Shri S. Satsamrathi
2. " V. Abdul Ghaffoor
3. " P. Ramaswami Reddiar
4. " M. Bhakthavatsalam
5. " T. S. Avanesalingam
6. " S. Kumaraj Pandiyan
7. " K. Krishnamoorthy
8. " Royya Chokkingam
9. " C. N. Muthuranga Madalliar
10. " K. Bhashyam
11. " P. S. Kumarasami Raja
12. " C. N. Uppalartnam
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14. " K. P. Yagneswaro Sarma
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21. " J. Natesan
22. " N. M. H. Subbaraman
23. " M. Alwar
24. " Madurai Mitran N. Subramaniam
25. " T. S. Sasivarna Thevar
26. " George Joseph
27. " K. Santanam
28. " Ramaachandra Reddiar

**United Provinces—33**

1. Shri Balkrishna Sharma
2. " B. N. Sanval
3. " Malkhan Singh
4. " Purshottamdas Tandon
5. " Jitendranath Towari
6. " Uma Nehru
7. " Vishambhar Dayal Tripathi
8. " Raghunath Sahai Shukla
9. " Rafi Ahmad Kidwai
10. " Sampurnanand
11. " Narendra Dev
12. " Brij Behari Mohoratra
13. " Musaffar Hussain
14. " Gopinath Singh
15. " Babu Raghava Das
16. " M. N. Roy
17. " Khurshedlal
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25. " Vijaylakshmi Pandit
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28. " Govind Sahai
29. " Shyama Charan Shastri
30. " Gouri Shacker Misra
31. Shri Hindabasini Prasad
32. " Bangopal
33. " Hakim Brijlal Varma

**Utkal—4**

1. Shri Nilkantha Das
2. " Bhagirathi Mahapatra
3. " Nabakrishna Chowdhary
4. " Acharya Harihar Das

**Vidarbha—4**

1. Shri M. S. Aney
2. " P. B. Gole
3. " Ramrao Anand Rao Deshmukh
4. Dr. S. S. Kulkarni

**Provincial Office-bearers**

1. AJMER OFFICE—Katchery Road, Ajmer

President : Prof. Gokul Lal Asawa

**Secretaries :**

- (1) Shri Bishambar Nath Bhargava
- (1) " Balkrishna Garg

2. **ANDHRA OFFICE**—50 Godown Street, G. T., Madras  
*President* : Shri T. Prakasam  
*General Secretary* : Shri B. Sambamurty  
*Treasurer* : Shri K. Nageshwar Rao
3. **ASSAM OFFICE**—Gonhati  
*President* : Shri Bishnuram Medhi  
*General Secretary* : Shri Siddhinath Sarma  
*Treasurer* : Dr. Hari Krishna Das
4. **BIHAR OFFICE**—Sadaqat Ashram, Dighaghat, Patna  
*President* : Shri Rajendra Prasad  
*General Secretary* : Shri Anugrah Narayan Singh
5. **BENGAL OFFICE**—38-3 Wellington Street, Calcutta  
*President* : Shri Subhas Chandra Bose  
*Secretary* : " Kamal Krishna Ray  
*Treasurer* : " Amar Krishna Ghosh
6. **BOMBAY OFFICE**—Congress House, Vithalbhai Patel Road, Bombay 4  
*President* : Shri K. F. Nariman  
*General Secretaries* :  
 (1) Shri S. K. Patil  
 (2) " Ganpatishanker Desai  
*Treasurer* : Shri L. S. Patel
7. **BURMA OFFICE**—174-36th Street, Rangoon  
*President* : Shri Ganga Singh  
*Secretary* : " Ramesh Nath Goutam  
*Treasurer* : " Mohanlal Kalidas
8. **DELHI OFFICE**—Chandni Chowk, Delhi  
*President* : Shri Indra  
*General Secretary* : Shri Jugal Kishore Khanna
9. **GUJARAT OFFICE**—Congress House, Bhadra, Ahmedabad  
*President* : Shri Vallabhbhai Patel  
*Secretaries* :  
 (1) Shri Morarji R. Desai  
 (2) " Bhogilal Dhirajram Lala
10. **KARNATAK OFFICE**—Dharwar  
*President* : Shri S. K. Hosmani  
*General Secretary* : Shri R. S. Hukariker  
*Treasurer* : Dr. V. R. Hailgol
11. **KERALA OFFICE**—Mathrubhuzhi Building, Calicut (Madras Presy)  
*General Secretary* : Shri K. Raman Menon
12. **MAHARASHTRA OFFICE**—Gopalbagh, Jubbulpore  
*President* : Shri Avadhesh Pratap Singh

*General Secretaries* :

- (1) Shri D. K. Mehta  
 (2) " Rajbhan Singh Tiwari  
*Treasurer* : Shri Govind Das
13. **MAHARASHTRA OFFICE**—291 Shanwar Peth, Poona City  
*President* : Shri Shanker Rao Deo  
*Secretaries* :  
 (1) Shri G. A. Deshpande  
 (2) " S. K. Bhawe  
*Treasurer* : Dr. B. G. Laju.
14. **NAGPUR OFFICE**—Tilak Vidyalaya, Dhantoli, Nagpur  
*President* : Dr. N. B. Khare  
*Secretary* : Shri E. S. Patwardhan  
*Treasurer* : Dr. B. P. Dalvi Itwari
15. **N. W. F. OFFICE**—(Under ban)
16. **PUNJAB OFFICE**—Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore  
*President* : Dr. Satyapal  
*General Secretary* : Master Raja Ram  
*Treasurer* : L. Pindi Das
17. **SINDH OFFICE**—Swaraj Bhawan, Ram Chandra Temple Road, Katan Talao, Karachi  
*President* : Dr. Choithram  
*Secretary* : Shri Parasram V. Tahilramani  
*Treasurer* : " Motiram A. K.
18. **TAMIL NAD OFFICE**—Congress House, Mount Road, Madras  
*President* : Shri C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar  
*Secretaries* :  
 (1) Shri A. Satyamurthi  
 (2) " C. P. Subbayya Mudaliar  
*Treasurer* : Shri P. S. Kumaraswami Raja
19. **U. P. OFFICE**—14-B, Hewitt Road, Lucknow  
*President* : Shri Narendra Dev  
*Secretaries* :  
 (1) Shri Sampurnanand  
 (2) " Kesho. Deo Malaviya  
 (3) " Mohanlal Gantam  
 (4) " Damodar Swarup Seth  
*Treasurer* : Shri Sri Prakasa
20. **UTKAL OFFICE**—Bakharabad, P. O. Chandni Chowk, Cuttack  
*President* : Shri Harekrishna Mahatab  
*Secretary* : " Nabakrishna Chandhury  
*Treasurer* : " Shri Nitranand Kanungo
21. **VIDARHIA OFFICE**—Rajasthan Building, Akola  
*President* : Shri Brijlal Biyant  
*Secretary* : Shrimati Durgabai Joshi

# The Working Committee Proceedings

Wardha—February 27 & 28 and March 1, 1937

A meeting of the Working Committee was held on February 27, 28 and March 1, at Wardha. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. Other members present were Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, Shris Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Jairamdas Daulatram, Bhulabhai Desai, Jarnalal Bajaj, Govind Ballabh Pant, Narendra Dev, Shankarrao Doo, Achyut Patwardhan, and J. B. Kripalani.

Shris Rajagopalchari, Rukmini Lakshminipati, Jaiprakash Narayan, Mridula Sarabhai and Dr. Khan Sahab attended the meeting by special invitation. Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was also invited but he could not attend owing to sudden indisposition.

Shri M. K. Gandhi was present throughout the deliberations on February 27 and 28.

The minutes of the last two meetings held immediately before and after the Faizpur session, already circulated, were confirmed.

## WORKING COMMITTEE, A. I. O. C. AND THE CONVENTION MEETINGS

The following dates were fixed for the Working Committee, the All India Congress Committee and the Convention Meetings at Delhi :

Working Committee	March 15, 16
All India Congress Committee	March 17, 18
Convention	March 19, 20

It was decided that only such persons as are mentioned in the Congress resolution be invited to the Convention in Delhi, that is, members of the A. I. O. C. and Congress members of the various legislatures in India. It was further resolved that the Congress President should, *ex-officio*, preside over the Convention.

The Committee passed the following resolutions :

### 1. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NATION

The Working Committee congratulates the nation on its wonderful response to the call of the Congress during the recent elections, demonstrating the adherence of the masses to Congress policy, and their firm determination to combat the new Constitution and end it, and by means of a Constituent Assembly to establish an independent and democratic State and remove the many burdens under which all sections of our people suffer. The Committee realises the high responsibility with which the nation has charged it, and it calls upon the Congress organisation and, in particular, the newly elected Congress members of the Legislatures to remember always this trust and responsibility, to uphold Congress ideals and principles, to be true to the faith of the people, and to labour unceasingly as soldiers of Swaraj for the freedom of the motherland and the emancipation of her suffering and exploited millions.

### 2. CONGRATULATIONS TO PEOPLE OF MIDNAPORE AND OTHER AREAS

The Working Committee expresses its special satisfaction at the response of the people and the voters to the call of the Congress in areas, such as the North-West Frontier Province and certain parts of Bengal where the Government has been, and is, pursuing a policy of intensive repression and preventing normal public activities by banning Congress Committees and imposing laws and rules and regulations interfering even with the day to day personal lives and business of the people. In particular, the Committee congratulates the people of Midnapore District in Bengal, who, in spite of the most extra-ordinary repression, have shown their love for freedom and confidence in the Congress policy and organisation, which is banned in their district, by electing Congress candidates by overwhelming majorities, in the case of the Central Midnapore rural constituency the majority being the stupendous record one of 6432. This great victory of the Congress is a striking proof of the utter failure of the Government's policy of repression and of keeping Bengal's young men



and women in internment and detention without trial, and is evidence of the people's utter condemnation of this policy.

### 3. OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

As doubts have been raised regarding the propriety of taking oath of allegiance, the Working Committee wishes to declare that the taking of that oath, in order to enable participation in the work of the Legislatures, in no way lessens or varies the demand for independence, and every Congress member stands by that objective and has to work to that end. The primary allegiance of all Congress-men, as well as all other Indians, is to the Indian people, and the oath of allegiance does not affect in any way this primary duty and allegiance.

### 4. EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES OF CONGRESS MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURES

The Working Committee desires to remind all Congress members of the provincial Assemblies that their sphere of activities is not confined to the legislatures but includes their constituencies. All effective work in the legislatures must have the sanction of the people behind it and, therefore, all work in the legislatures must be co-ordinated with Congress activity outside. Every Congress member must therefore keep in constant touch with the people of his constituency, and should consult them and report to them from time to time, and give such help to them as he can in their day to day struggles. He should further keep in touch with the primary and other local Congress Committees in his constituency and share the responsibility of keeping the Congress organisation in that area in efficient working condition and in touch with the masses it seeks to represent.

The Congress Parliamentary party in each province should consult the Provincial Congress Committee concerned and report to it from time to time.

### 5. MASS CONTACTS

In view of the great awakening of the masses during the election campaign and their interest in Congress work and desire to participate in it, the Working Committee wishes to impress upon all Provincial and local Committees the necessity of increasing the association of the masses with the Congress organisation in accordance with the directions of the Faizpur resolution. The Committees and organisations that were built up in rural areas for election purposes should be kept functioning and converted into local branches of the Congress, so that primary Committees should exist in as large number of villages as possible.

### 6. CONGRESS POLICY IN THE LEGISLATURES

The work of the Congress members of the Provincial legislatures shall be governed by the following policy:

(i) The Congress has entered the legislatures not to co-operate with the new Constitution or the Government but to combat the Act and the policy underlying it, as this Act and policy are intended to tighten the hold of British Imperialism on India and to continue the exploitation of the Indian people. The Congress adheres to its general and basic policy of non-co-operation with the apparatus of British Imperialism except in so far as circumstances may require a variation.

(ii) The objective of the Congress is *purna swaraj* or complete independence and to that end all its activities are directed. The Congress stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the Government is under their effective control. Such a State can only be created by the Indian people themselves, and the Congress has therefore insisted on a Constituent Assembly, elected by adult franchise, to determine the Constitution of the country. The Constituent Assembly can only come into existence when the Indian people have developed sufficient power and sanction to shape their destiny without external interference.

(iii) The immediate objective of the Congress in the legislatures is to fight the new Constitution, to resist the introduction and working of the Federal part of the Act, and to lay stress on the nation's demand for a Constituent Assembly. Congress members of the legislatures have been directed by the Faizpur Congress to take the earliest opportunity to put forward in the new Assemblies this demand for a Constituent Assembly and to support it by mass agitation outside.

(iv) Congress members of the legislatures must remember the Congress policy of not assisting or cooperating with any function or activity, calculated to enhance the power or prestige of British Imperialism in India. Ceremonial, official, or social functions of this kind must therefore be avoided and no Congress member should

take part in them. In doubtful cases individual members should not take any action themselves but should refer to the Congress party in the Assembly and should abide by its decision.

(v) No Congress members of the legislatures may accept a title given by the British Government.

(vi) The Congress Party in each provincial Assembly must act as a disciplined body the leaders of which will represent the Party in any conversations with the Government and other groups. Individual members shall have no official contacts with Government other than those resulting from their duties as members, and such as may be expressly authorised by the Party.

(vii) Members will be expected to be in their places in the Assemblies during the session and when the party is attending. There should be no absence except for leave taken and cause shown.

(viii) All Congress members of the legislatures shall be dressed in khadi.

(ix) Congress parties in the Provincial Assemblies must not enter into any alliances with other groups in the Assembly without the permission of the Working Committee.

(x) Any member of the Provincial Legislatures not elected on behalf of the Congress but willing to take the Congress pledge and abide by Congress principles and discipline may be taken into the Congress party in that legislature, if the Party consider his admission desirable. But no person against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the Congress may be accepted without the permission of the Working Committee.

(xi) Congress members should press for the carrying out of the Congress programme as enunciated in the Election Manifesto and the Congress agrarian resolution. In particular they should work for :

1. A substantial reduction in rent and revenue.
2. Assessment of income-tax, on a progressive scale, on agricultural incomes, subject to a prescribed minimum.
3. Fixity of tenure.
4. Relief from the burden of rural debt and arrears of rent and revenue.
5. Repeal of all repressive laws.
6. Release of political prisoners, internees and detenus.
7. Restoration of lands and property confiscated or sold by Government during Civil Disobedience Movements.
8. Eight hours day for industrial workers, without reduction of pay. Living wage.
9. Prohibition of intoxicating liquor and drugs.
10. Unemployment relief.
11. Reduction of high salaries, allowances, and cost of administration of Government.

(xii) Under the existing Act with all its safeguards and special powers in the hands of the Viceroy or the Governor, and its protection of the services, deadlocks are inevitable. They should not be avoided when they occur while pursuing Congress policy.

(xiii) Congress members in the Provincial Assemblies should further give expression to certain important demands of all India application which may not be given effect to in the provincial Assemblies, such as, substantial reduction of the military expenditure as well as of the higher civil services; complete national control over trade and tariffs and currency; repeal of all India repressive legislation; freedom of speech, press and association; opposition to war preparations, credits and loans.

(xiv) Congress members in the Assemblies must always endeavour to mobilise public opinion in their constituencies for the particular demand they are putting forward in the legislatures. Work in the legislatures should thus be co-ordinated with activity outside and mass movements built up in support of those demands and of Congress policy in general.

#### 7. MINISTRIES

In regard to the acceptance or non-acceptance of ministries the Working Committee will make its recommendations to the A. I. C. C. after it has received the recommendations of provincial and local committees.

#### 8. ANTI-CONSTITUTION DAY—APRIL 1

The Working Committee draws the attention of the nation to the resolution

of the Faizpur Congress calling for a nation-wide *hartal* or general strike on April 1, the day on which the new Constitution is to be inaugurated. The Committee trusts that the nation will respond to this call in full measure in order to demonstrate the will of the Indian people to resist the imposition of this Constitution. It calls upon the Provincial and local Committees to work to this end and to invite the co-operation for this purpose of other organisations and groups.

#### DISCIPLINARY ACTION

There was a discussion about the disciplinary action taken at the time of the recent elections to the Provincial legislatures. It was decided that the President was to review the cases. If he thought necessary he may send any case for the consideration of the Working Committee.

Shri S. A. Dange's resignation from the membership of the All-India Committee conveyed in his letter to the President was accepted. The Maharashtra P. C. C. was to fill up the vacancy according to the Constitution.

#### CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

The time for submitting the report of the Constitution Committee appointed at Faizpur was extended from April 15 to May 15.

#### JALLIANWALA BAGH

A Committee consisting of Shris Bhulabhai Desai and Govind Ballabh Pant was appointed to consider and report what steps be taken in regard to the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Fund and properties.

## The All India Congress Committee Proceedings

### Delhi—March 17th. & 18th., 1937

A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held at Ansari Nagar at Delhi on the 17th. & 18th. March 1937. (For detailed proceedings, See posts).

215 members representing all the provinces were present. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru presided.

The minutes of the last meeting held at Faizpur on 25th and 29th December, 1936 already circulated were confirmed.

#### The New Constitution and Congress Policy

The main resolution on "The New Constitution and Congress Policy," recommended by the Working Committee was moved by Sri Rajendra Prasad and seconded by Sri Vallabhbhai Patel. There were several amendments. The principal amendment moved by Shri Jayprakash Narayan advised non-acceptance of ministerial offices in the provinces in place of the conditional acceptance recommended by the Working Committee.

There was a lengthy debate for two days. About 30 speakers besides the mover took part in it.

The principal amendment by Shri Jayprakash Narayan was defeated by 78 to 135 votes. Other amendments were lost by overwhelming majorities and the resolution was passed by 127 to 70 votes.

#### TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

The All India Congress Committee records its high appreciation of the magnificent response of the country to the call of the Congress during the recent elections and the approval by the electorate of the Congress policy and programme. The Congress entered these elections with its objective of independence and its total rejection of the New Constitution, and the demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame India's constitution. The declared Congress policy was to combat the New Act and end it. The electorate has, in overwhelming measure, set its seal on this policy and programme and the New Act therefore stands condemned and utterly rejected by the people through the self-same democratic process which had been evoked by the British Government, and the people have further declared that they desire to frame their own constitution, based on a national independence, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise. This Committee

therefore demands, on behalf of the people of India, that the New Constitution be withdrawn.

In the event of the British Government still persisting with the New Constitution, in defiance of the declared will of the people, the All India Congress Committee desires to impress upon all Congress members of the legislatures that their work inside and outside the legislatures must be based on the fundamental Congress policy of combating the New Constitution and seeking to end it, a policy on the basis of which they sought the suffrage of the electorate and won their overwhelming victory in the elections. That policy must inevitably lead to dead-locks with the British Government and bring out still further the inherent antagonism between British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism, and expose the autocratic and undemocratic nature of the New Constitution.

The All India Congress Committee endorses and confirms the resolutions of the Working Committee passed at Wardha on February 27 and 28, 1937 on the extra-parliamentary activities of Congress members of legislatures, mass contacts, and the Congress policy in the legislatures, and calls upon all Congressmen in the legislatures outside to work in accordance with the directions contained in them.

And on the pending question of office acceptance, and in pursuance of the policy summed up in the foregoing paragraphs, the All India Congress Committee authorises and permits the acceptance of offices in provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislature, provided the ministries shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to constitutional activities.

#### ACCOUNTS

The last year's audited accounts were placed before the committee. As they had been received a couple of days before the meeting they could not be printed and distributed. It was therefore decided that they may be printed and distributed among the members and passed at the next meeting.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

Most of the non-official resolutions of which notice had been given were covered by the main resolution. The three that were not so covered were: (1) Shree Pattabhi Sitaramayya's about States People, (2) Shri Sibnath Banerji's about Jute Mill strike in Calcutta and (3) Deportation of Political Prisoners to Andamans by Sri Sardul Singh and others. The first of these was referred to the Constitution Committee and the latter two to the next Working Committee meeting.

#### SRI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE'S RELEASE\*

On news being received of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's release from detention, the A. I. C. C. directed the President to convey to him their affectionate welcome on his release and their good wishes for his early recovery.

## The Working Committee Proceedings

### Delhi—15th. to 22nd. March, 1937

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at the Harijan Colony, Delhi from 15th to 22nd March, 1937. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. All the members of the Committee with the exception of Sri Shankarrao Deo were present.

Shris Rajagopalachari, Rukmini Lakshmi pati, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Jaiprakash Narayan and Mirdula Sarabhai attended the meeting by special invitations. Shris Madan Mohan Malaviya and Purushottamdas Tandon were also invited to join in the deliberations on March 16.

Shri M. K. Gandhi was present throughout the deliberations.

Leaders of the Congress parties in the Provincial Legislatures were invited to the meeting on March 21 and 22, to discuss with the Committee the full implications of the resolution on "The New Constitution and Congress Policy" passed by the A. I. C. C. on March 18.

\*Note—Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was released unconditionally in shattered health on the evening of March 17, 1937 after a continued detention and exile of more than five years.

The minutes of the last meeting held at Wardha from February 27 to March 1 were confirmed.

The following resolutions were passed :-

**1. THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND CONGRESS POLICY**

(For the text of the resolution which was passed by the A. I. C. C. without any alteration see the proceedings of the A. I. C. C. pages 177).

**2. PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE\***

The Working Committee appoints a Parliamentary Sub-committee of the following members to be in close and constant touch with the work of the Congress Parties in all the legislatures in the provinces, to advise them in all their activities and to take necessary action in any case of emergency :-

Manlana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Rajendra Prasad.

**3. MINISTERIAL OFFICE AND MEMBERSHIP OF CONGRESS**

In the event of any offices of ministers being accepted by Congressmen, the Working Committee considers it advisable that such ministers should not continue to remain members of Congress Executive Committees. But they may retain membership of general bodies like the A. I. C. C. and P. C. C.

**4. PLEDGE**

The following pledge was drawn up for non-Congress members of the legislature who desired to join the Congress party in the different legislatures :-

I am a member of the Indian National Congress at.....

I desire to become a member of the Congress Parliamentary Party in.....

I declare that I will follow the principles and policy laid down by the Congress or by any competent authority on its behalf and will conform to the rules and directions duly issued from time to time, as well as to the instructions issued by the party organisation in the Assembly or Council for the guidance of the members thereof.

I also undertake to resign my seat whenever I am called upon to do so by a competent Congress authority.

**5. EXCISE DUTY ON SUGAR**

The Working Committee has heard with surprise of the recent increase in excise duty on Indian sugar by the Government of India and the Viceroy in the teeth of the opposition of the Assembly and against the declared opinion of every single elected Indian member. This Committee condemns this inhuman step which is detrimental to the interests of the consumers, farmers and manufacturers alike at a time when the sugar industry is faced with a crisis and the harvesting season is approaching its end. The Committee is particularly perturbed as this additional duty is bound to aggravate the difficulties of the agriculturists, specially in the U. P. and Bihar where sugarcane is the solitary marketable crop which enables them to some extent, to meet the heavy demands that are made on them. It appeals to the manufacturers to revise their decision to close their factories before their normal time and to keep them working till the standing cane within the zone of every factory has been exhausted and expects that the railways will at least reduce substantially the rates of freight on sugarcane as a special case for the next three months.

**6. CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE**

The Central Parliamentary Committee submitted the report of its work in connection with the Provincial elections to the Working Committee. The Committee passed the following appreciatory resolution about its work :-

"The Working Committee desires to record its grateful appreciation of the labours of the Central Parliamentary Committee under the chairmanship of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. These labours have already received reward in the splendid election results throughout India.

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\*NOTE—The Parliamentary Sub-committee was also to deal with the question of bye-elections in the provinces and in the Central Assembly in co-operation with the provincial executive councils.

## 7. NATIONAL WEEK

The Working Committee draws the attention of all Congressmen and Congress Committees to the approaching National Week, April 6th to 13th, and trusts that it will be suitably celebrated throughout the country.

## 8. THE ALL INDIA CONVENTION

The Committee considered the procedure to be laid down for the All India Convention.

It was decided that a subjects committee consisting of the Leaders, Secretaries and other office-bearers of the Congress parties in the Central and Provincial Legislatures, with a certain number of members of the A. I. C. C. representing the provinces in proportion of their strength on the A. I. C. C. together with a number of nominees of the President from among the members of the A. I. C. C. be formed, to discuss the procedure to be adopted and the resolution to be moved at the All India Convention.

A pledge was also drawn up by the Working Committee for the members of the Convention.

## 9. CONGRESSMEN ACCEPTING MINISTERIES IN MINORITY PROVINCES

It was decided that any Congressman accepting office in any province where the Congress had failed to get the majority made himself liable to disciplinary action.

## 10. MEMBERS AGAINST WHOM DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN

The Committee decided that if a Congressman against whom disciplinary action had been taken desired to rejoin the Congress party in the Legislatures he was not to be immediately admitted but was to be asked to wait and justify his conversion by work before he was admitted to the party.

## 11. LABOUR MEMBERS RETURNED ON CONGRESS TICKET

It was decided that even when such members formed themselves in a labour group they must conform to the Congress discipline as long as they formed part of the Congress party in the legislature.

## 12. A. I. C. C. MEMBERSHIP LISTS FROM THE PUNJAB AND BENGAL

In place of the old names of the members of the A. I. C. C. the Committee accepted the new list from the Punjab sent by the Secretary Punjab P. C. C.

The method of counting votes in the A. I. C. C. elections adopted by the Bengal P. C. C. was not recognised as proportional voting by single transferable vote. Therefore a recounting was authorised. If the old voting papers were not in existence, new elections would be necessary.

## 13. ELECTION OF LEADERS OF CONGRESS PARTIES IN BOMBAY AND UTKAL

On a representation signed by some members of the Congress party of the Bombay Legislatures drawing the attention of the Working Committee to the agitation carried on in some Bombay papers in connection with the election of Sri B. G. Kher as leader of the Congress party, the Committee called Sri K. F. Nariman and heard him at length and went into the matter fully. The Committee issued the following statement in this behalf :—

"A representation signed by 40 members of the Congress party of the Bombay Legislature, who were present in Delhi for the Convention, was received by the President. In this they draw the attention of the Working Committee to an agitation carried on in certain Bombay newspapers in connection with the election of Mr. Kher as leader of the Party.

"It was pointed out therein that whereas Mr. Kher had been unanimously chosen as the leader and entrusted with authority to appoint other office-bearers, irresponsible imputations, charges and insinuations were being made in respect of that election. The signatories requested the President to issue a statement deprecating this agitation interfering with the free, deliberate and unanimous choice of the Party as the encouragement of such agitation would be highly detrimental to the public life of the country and the cause of the Indian National Congress. Seven other members presented a separate letter to the same effect.

"The Working Committee has noted with great surprise and pain the agitation that is being carried on in the Bombay Press. Besides the press agitation a number of telegrams and other communications were received by the President from individuals and groups in Bombay in the same connection.

"The Working Committee went fully into the matter and heard Mr. K. F. Nariman at great length. The Committee is convinced that there is no reason whatsoever to interfere with the free and deliberate and unanimous choice that the Bombay Congress Party in the Legislature, after fully considering all matters, has made. The Committee is convinced also that the agitation against the decision is wholly groundless and it has no hesitation in condemning it as detrimental to the public life of the province and injurious to the cause of the Congress. Had the Working Committee found any reason to believe that the election had been influenced by the improper conduct on the part of anybody or that the choice was made under any undue pressure from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as alleged, it would have certainly ordered a fresh election. There is not the slightest ground, however, for doing this. No less than 48 members who were present in Delhi for the Convention have given a signed declaration to the effect that the choice of Mr. Kher was free and unanimous. The Committee, therefore, confirming the said election, earnestly appeals to the Press and other persons concerned to stop this agitation against what has been finally decided upon by the party that had to elect its leader after considering the matter from all points of view. We hold that the carrying on of any further agitation would amount to seeking to terrorise the Party and call upon all those who are interested in and are in sympathy with the aims and objects of the Congress to discourage such activities."

#### 14. UTKAL

The Committee considered the letter of Sri Nilkanta Das together with the representation from some members of the Congress Party in Utkal about the election of Sri Biswanath Das as leader of the Congress Party in the Utkal legislature.

The Committee decided that it was neither proper nor advisable to interfere with the decision of the party. It also advised Sri Nilkantha Das to continue as a member of the Central Assembly and not to seek election to the Provincial Assembly.

The Committee confirmed the resolution of the Jallianwala Bag Fund Committee, appointing Sri Jawaharlal Nehru as a Trustee to fill up the vacancy caused by the death of the Late Pandit Motilal Nehru.

The Committee also confirmed the appointment of Sri Jammaal Bajaj as the third Trustee of the Fund.

## The All India National Convention

Delhi—19th. & 20th. March 1937

In pursuance of the resolution of the Faispur Congress in this behalf the All India Convention met at Delhi on March 19 and 20. The Convention consisted of the members of the A. I. C. C. and the members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures belonging to the Congress party. There were 215 members of the A. I. C. C. and about 500 members of the different legislatures.

A Subjects Committee as directed by the Working Committee was formed to discuss the procedure and to draft the resolutions for the open session of the convention. This Committee met twice in the morning and the night of March 19.

#### OPEN SESSION

The Convention assembled at 5 p. m. on March 19. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Congress, presided.

The proceedings commenced by the singing of the national song.

The Chairman of the Reception Committee then read a short speech welcoming the members of the Convention and other guests to the historic city of Delhi.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his Presidential speech lasting for an hour and a half.

The President thereafter administered the oath of allegiance to the members of the Convention. It was an impressive and solemn ceremony. The members stood up and repeated the following oath after the President, sentence by sentence, in Hindustani. They also afterwards signed their names in a register. The following is the text of the pledge. This signed register is kept in the A. I. C. C. office.

#### Text of the Pledge

I, a member of this All India Convention pledge myself to the service of India and to work in the legislatures and outside for the independence of India and the

ending of the exploitation and poverty of her people. I pledge myself to work under the discipline of the Congress for the furtherance of Congress ideals and objectives to the end that India may be free and independent and her millions freed from the heavy burdens they suffer from.

Thereafter the Convention adjourned to meet again the next day.

The Convention met again on March 20 at 2 p. m.

The following resolutions were passed :

### 1. THE NATIONAL DEMAND

This Convention reiterates the opinion of the people of India that the Government of India Act of 1935 has been designed to perpetuate the subjection and exploitation of the Indian people and so strengthen the hold of British Imperialism on India.

The Convention declares that the Indian people do not recognise the right of any external Power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India. The Indian people will only accept a constitutional structure framed by them and based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their needs and desires.

The Convention stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole. Such State can only be created by the Indian people themselves through the medium of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage, and having the power to determine finally the Constitution of the country.

The electorate has, in overwhelming measure, set its seal on the Congress objective of independence and the rejection of the New Constitution. The Constitution therefore stands condemned and utterly rejected by the people, through the self-same democratic process which had been invoked by the British Government and the people have further declared that they desire to frame their own constitution based on national independence through the medium of a Constituent Assembly.

The Convention therefore calls upon all Congress Parliamentary parties to take the earliest opportunity to put forward in the name of the nation, a demand in their respective legislatures that the Government of India Act of 1935 be withdrawn so that the people of India may frame their own Constitution.

### 2. CONGRESS POLICY IN THE LEGISLATURES

This Convention draws the attention of the various Congress Parliamentary Parties to the resolution relating to the Congress policy in the legislatures passed by the Working Committee at Wardha and adopted by the A. I. C. C. at Delhi on March 18 and calls upon them to be guided by that resolution in their work within the legislatures.

### 3. EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURES

The Convention desires to remind all Congress members of the legislatures that their sphere of activities is not confined to the legislatures but includes their constituencies. All effective work in the legislatures must have the sanction of the people behind it, and, therefore, all work in the legislatures must be co-ordinated with Congress activity outside. Every Congress member must therefore keep in constant touch with the people of his constituency, and should consult them and report to them from time to time, and give such help to them as he can in their day to day struggles. He should further keep in touch with the primary and other local Congress committees in his constituency and share the responsibility of keeping the Congress organisation in the area in efficient working condition and in touch with the masses it seeks to represent.

The Congress Parliamentary Party in each province should consult the Provincial Congress Committee concerned and report to it from time to time.

The proceedings came to an end at 6 p. m. and the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

## The Jallianwala Bag Memorial Fund

Delhi—19th. March 1937

The meeting of the Jallianwala Bag Memorial Fund Committee was held at Harijan Colony, Delhi at 9 a. m. on the March 19, Shri Gandhiji presided. In addition



to the members Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Jammalal Bajaj, Bhulabhai Desai and Govind Ballabh Pant were present.

It was decided that till the committee was reorganised by a resolution of the next Congress the vacancy caused by the death of late Pandit Motilalji as Trustee of the Fund be filled and one more trustee be added raising the number of trustees to three. The two new trustees appointed were Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and Jammalal Bajaj.

## Hartal on First of April

The following statement was issued by the President for the observance of the Hartal on April 1, 1937 as a nation-wide protest against the New Constitution Act of India imposed upon the country against its expressed wishes by an alien government.

"The first of April will soon be upon us and I trust that all Congressmen and Congress organisations are taking suitable steps to observe that day as a day of complete Hartal. On the evening of that day public meetings should be held in towns and villages and an identical resolution should be passed at these meetings. This resolution is given below. It has been framed on the basis of the National Demand as formulated by the All India Convention.

"This meeting reiterates the opinion of the people of India that the Government of India Act of 1935 has been designed to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people and to strengthen the hold of British Imperialism on India. This meeting declares that the Indian people do not recognise the right of any external power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India. The Indian people can only accept a constitutional structure which has been framed by them and which is based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their needs and desires. They stand for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the Government is under their effective control. Such a state can only be created by the Indian people themselves and through the medium of a Constituent Assembly elected by adult suffrage and having the power to determine finally the constitution of the country.

"This meeting therefore condemns and utterly rejects the New Constitution and demands its withdrawal in accordance with the declared will of the Indian people."

The Government response (in Beagal to the President's appeal has been prompt. The Police Commissioner of the city and suburbs of Calcutta has prohibited for a period of seven days from March 29 to April 4 any procession, meetings or other demonstrations on behalf or in furtherance of the objects of the Hartal or any meeting which might reasonably be suspected to be in furtherance of such objects without the express permission in writing previously obtained of the Commissioner of Police and subject to such conditions as he may impose.

The reason given for the order is that the Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party issued an appeal that the Hartal be observed in a militant manner, involving the stoppage of all forms of transport, labour and other activities.

### CONGRESS MINISTRIES

The Leaders of the Congress Party in the Provincial Legislatures, with Congress majorities, were invited by the respective Governors of the provinces concerned to help them in the formation of ministries. Invitations were received by Congress Parliamentary Leaders in Bombay, Madras, U. P., Behar, Central Provinces and Utkal. The Leaders invited, responded to the invitation. They showed the Governors the resolution passed by the last A. I. C. C. meeting laying down the policy of the Congress in regard to the New Constitution and the conditions necessary for office acceptance. The Governors in all the six provinces expressed their inability to give the necessary assurance that they would not use, in regard to the constitutional activities of their cabinets, their special powers of interference or will not set aside the advice of their cabinets. The Leaders therefore declined to shoulder the responsibility of forming ministries.

## The Working Committee Proceedings

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad,—April 26th—29th 1937

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad on 26—29 April, 1937. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. All members of the Committee with the exception of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Shri Shanker Rao Deo were present. Shris M. K. Gandhi, Rajagopalachari, Rukminipathi, Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai attended the meeting by special invitation.

Leaders of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the provinces were invited to be present for consultation. Those who attended were Shri B. G. Kher, Shri Krishna Sinha, Dr. N. B. Khare, Dr. Khan Sahab, and Shri Biswanath Das. Shri Harekrishna Mahatab was also present.

The minutes of the last meeting held at Delhi on 15—22 March already circulated were confirmed.

The Committee considered the situation created in the country by the refusal of the Governors in provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislatures, to give the assurances asked for in terms of the resolution of the A. I. C. C. about office acceptance, passed at its last meeting at Delhi.

The following resolutions were passed :

### 1. CONGRESS MINISTRIES

The Working Committee approves of and endorses the action that the leaders of the Congress Parliamentary Parties in the provinces took, in pursuance of the resolution of the A. I. C. C. dated March 18, 1937, on being invited by the Governors in their respective provinces to help them in the formation of ministries.

In view of the fact that it is contended by British ministers that it is not competent for the Governors, without amendment of the Act, to give the assurance required by the Congress for enabling the Congress leaders to form ministries, the Committee wishes to make it clear that the resolution of the A. I. C. C. did not contemplate any amendment of the Act for the purpose of the required assurances. The Working Committee moreover is advised by eminent jurists that such assurances can be given strictly within the constitution.

The Working Committee considers the pronouncements of the policy of the British Government made by Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler are utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the Congress, are misleading and misinterpret the Congress attitude. Further the manner and the setting in which such pronouncements have been made are discourteous to the Congress. The first record of the British Government as well as its present attitude show that without specific assurances as required by the Congress, popular ministries will be unable to function properly and without irritating interference. The assurances do not contemplate the abrogation of the right of the Governor to dismiss a ministry or dissolve a provincial Assembly when serious differences of opinion arise between the Governor and his ministers. But this Committee has grave objection to ministers having to submit to interference by Governors with the alternative of themselves having to resign their office instead of the Governors taking the responsibility of dismissing them.

### 2. WORK OUTSIDE LEGISLATURES

Owing to the dead-lock created by the refusal of Governors to give the assurance asked on behalf of the Congress enabling acceptance of office by Congress members of the legislatures, various questions have been addressed to the Working Committee by the Congress leaders in these provinces as to the attitude, Congressmen should adopt, towards the so-called ministries formed by the Governors in the provinces concerned. The Working Committee is of opinion that the formation of these ministries by the Governors is unconstitutional, repugnant to the conception of autonomy and in total defiance of the overwhelming public opinion in each of those provinces. The Working Committee is further of opinion that those who have accepted ministerships in these circumstances have by their unpatriotic conduct rendered a disservice to the country. The Committee advises that public meetings be held denouncing the action of these so-called ministers and challenging them to face the legislatures and justify their conduct. But the Committee is of opinion that hostile black flag demonstrations and the like should be avoided.

Congressmen should realise that parliamentary work is but a minor part of the national programme and that the great objective of complete independence can only be secured by sustained efforts by every Congressman and Congresswoman in carrying out the programme outside the legislature as laid down from time to time. In furtherance of this objective, members of the legislatures should establish living touch with the electors in their respective constituencies and carry the message of the Congress and commend to them the constructive programme including the use of khaddar to the exclusion of mill cloth, the local production of khaddar in villages by hand-spinning and hand-weaving; creating public opinion in favour of total prohibition; promotion of communal unity by collective and individual effort; and the eradication of the evil of untouchability in every form.

### 3. CONTACT WITH NON-CONGRESS MINISTERS

Resolved that no Congress member of the Provincial Legislatures shall have any dealings or interviews with the so-called ministers who have been unconstitutionally appointed in provinces where Congress commands a majority and the ministries in other provinces, except with the express permission of the Leader of the Congress party.

### 4. ZANZIBAR

The Working Committee feels deeply concerned over the publication of the recent draft Bills by the Zanzibar Government perpetuating complete internal and external monopoly of dealing in cloves in the hands of a close corporation, practically excluding the Indians therefrom and depriving them of all means of recovering their just and legitimate dues from the clove-growers and inflicting a deathblow upon the vital economic interests of the Indian people in Zanzibar. The passing of these decrees is sure to create a grave situation in Zanzibar and this Committee is informed that the exasperated Indian community may have to resort to passive resistance for the restoration and preservation of their legitimate rights.

In the opinion of this Committee these measures are in direct violation of the just rights of the Indians and of the Zanzibar treaties of 1896 and 1898 which guarantee security of property for Indians and prohibit the establishment of clove monopoly.

It is the further considered opinion of this Committee that this legislation, though ostensibly designed to benefit the Arab clove growers, is really intended to assist the British capitalists denying the just claims of Indians who have raised Zanzibar to its present prosperous staple agricultural position.

This Committee assures our countrymen overseas in Zanzibar of its sympathy in their present situation, extends its support in their struggles and is of opinion that retaliatory measures should be taken forthwith by the Indian Government.

### 5. THE JUTE MILL STRIKE

The Working Committee views with alarm and concern the grave situation of the Jute workers of Calcutta who have been conducting a heroic struggle for the last twelve weeks for the recognition of their elementary right to form a union and for securing redress of their legitimate grievances. The Jute worker's struggle has assumed a great national importance. The strike has made rapid strides and to-day something like two hundred thousand workers are involved in it.

The Committee offers its heart-felt sympathy to the strikers and expresses its admiration for the determined and peaceful manner in which they are struggling against the combined forces of employers and the Government.

The Committee puts on record its sense of disappointment at the attitude of the employers who by refusing to satisfy the reasonable demands of the workers are prolonging the strike and deepening the misery of the strikers.

The Committee is of opinion that it is the imperative duty of the Government to intervene in the conflict and to secure speedy settlement of the dispute on the basis of the recognition of Workers' rights and satisfaction of their just demands. The Committee, however, notes with regret that the Government is taking the side of the employers in this dispute and places on record its strong condemnation of the repressive policy of the Government which seeks to suppress the workers' struggle by promulgation of prohibitory orders under Section 144, Cr. P. C., arrest of labour leaders and workers and various acts of policy and military violence. The Committee, in particular, records its strongest protest at the reported entry of the police and military into the workers' quarters, the assault on one of the Labour Mem-

bers of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the prohibition of these members including the President of the Trade Union Congress from entering their Constituencies and the firing on unarmed workers including little boys.

#### 6. ITALY AND ABYSSINIA

The Working Committee expresses its abhorrence of the brutal massacre of peaceful masses of Ethiopians by Italian intruders and offers its sympathy to the victims of Fascist imperialism.

The Working Committee takes strong exception to the closing of the Mohamed Ali Stores in Abyssinia and regards this as an act of grave injustice. The Committee is of opinion that the Italian Government should withdraw this ban and grant adequate compensation to the owners of the stores.

#### 7. ORGANISING SECRETARY

Shri Jairamdas Daulatram was appointed the Organising Secretary for the whole of India in terms of the Faizpur Congress resolution on Mass Contacts.

#### LABOUR COMMITTEE

The last year's Labour Committee consisting of Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, Shankerlal Banker, V. V. Giri, M. R. Massani and J. B. Kripalani (Convener) was reappointed.

## President's Circular—I—Work before Us

Following circular letters were issued by the President, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru to the Provincial Congress Committees and other Congress organisations :

Dear Comrade,

You have no doubt read carefully in the public press the resolution passed recently by the Working Committee on the present situation and the constitutional deadlock that has been created by the refusal of the Governor to give the assurances asked for in terms of the A. I. C. O. resolution. This resolution clarifies the present position which has already been sufficiently discussed in statements issued by Gandhiji and others. It is desirable that the full import of this resolution and the future possibilities should be explained to all Congressmen and the public generally so that we may have the intelligent co-operation of all in future steps. What the future may bring we cannot say but we have to be prepared for all contingencies. It is by our organised and disciplined strength alone that we can shape that future. Hence the stress on the constructive programme of the Congress. Previous resolutions of the Congress and the Working Committee have laid stress on the agrarian problem and on questions affecting the industrial workers. All these together form part of the Congress programme and all these have to be worked for.

Above all I would beg of you to remember the future that looms ahead and to prepare for this. Congress members of the provincial legislatures must keep in constant touch with their constituents.

There is one matter which I should like to clarify. The Working Committee, while strongly condemning those who have accepted ministerships in defiance of Majorities in legislatures and the popular will, has advised that hostile black flag demonstrations should be avoided. This does not mean that such demonstrations are always illegitimate, nor is it in anyway a condemnation of those of our comrades who have so far taken part in them. Several have gone to prison because of these and our sympathy goes to them. But the Committee felt that under existing circumstances such demonstrations were necessary and that they gave a fictitious importance to certain individuals who are styled ministers to-day. Therefore they have advised against them and this advice should be followed everywhere in a disciplined manner. At the same time the holding of meetings denouncing the action of the so-called ministers has been encouraged.

## II—Organising Secretary

Dear Comrades,

The Faizpur Congress directed that in order to give effect to its directions to increase mass contacts and to strengthen the Congress, an Organising Secretary should be appointed by the Working Committee. Owing to the elections there was unfortunately delay in this. The Working Committee has, however, now appointed

Shri Jairamdas Daulatram to this responsible office. He will communicate with you direct and ask you to send him particulars of your work. I trust you will give him every help and co-operation. For the present his address for communications is: Market Road, Hyderabad, Sind. Later he will undertake a tour in the provinces. Questions and difficulties about organisations should be addressed to him.

The Faizpur Congress also called upon each Provincial Congress Committee to appoint an organising secretary. Will you please inform our office as well as Shri Jairamdas Daulatram what action you have taken in this matter.

Some time back I suggested to you to form a Muslim Mass Contact Committee in your province. Will you please inform Dr. Asraf of our office what steps you have taken to do so. This matter should be expedited.

### III—Coronation

Dear Comrade,

I have to draw your attention, and request you to draw the attention of all Congressmen and others, to the Faizpur Congress resolution on non-participation in the coronation and other imperialist functions. When this resolution was passed there was a possibility that such celebrations might be organised on a big scale in India. But probably because of the Congress attitude and the Congress victory in the elections, this has been abandoned. There will now be only some minor official celebrations and illuminations of a few official buildings. None the less Congressmen should remember and should remind others that it is derogatory to our dignity and against the policy of the Congress to take any part in coronation functions, whatever they might be.

### IV—Red Flags at Congress Meetings

Dear Comrade,

References are sometimes made to us about the use of the Red Flag at Congress meetings. Occasionally unseemly incidents have also taken place in this connection. I have previously expressed myself in public whenever such an incident has taken place but I should like to make the position clear for the guidance of Congressmen.

The Red Flag has for a hundred years or more been the flag of the workers all over the world and nearly all workers' organisations have adopted it in various countries. It represents the struggles and sacrifices of the workers as well as the conception of the unity of the workers all over the world. As such it is entitled to our respect and a workers' organisation, if it so chooses, has every right to display it at its functions.

But so far as the Congress is concerned our flag is the national tri-colour. During its short life of half a generation it has already become a symbol to us all, including workers and peasants, of freedom and national unity and solidarity. It represents, as nothing else does, the spirit of the Indian people striving for freedom and the honour of the nation. And because of that so many of our comrades have braved suffering and prison for the sake of that flag. In remote villages we find that flag displayed and the sight of it gives courage and hope to the poor down-trodden villager. That flag has become wrapped up in our minds with so much that we value so much that we hope for, that any discourtesy to that flag hurts us vitally and we resent the insult to the nation's honour. We cannot tolerate any such discourtesy or insult from whomsoever it might come.

For the Congress this is the only flag and on all Congress functions it is this flag which must be displayed. Between it and the Red Flag or any other flag there can be or should be no rivalry. If workers' organisations join a Congress procession or a Congress meeting, it is open to them to have their own flag or banners. But any such flag must not dominate the scene or seek equality at such functions with the National Flag. At all Congress functions it is the National Flag that must dominate the scene. I trust that these directions will be borne in mind by all and no one will countenance any act which may be construed as lessening the honour and dignity and importance of a flag that has become so dear to us during these many years of struggle and conflict.

## V—Provincial Contributions

Dear friend,

I draw your attention to Art. VIII (b) (iii) of the Constitution. You will arrange to send your provincial contribution in time.

*Art VIII (b) (iii)* :—Every Provincial Congress Committee shall, before the new All India Congress Committee meets as Subjects Committee under Article IX (g), pay to the Working Committee the fees received from the delegates. Any other subscription that may be fixed by the latter, having regard to the population, membership and financial capacity of the provinces, shall be paid not later than the end of June every year. Delegates and members of the All India Congress Committee from provinces in default shall not be permitted to take part in any of the proceedings of the Congress or any Committee thereof.

### The Repression

15th. March to 30th. April 1937

Shri Sibnath Banerjee, M. L. A., President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar, M. L. A., Maulvi Julauddin Bashaemy, M. L. A. Ashutosh Das, K. C. Mitra, Balalal Das Mahapatra, Debendra Nath Sen, and many other labour leaders of Calcutta were served with orders restraining them from entering the area covered by the Jute Mill strike.

Shris R. S. Nimhkar, V. B. Karnik, Dange, Gunada Mazumdar, Rajani Mukherjee and 15 others were served with similar restraint orders in the last week of March, the object of which was to prevent the workers from participating in the Hartal of April 1.

Shri Hemanta Kumar Bose, a former Assistant Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and 16 other Congress workers of Calcutta were arrested on March 28 on a charge of leading a procession to organise Hartal in contravention of Police Commissioner's order.

Shri Ganesh Prasad Varma of Daltonganj, already interned under the Bihar Public Safety Act, was served with a fresh order of internment within the municipal limit of Daltonganj.

Arrests were made all over the country on April 1. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Shrimati Chandravati Devi, Shri Anisur-Rahman, Shri Abdul Hanqui and 14 others were arrested at Patna for leading a procession and Shri Ambika Kanta Sinha and 12 others were arrested later on for demonstrating against the Chief Minister. The second batch of arrested persons was released after a few days by order of the Chief Minister, but all the persons arrested in the first batch were convicted on April 14 and sentenced to 8 months' imprisonment.

Shrimati Satyavati, Shri B. Narasimham and 23 other Congress workers were arrested in Delhi for organising Hartal. In course of the arrest Shrimati Satyavati was assaulted by the Police which formed the subject-matter of a successful adjournment motion in the Assembly. The arrested persons were sent up for trial. Shri Narasimham was awarded three months' rigorous imprisonment and two others to six weeks' rigorous imprisonment each. Shrimati Satyavati was ordered to execute a bond for good behaviour; but on her refusal she was sentenced to simple imprisonment for a month. On appeal the Session Judge reduced the sentence on April 24 to the period already undergone.

Four persons were arrested at Allahabad in connection with the Hartal.

Shri Lakshpati Singh and Kamowar Sharma were arrested at Silao ( Patna District ) for similar offence and later convicted and sentenced to 4 months' rigorous imprisonment each.

Shri P. Kujavadivelu, President of the Madras Press Workers' Union, was served with a notice under Section 144 Cr. P. O on April 3 prohibiting him for one month from convening or addressing any meeting, attending, directing or organising any procession and publishing leaflets and posters in connection with the toddy-tappers' strike.

The offices of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union at Kharagpur and the residence of the Branch Secretary and the Head Clerk were searched by the Police on April 5. Some press reports issued by the International Federation of Trade Unions and a few other journals were seized.

Shri Satya Narain Shroff, Advocate and Political Worker, Mukta Prasad, President of the Harijan Sevak Samana, Bikaner and Lakshmidas, Secretary of the Proja Mandal were externed from Bikaner under the Bikaner Public Safety Act.

The hereditary Jagir of Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar was forfeited by the Punjab Government on account of his political activities.

The Delhi Police searched several libraries of Delhi including Mahavir Jain Library and Sasta Sahitya Mandal on April 9 for copies of the Independence Pledge of 1930. A copy of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's "History of the Congress" was also seized.

The trial of Shris Basanta Kumar Joshi, Suraj Bans Singh and 16 others was opened before a Calcutta Magistrate on April 12 on charges of conspiracy to propagate the doctrines of Communism. The Public Prosecutor described the case as similar in character to the Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy case and the Meerut Conspiracy case.

Notices under Section 32 of the Police Act were served on a number of persons at Mizaffarpur on April 17 for taking out processions on the Hartal Day.

Prof. Ramalingam, Shri V. R. Kalappa and other workers of the Railway Union at Kharagpur were served with notices under Section 144 Cr. P. C. directing them not to take out any procession nor hold any meeting at Kharagpur.

The Lahore Police raided the Lajpat Rai Bhawan in the night of April 18 when the Socialists were holding a private meeting. The Committee room was minutely searched and certain documents as well as scattered bits of paper were seized.

The District Magistrate of Patna demanded a security of Rs. 1,000 from Pandit Kibhuday Brahmachari who filed a declaration to bring out a weekly paper entitled "Banga Bhakti."

Shri Ghate of the Meerut Conspiracy Case was arrested at the Lahore Railway station on April 18 and, after detention in the Fort for the day, was served with an externment order prohibiting his entry in the Panjab.

A sentence of imprisonment till the rising of the court and a fine of Rs. 150 was imposed on Shri Gajjan Singh, a Socialist worker of Ludhiana for violating the terms of the internment order.

Shri Prankrishna Parihari, President of the Guntur District Congress Committee was arrested on a charge of sedition on April 20 for a speech delivered on the Hartal Day.

The houses of Bahu Girindra Kumar Basu Neogi and Dr. Gopal Chandra Basu in the Tangail sub-division were searched by the Police on April 19 and Guriadrabahu was taken to the Police Station for interrogation.

Shris A. Zuman, M. L. A., Dayaram Beri, Himangshu Biswas and several others arrested at Raikha (Hoogli) on April 24 in connection with the Jute Strike. Two days previous the Police had opened fire, which resulted in serious injury to two persons.

Shri Bishambhar Dayal Tripathi, M. L. A. of Unao, formerly Secretary of the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee, served with a notice on April 22 under Section 109, Cr. P. C. calling upon him to execute a bond of Rs. 5,000 and 2 sureties of Rs. 2,500 each for having delivered alleged seditious speeches.

The Kashmir State has banned the Congress Declaration of Independence.

Dr. Rethakrishna, a Congressman and a labour leader of Lucknow, was arrested on April 24 for delivering alleged seditious speeches.

Shri John Benjamin, President of the G. I. P. Railway Union, Jhansi and Vice-President of the U. P. Trade Union Congress, was convicted by the District Magistrate of Jhansi on a charge of sedition and ordered to execute a bond of Rs. 200 and a security of the same amount for good behaviour for one year.

The Sub-divisional Officer, Monghyr, is reported to have served notices under Section 144, Cr. P. C. on Shri H. B. Chandra, M. L. A. and other labour leader restraining them from holding meetings within the Railway ground.

The Delhi Police searched several houses on April 29 for literature and seized some handbills bearing the titles "workers of the world unite" and "victory of Red Flag."

The luggage of Shri Bunkrishna Khatri, Secretary of the All India Political Prisoners' Relief Committee was searched at Jampur on April 28 and 20 copies of "Independent India" were taken away from his possession.

Shri Ramani Chakravarti, a prominent member of the Radical Party, Calcutta and Secretary of the Workers' League and Shri Pravas Sen, a member of the North Calcutta Radical Party were served with notices under Section 144, Cr. P. C. pro-

hibiting their entry within the Jute Strike area. Shris Santiram Mondal and Thakur Singh were served with similar notices.

The Special branch of the Calcutta Police raided on April 29, the Bengal Labour Party office and "Ganasakti" office in Zakaria Street and arrested Shri Samsul Buda and two other labour leaders. Some drafts were also seized.

Order under Section 144, Cr. P. O. banning any assembly of 5 persons or more was promulgated for the second time at Kustia (Bengal) where a strike is going on in the Mohini Mills.

Shri Jibananda Banerjee, an internee was sentenced on April 28 by a Special Magistrate to two months' rigorous imprisonment on a charge of violation of Internment order.

## The All India Congress Committee

Opening Day—Delhi—17th and 18th March 1937

The All-India Congress Committee meeting opened amidst colourful and enthusiastic scenes in the beautiful decorated pandal at Ansari Nagar Delhi on the 17th March 1937.

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, opening the proceedings, said they would first take up routine matters like the confirmation of the minutes of the last A. I. C. C. at Faizpur and the passing of accounts. Incidentally, he referred to the problem with which the Congress was faced, that is to say, the office question. This had been under consideration for a considerably long time and they had examined all the aspects of the question. He expressed the desire that, before coming to a final decision on the question, all schools of thought should be given a chance to express their views.

The minutes of the last meeting and audited accounts were passed.

### Date of Next Congress

*Bardar Vallabhbhai Patel* then moved that the dates of the next session of the Congress be fixed some time in February. Explaining the reason for the change of dates, the Bardar said that the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee considered this question and were of opinion that it would be more convenient if the session was held in February as the poor peasants of Gujarat and villagers would be able to attend the session in larger numbers. If the session was held in December, it would be cold and therefore it may be inconvenient. He admitted February would be inconvenient for a large number of legislators to attend the session as it would clash with the Budget session. The question had been referred to the Congress Working Committee which had approved of the decision of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee.

Bardar Patel's resolution was seconded by Babu Rajendra Prasad and accepted by the House.

### Acceptance of Office

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* then announced that Babu Rajendra Prasad would place before the House the resolution adopted by the Working Committee regarding office acceptance. The President announced that amendments would be accepted till 8.30 p. m., but if any member who were not present on account of their being busy in the Assembly wanted to move any amendments they would be accepted even at a later hour. Congress M. L. Aa could not come earlier as an important discussion on the Finance Bill was proceeding in the Assembly.

Before Babu Rajendra Prasad actually moved the resolution on office acceptance, Mr. K. Kashyap (Madras) raised a point of order that the resolution contained several clauses which seemed inconsistent with one another. For instance, whereas the last paragraph of the resolution recommended acceptance of offices in the Provinces where the Congress commanded a majority the second paragraph "impresses upon all



Congress members of the legislatures that their work inside and outside the legislatures must be based on the fundamental Congress policy of combating the new constitution and seeking to end it" etc. So Mr. Bashyam felt that one part should be decided before another and the resolution should be split up and moved separately.

Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru ruled that, while he acknowledged difficulty, pointed out by Mr. Bashyam, he was not prepared to split up the resolution which was one comprehensive whole. But, to obviate difficulty, he would be prepared to put to vote the clauses and amendments to it separately.

Sardar Sardul Singh wanted to know if the report appearing in morning papers that the Working Committee unanimously accepted the resolution on office acceptance was correct.

The President replied, "It is an important, as well as a delicate question. Ordinarily, the proceedings of the Working Committee are not open to the public or the Press and I am not supposed to disclose what happened there, but, as we are discussing a very important question and we want to understand each other, I don't want to be formal and I can tell you that members of the Working Committee were sharply divided on the question. But they tried to understand each other's view point. Keeping always in mind that our main objective is to fight our opponents, we tried to come to an understanding and it is this, that the resolution that will be placed before you now has the unanimous support of the Committee. It is good that recently the Press and the public have been taking a keen interest in the proceedings of the Working Committee, but I may tell you what appears in the Press is not always correct. Many a time not being able to get authentic news, the press uses its imagination. In this particular case I may tell you that the report referred to by Sardar Sardul Singh is not correct."

Babu Rajendra Prasad next moved the Working Committee's resolution on Office Acceptance. He said that the resolution was a very important one on which the whole country had shown the keenest interest. After referring to the Round Table Conference, which Mr. Gandhi had attended, and to the subsequent resolutions passed by the successive Congress Sessions rejecting the constitution framed at the Round Table Conferences, Babu Rajendra Prasad declared that the Congress policy even now remained unchanged. They did not now say that the constitution was acceptable. There was a difference, however, and that was that the Congress had given permission to Congress men to contest the elections and enter the legislatures. But even when such permission was given the Congress made clear, firstly, that it rejects the constitution because the country's objective could not be achieved through it; secondly that this constitution shall be replaced by another framed by a Constituent Assembly. The Congress had, however, left undecided the question whether the constitution should be combated by accepting office or from the outside. Before deciding that issue they wanted to fight the first battle on the election front.

Continuing, Babu Rajendra Prasad declared that the Congress office was collecting figures from different provinces to show exactly what percentage of voters voted for the Congress. All figures were not yet available but he would tell the House that in the Madras Presidency 75 per cent of the voters voted for the Congress. In this estimate he had not included those constituencies where no Congress candidate was set up, or those constituencies from which Congress candidates were elected without contest. If these were also taken into consideration the percentage would be still higher. In Bihar 76 per cent of the voters voted for the Congress. In Bombay, where the Congress majority was the smallest, 56 per cent of the voters supported the Congress. If they considered the total number of votes polled for the Congress, the seat captured by the Congress ought to have been more. However, the Congress claim was indisputable that the electorate responded to its call. The Congress claimed that it represented the entire Indian nation including even those who were not members of the Congress. This claim had been upheld by the election results. The Congress had secured this verdict in exactly the same manner in which the British Government wanted it and the latter could no more claim that Indians were satisfied with the new Constitution.

The resolution he had moved wanted the House to confirm the resolutions adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha. The first part of the resolution required all Congress legislators to keep their contact with the constituencies and strengthen the Congress organisations. It also showed the way in which it could be done. The later part explained how they could work inside the legislatures if they got an opportunity. When the Working Committee passed the Wardha resolutions, it had not decided to accept offices. Now it had recommended that office should be accepted,

but it did not mean that there was any change in Congress policy. They were not running after offices.

Let not the Government or the Congressmen who have gone into legislatures imagine, said Babu Rajendra Prasad, that the Working Committee resolution meant that the Congress was running after offices. The Congress wanted to accept office only to get as much help as they could in attaining their object, namely, organising the country for the attainment of their objective. The reason why they had put conditions was that they wanted to remove as many obstacles from the way as they possibly could. They wanted an assurance from Governors that they would not use their special powers to hinder the work of the Congress Party so long as the latter carried out Congress programme within the four corners of the constitution. The Governor of any province where the Congress had an absolute majority would have to ask the Leader of the Congress Party to form the Ministry. It would be the duty of the Congress leader to explain to the Governor that the objective of the Congress was the attainment of complete independence and that they wanted to use legislatures for carrying out the Congress programme as enunciated in the Congress resolutions. If the Governor could agree to that and give an assurance to that effect then alone could the Congress leader form a cabinet by declaring publicly that he had secured the necessary assurance.

Those who had gone into legislatures had gone on behalf of the country and had justified the Congress claim that it was the mouthpiece of the Indian nation. If the Congress was accepting office it would not be doing so for any personal prestige or for personal gain but for the purpose of benefiting the electorate which had sent them in. What the Congress wanted from the Governors was not a change in the constitution, as that was not within his power and that could be obtained only by strengthening the Indian masses. The Congress wanted only an assurance from the Governor that what lay within his power to obstruct the furtherance of Congress programme would not be made use of. During the Round Table Conference and on other occasions it had been proclaimed that special powers would not be used. The Congress wanted now to test whether those declarations were sincerely made and expose to the world the hollowness of those declarations, in case the special powers were used. Those in favour of office acceptance were convinced that they would get many opportunities to strengthen the country's cause. How far they would be able to achieve that objective would depend to a large extent on the tact, sagacity and ability to use their weapons effectively. The work that was being done in the country during the last 15 to 20 years gave grounds for optimism that Congressmen in office would not play into the hands of the enemy. (Cheers).

The *President* stated that Sardar Patel would support the resolution, but would make a speech later and in the meanwhile amendments would be taken up.

*Sardar Sardul Singh*, on a point of order, said that the first three parts of the resolution were inconsistent with the fourth part, which, again, was contrary to the spirit of the Congress resolution previously passed. In these, the Congress had declared the intention to reject the constitution, while to-day it stated that Congressmen would work within the frame-work of that very constitution. That was not legitimate. It was in fact a fraud and a deception.

*Pundit Nehru* explained that the interpretation placed by Sardar Sardul Singh on the last part of the resolution was not correct. It did not imply that the Congress would work the constitution. If, however, Sardar Sardul Singh thought otherwise, he would have an opportunity to place his views before the house which could give its verdict when the time came.

#### THE SOCIALIST AMENDMENT

*Mr. Jaiprakash Narain* then moved the Socialist amendment declaring against office acceptance.

The Socialist amendment suggested the deletion of the last para of the resolution and substitution of the following: "is of opinion that the acceptance of Ministerial offices by Congressmen is inconsistent with the policy adumbrated above and would weaken the struggle for National Independence. The A. I. O. C. deprecates the idea that the Congress Ministers, can within the frame-work of the Government of India not secure any appreciable amelioration in the condition of the exploited and the oppressed section of the people or any substantial political or economic concession for them. On the other hand the acceptance of responsibility without the transfer of any real power will make the Congress Ministers a party to repression and exploitation which is implicit in the imperialist regime and will thus discredit

the Congress in the eyes of the people. The A. I. C. C. therefore decides against acceptance of Ministerial offices by Congressmen."

Mr. K. F. Narayan, on a point of order, said that the amendment was a negation of the original resolution and therefore was out of order.

The President ruled it was consistent with the foregoing clauses of the resolution and so was in order.

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, commending his amendment, said that he did so with some trepidation. The question had been discussed for a long time, but nothing that had happened or been said had changed his mind. His conviction was that acceptance of office would be a blunder. It was clear that there were two mentalities within the Congress, one the reformist and the other the revolutionary. On the one hand they had been professing to wreck the constitution and, on the other, they were declaring that they would accept ministries. He could not understand how those two things could be reconciled. Again, the Working Committee resolution first said that deadlocks were inevitable and then it stated that they should have an assurance from the Governors that special powers would not be used. If such an assurance was obtained, then he thought deadlocks would not be so very inevitable. It was no use saying that they would make whatever use they could of the constitution and through it prepare for the final struggle. That to his mind was a reversal of policy. If they were going to work the Constitution, let them do so without imposing conditions. These conditions were derogatory to self-respect. The only strength they could derive was by wrecking the Constitution and carrying on the struggle outside.

#### OPPORTUNITY TO WRECK

Sardar Sardul Singh moved an amendment to the effect that the Congress should not accept ministerial offices. He said that he was surprised to find the Working Committee recommending acceptance of office. All these years they had been telling the country that they were not prepared to accept the new Constitution, and that they would reject it and wreck it at the first opportunity. But now, when that opportunity had come they had begun, to talk of acceptance, under the pretext of benefiting the masses. One thing that Mr. Gandhi gave the Congress was the message of truth. He did not want the Congress to say one thing and do another. He sensed the spirit of bargaining in the condition that the Governor should give an assurance to the effect that he would not use his special powers. That spirit was harmful, as it meant co-operating with the Government and working the new Constitution. He was ready to concede that they would be able to do something for the masses but that was not their objective. They could not put an end to the poverty and misery of the masses until they had real power to stop the heavy expenditure on military and imperial services and also to control the financial policy of the country in a manner that would put an end to exploitation. The result of their not being able to do things which they promised to do would be that they would also be discredited in the same manner as the Liberals who were wanted to-day neither by the Government nor by the country. The country had given them an opportunity to wreck the constitution. Wherever they had majorities, they could make it impossible for any Cabinet to carry on its work for a day. That was what they should do by refusing to accept offices. The result would be that the Governor would be forced to use their special powers and carry on the administration without the legislatures. The position could not last long. The Government would have to come to a settlement with the Congress.

#### DIFFERING POLICIES IN DIFFERENT PROVINCES

Lala Dasichand of Ambala moved an amendment deleting the para relating to conditional acceptance of offices and the addition of a para to the effect that Working Committee would guide and control Congress ministries as it thought proper.

He thought that demanding assurance from the Governor was superficial as the Governor was bound to come to some agreement, so long as the Congress was prepared to work within the four corners of the constitution. Nothing would prevent him from saying at a later stage that the Congress had broken the pledge given of working within the constitution and use the special powers. The resolution gave the initiative for the creation of deadlocks to the Governor which ought to be in the hands of the Congress majorities. As per the resolution it had been left to the leader of the Congress Party in the provincial legislature to satisfy himself as to whether the Governor had given a proper assurance. It meant leaving the whole

question to the individual judgment of a single man. As leaders in different provinces differed in temperament there was bound to be a difference of policy between Provinces and Provinces.

*Sardar Sardul Singh* (Not Caveeshar) moved an amendment to the effect that Congressmen should not accept offices nor should they in any way help in carrying on the foreign administration in the country. He pointed out that Congressmen had been returned to end the Act from A to Z and not to work it for obtaining minor benefits.

#### NO DELIBERATE DEADLOCKS

*Mr. K. F. Nariman* moved an amendment for the deletion of conditional acceptance and suggesting that ministries when formed, should proceed immediately to give effect to the programme outlined in the Congress Manifesto and Resolution. These amendments further laid down that the ministries should not deliberately create deadlocks, but since deadlocks were inevitable in working out the Congress programme, Congressmen should get out and seek re-election.

The Congress which had been talking of mass contact would be entering into an imperial pact if what was desired in the resolution was given effect to, said *Mr. Nariman*, and credit for whatever good was done by Congress ministries would go to the Governor as the latter would claim that these were possible because he did not use his special powers. *Mr. Nariman* warned the House against falling into any such trap as they were dealing with great diplomats.

*Mr. Nariman* declared that it was impossible to secure an assurance from one Governor which would be binding on the succeeding Governor, even the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had been violated. How then were they to rely on the Governor's verbal assurance. The resolution also removed what he described as the hammer of deadlock with which they could bring pressure on Government. The intention to seek assurance was inconsistent with election pledges. If they had gone to the electorate with a statement that they would enter into a pact with the Governor then they would never have got a large majority that they actually got. Nowhere in the world had there been a case attempting to wreck the constitution by coming to an understanding with the Governor.

#### ANTIQUATED LEADERSHIP

*Mr. Dutt Masumdar* moved an amendment to the effect that ministries should not be accepted unless Government unconditionally released all political prisoners and detainees and the Governor gives an assurance to the leader of the Congress Party to the satisfaction of Provincial Congress Committee that he will not use his special powers. He supported the first amendment moved by *Mr. Jaiprakash* for the total rejection of office acceptance and declared that the Working Committee resolution was the beginning of a dangerous form of backsliding from the policy of complete wrecking. A remarkable feature of the resolution was that it failed to give a lead to the country for which it had been looking up to the Congress. It showed indecent haste to accept ministries, forgot the position of the Provinces in which the Congress had no majority and failed up to say how uniformity of policy would be achieved. It sought to give a bond of good behaviour to the Governor in working the constitution, which the Congress had declared was a charter of slavery. He vigorously criticised what he described as the antiquated leadership and ideology, which, ever since it co-operated with the Round Table Conference, had gradually forgotten the pledge of militant mass struggle.

#### MINISTERS AND DIRECT ACTION

*Mr. B. Subramanayam* moved an amendment to alter the proviso so as to lay down that Ministers are such as have full faith in direct action as contemplated by the Congress and the personnel of the Ministries is approved by the Working Committee or sub-committee which would have control over the ministry. He urged that ministers should be drawn from the people who had taken active part in Civil Disobedience Movement and had faith in the policy of combating the constitution, with a view to ending it. In saying this, he did not mean any disparagement to others. The resolution bristled with inconsistency. For instance, how were they to create deadlocks if they undertook to work within the constitution? Further, who was to interpret the Ministers' action and decide whether they acted within the constitution or not? In fact the resolution gave scope to the Government to put the Congress in the wrong.

*Shri Balakrishna Sarma* moved the next amendment to delete the whole proviso in the fourth paragraph. He said leaders of different mentalities were being sent to Governors of different mentality to come to varying understandings. It was likely that the people of reformist mentality would get in as ministers. If they wanted an assurance from the Governor, were they going to give an assurance to him on their side? The deletion of this proviso would give freedom to the Congress ministries to create deadlocks, whenever they liked. The initiative would always remain in their hands.

On *Babu Rajendra Prasad's* suggestion the House agreed to take all the remaining amendments numbering about 15 as moved and decided on a general discussion of the main resolution instead of confusing issues by discussing amendments which overlapped one another.

The *President* announced that there would be no voting to-day as he desired to have a full discussion.

*Dr. Sastry* pointed out that there were several inconsistencies in the resolution. The speaker proposed that one of the conditions of accepting office should be not only that the Congress commanded a majority but that the Congress had a majority of its own as a party in both Houses. He felt that each province had its programmes and varied types of men and, knowing human weakness, he suggested that the quality of the men who accepted ministerships should be the main consideration. He maintained that the main objective should be to carry out the Congress mandate of wrecking the constitution and the selection of Ministers should be governed by the supreme test of agreement with the objective and determination to achieve it.

*Beth Gowdasdas*, supporting *Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's* amendment, said that acceptance of offices would create a bad atmosphere in the country. It should be a matter for shame to the Congress to send its leader to the Governor to say that he would behave as a good boy and work the constitution and request the Governor to say that he would not use his special powers. The resolution had been so drafted as to provide for a state of things under which a Governor need not give a written assurance. Why not openly say that the situation in the country to-day demanded acceptance of offices?

#### OFFICE ACCEPTANCE AND CONDITIONS

*Mr. B. K. Sadasa*, supporting *Mr. Nariman's* amendment, said that only through acceptance of office could deadlocks understandable by the masses be created and not by any other means. Items in the programme placed before Congress legislators were such that on each one of them deadlocks could be created. The speaker appealed to the Working Committee to omit the proviso and allow acceptance of office without any conditions.

*Mr. Konda Venkateswappayya* said he was not opposed to office acceptance. His objection was to the proviso in the last para of the resolution. It was contradictory to the rest of the resolution. After having declared their faith in the policy of wrecking and in Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution of their own, was it proper for them to say they would be satisfied to work within a constitution thrust upon them against their will? To say that they would work the constitution and ask the Governor not to use his special powers was to lower their banner and sue for peace. It was for the Government to sue for the peace now that the Congress had secured an overwhelming majority. In fact, if they persisted in their policy the Governor might hesitate to use his special powers, but by suing for peace themselves they would compromise their self-respect and when they next approached the electorate it would not respect them and there would be a great disappointment.

*Shri Sahajansinha*, in a forceful speech, opposed the office acceptance resolution and said that it showed the gradual deterioration in the position of the Congress. The first paragraph of the resolution showed that the Congress stood for very high things and had high ideals as it ought to. The second paragraph showed a suicidal course and the third paragraph indicated that the Congress was becoming reformist in its mentality. The fourth paragraph completed the fall and justified his conclusion that the Congress had fallen into unfathomable depth. The resolution had been drafted with great tact and subtlety and it fully betrayed the growing reformist mentality. The speaker had no doubt that Congressmen when they became ministers would be worse than liberals. He accepted that office acceptance would strengthen the hands of reactionaries and British imperialism. He asked the House to realise the implications of the Congress ideal of independence. He was ashamed that Congress should say that the masses would be benefited by its acceptance of offices. He

did not agree with the suggestion of the previous speaker that opposition to the Working Committee resolution amounted to lack of confidence in the Working Committee. It was only a difference in outlook. The Congress majorities clearly indicated that the masses were behind the Congress and that they were ready to support the Congress in direct action.

Mr. Satyamurthi, supporting the Working Committee resolution, pointed out that an overwhelming majority of the Province and Local Congress Committees had voted for office acceptance and unless arguments of overwhelming force were advanced against it the House should also endorse that vote. In Madras, in any case, the mandate of the electorate implied acceptance of office to carry out the programme adumbrated by the Congress. He begged of the A. I. C. C. to have a sense of realism and vote as representatives of public opinion throughout India.

As for the plan of combating the Act, Mr. Satyamurthi saw no better, quicker and more effective way, barring direct action, than acceptance of office. In their election Manifesto Congressmen had told the electorate what they intended to do and all these items of their programme could not be carried out unless they accepted office. If, therefore, they now refused to accept office they would be committing a fraud upon the electorate. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, if Press reports were correct, had said, "To hell with the Constitution." But he could not send it there by a course, even though he was a Brahmin (Laughter.) The speaker declared that, by accepting office, they were not accepting the Act. As for "revolutionary" and "reformist" mentalities, if he could remove the poverty and ignorance, if he could add one pie to the earnings of the Indians by the possession of the "reformist" mentality, he would not hesitate to plead guilty to that mentality. He vigorously rebutted the statement that the ministers might not be up to the mark. They should not, he declared, be guilty, even privately, of this sort of distrust. He was not altogether happy over the last paragraph of the resolution but, as a humble politician, he was prepared to accept it. He had heard that the Working Committee was unanimous in the matter. (Cries of dissent from the audience.)

Pandit Nehru, interrupting the speaker, said that statement called for an explanation and he added that the Working Committee was not and could not be unanimous.

Mr. Satyamurthi added that he remembered the saying that, in moments of doubt, trust to a master brain and disinterested mind like Mahatma Gandhi's.

Dr. Pattabhi Sesharamayya said he spoke with reluctance, particularly because he disliked having to say anything in opposition to the Working Committee at whose feet he still had to sit and learn Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience. The resolution was the saddest disappointment to him, for one thing, because of its co-mingling of sentiments, making it a jumble the like of which they had not seen for the last 15 or 16 years. Its palpable inconsistencies had been pointed out by more than one speaker. It went up like a rocket and came down like a stick. (Laughter.) The Working Committee might have come to the conclusion embodied in the resolution after considering the opinions expressed by provincial and primary Congress bodies but the House was not in possession of the views of these bodies. Even if the majority opinion was in favour of office acceptance, was it necessary for the A. I. C. C. to efface its own judgment and endorse it? Mr. Satyamurthi had said that the refusal to accept office would be a fraud on the electorate. The speaker declared that accepting office would be committing a fraud on the Congress. Dr. Pattabhi Sesharamayya answered the question as to what was the alternative. Taking Madras, where there was no half-breed majority as in some other provinces and here Congress did not merely "command a majority", but had a majority on its own right the way was clear. Incidentally, he asked what was the significance of the phrase "command a majority", used in the resolution. Why did they not use a clearer phrase "returned in a majority?" Did they intend to give latitude to Congressmen to take in men who were prepared to throw their weight on the weightier side? However, in Madras they had so clear and strong a majority that they could shake the British Government to the foundations. They could, as an opposition, simply refuse to vote the salaries of ministers and all the 478 sections of the Act would be blown to the winds. Then the Governor must dissolve the House and undertake the administration by himself. They wanted to drive the Governor to that position. And if, in nine out of 11 provinces, the administrative machinery breaks down they could say the Government of India Act had broken down and they could once again go to the country.

The House at this stage adjourned till the next day.

## Second Day—Delhi—18th March 1937

The All-India Congress Committee, after thirteen hours of discussion to-day in which nearly 30 speakers participated, adopted the Working Committee's resolution on office acceptance by a large majority amidst applause. The Committee earlier rejected Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's amendment opposing office acceptance and all other amendments by a large majority.

Before the proceedings began the Congress President, *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* said: "I want to inform you of the release last evening of Mr. Subash Chandra Bose. I am sure you must all have seen the news about his release. It is not a matter for joy that one of our comrades should have been kept in restraint for such a long time. I propose to send on your behalf a message of welcome to Mr. Bose wishing him well and praying that he may soon be restored to health so that he may rejoin us soon and give us the benefit of his advice and help."

The House amidst cheers asked the President to send a message to Mr. Subash Bose.

The President also said he had sent a telegram to Mr. Bose last night on hearing of his release asking him to come to Delhi if doctors permitted. His idea was that it would be a matter of great joy for all to meet an old comrade who had been away from them for such a long time, even though he might not be able to participate in the A. I. C. C. deliberations. But he had just seen press messages saying that Sir Nilratan Sarcar, the eminent physician had examined Mr. Bose and advised him to have complete rest for some months. Therefore it was out of the question that he would be coming to Delhi.

### PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON VERBAL CHANGE

*Pandit Nehru* then made a statement regarding the proposed change in the Working Committee resolution on office acceptance. He said there was only one organisation in India which was gallantly fighting against imperialism and would continue to do so till success came in its way. That was the Congress. In spite of differences every section of it had pulled together and had been bound together by a common desire to reach the goal. With regard to acceptance of office, however, there were two definite sets of opinion hostile to each other and trying to gain mastery over each other. He himself held to the opinion which he had already expressed in emphatic terms. They had postponed the issue because, on the whole, they decided it was better to do so but the time for postponement was past and the matter had to be decided. And since yesterday it had been debate before the House. A great deal of heat had been produced but such earnestness, heat and even righteous indignation was desirable because it was not a mere matter of academic discussion. The decisions of the Committee meant so much to hundreds of thousands of people. But nevertheless the discussion of A. I. C. C. should be conducted with dignity they had always shown.

The question had been asked whether this resolution was unanimously passed by the Working Committee. Obviously it was not usual for questions of that sort to be put and for the President to reply to them, but because of the gravity of the question, and out of a desire to take A. I. C. C. into confidence he had told the House that the report that it represented the unanimous view of the Committee was not correct. Obviously it was a matter where opinion had crystallised firmly. Unanimity was not possible. What happened in such cases was that the resolutions were passed by a majority and they came before the A. I. C. C. as the resolution of the Working Committee, for the House to consider and alter as it liked.

Mr. Jawaharlal said: "I think it desirable that you should all know exactly what is my stand as President of the All-India Congress Committee in regard to this resolution. We cannot obviously shout from the housetop as to what discussions take place in the meeting in the Working Committee. All the same I do not think that the Working Committee wants any 'hush-hush' policy about any major act of ours, specially so far as the All-India Congress Committee is concerned, who, after all, is the final arbiter of the Congress policy and programme. You know indeed that there have been developing in the past, as is natural and desirable in a progressive movement, various currents of thought which often come into conflict with each other. But even so there has been an over-riding desire on the part of Congressmen to hold together and push together and fight together and win together, because we realise through bitter experience, not only of our long past history but also of the recent history of our political struggle, that nothing weakens us so much as internal dissensions. We

have tried to hold together. I am convinced the Britishers cannot put us down so much as we are apt to be put down by our dissensions."

There was one thing to which Mr. Nehru said he would draw attention. This morning the attention of the Working Committee was drawn to a particular criticism of the resolution.

The Working Committee was sensitive to the criticism of the J. A. I. C. C. So it thought about it and tried to clear the misapprehension that might have arisen. He wanted to make clear, however, that no vital or important change was made in the resolution. Babu Rajendra Prasad would place before them verbal alterations sought to be made.

*Babu Rajendra Prasad*, accordingly, placed the amended last paragraph:

In the place of the clause "provided ministerships shall not be accepted unless the Leader of the Congress Party in the Legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that, as long as he and his cabinet act within the constitution, the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of the ministers", the following shall be substituted:—"provided that ministerships shall not be accepted unless the Leader of the Congress Party in the Legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of the ministers in regard to their constitutional activities."

*Dr. Nalinakshya Sanyal* suggested that in the last para the phrase "permits acceptance of ministerial offices" should read "permits acceptance of office" which was accepted by Babu Rajendra Prasad.

*Babu Rajendra Prasad* said that during the discussions yesterday exception had been taken to the phrase "within the constitution." It had been made to appear that it meant that Congressmen were willing to work the constitution. The Working Committee never viewed the phrase in that light and according to them the phrase did not indicate that Congressmen were prepared to work the constitution. Whoever was a Minister could do only what he had been permitted to do by the Working Committee.

*Sardar Sardul Singh* (not Caveeshar) asked whether, in view of the President's statement that there was no unanimity among the Working Committee Members on the resolution, those who were against it would be allowed to speak.

The President said that he would not prevent anyone from expressing his views on the subject.

*Captain Aswadesh Prasad Singh*, opposing the resolution, said that the minor verbal changes that had been made did not in any way change the position or make any difference so far as the policy underlying the resolution was concerned. After going through the resolution one felt it was a case of a mountain of labour bringing forth a mouse. If the Congress accepted ministries it would lose the confidence of the masses, as Congress ministers would not be able to do anything. Replying to Mr. Matyamarthi's argument that the constitution would be sent to hell by acceptance of office the speaker felt that by accepting office they would only take the Congress to hell.

*Mr. C. Rajagopalachari*, supporting the resolution, said he had got up to support the resolution as a whole and not only a part of it. He wanted the House to take note of the fact that the Working Committee was representative of the whole body of Congressmen and it had produced the document after devoted and continued attention on the subjects. The resolution was one solid whole and amending it in any way would take away the spirit underlying the resolution.

"The Working Committee has placed before the House one solid whole resolution which cannot be divided. Any attempts, therefore, to drive an amendment here or one there is fraught with serious results on the meaning of the whole resolution. I say this in order that you may not light-heartedly vote against one part of the resolution to the prejudice of the another part.

"Many persons stated yesterday that the whole thing read like a very inconsistent jumble. I entirely dissent from that view and I tell you this is due to the preliminary prejudice with which you started in examining the resolution. Any person who finds inconsistency does so because he does not agree with the resultant resolution. I maintain there is not a grain of inconsistency in the resolution. I maintain it is perfectly consistent, honest and right. In essence it reflects the opinion of the whole country. After all, you represent the whole nation. Therefore there is bound to be what seemingly may represent the views and considerations of



various kinds of people. But the net result and policy that is administered is one and entire from the beginning to the end."

Mr. Rajagopalachari continued: "The policy of opposition to the Constitution Act is retained intact in the resolution. We have come to the conclusion that we should enter the legislatures to contest the election, that we should sit in the legislatures and finally that we should accept office. Those who have come to this conclusion do not hold the view that was emphasised yesterday, that the resolution is inconsistent with the general policy of opposition to the Government of India Act. Holding the view, as we do, it necessarily follows that acceptance of office is bound up with the policy of opposition to the constitution. That policy of opposition can be carried out in three ways:

"(1) First, you do not take the oath of allegiance at all, having been satisfied with the national demonstration of success at the polls.

"(2) Secondly, you sit in the legislatures, but play the role of main Opposition though you are in a majority; and

"(3) Thirdly, you take office, use the position and power that is contained within the Act, whatever it might be, for the same purpose of ending the Constitution.

"I maintain that acceptance of office is the better of the policies I have enunciated."

Mr. Rajagopalachari next analysed the resolution and said that the first paragraph represented their opposition to the Act as a whole. The second paragraph represented the Congress policy regarding the activities in the legislatures. The third paragraph represented Congress programme of work and the fourth said that offices should be accepted but not unconditionally but for ending the Act. This was not inconsistent with giving relief to the programme contained in the Wardha resolution. If they were found by accepting offices that they could not do any good to the people, they could again appeal to the people. In his opinion the resolution was a perfect and wonderful piece of harmony. It was as consistent as their programme which after all had changed from non-co-operation to Council-entry, then Satyagraha, then the Parliamentary programme and so forth. The speaker maintained that it was not right to oppose the general question of office acceptance as a whole simply because they did not like certain words here or there.

Severe attacks had been made regarding the Working Committee's resolution but he regretted that it was wrong tactics. He asked the House to give credit to the Working Committee of doing the correct thing. It had been suggested that they could wreck the constitution by remaining in opposition with such large majorities. He did not agree with that view because that would give the Governor an opportunity to dissolve the legislature before they could do anything. If they were going to remain in opposition, he asserted there was no need for them to have spent so much time, energy and money in fighting the elections. They could have devoted their time in doing some other more useful work. Having gone to the legislatures he wanted them to make use of it.

Naturally the conversation with the Governor must commence in some such way as this, I have come as a Congress Minister. I am going to do such and such thing. Are you going to use your powers? If he says 'I cannot tell you all that', was it possible to stay there as a self-respecting minister? A deadlock then must be created straightway. If the Governor promised, as the proviso wanted, and if he afterwards broke his promises they (Congress) would say, we have failed and we come out. They lost nothing in that.

If, however, the Governor at the out-set said, 'No, I cannot make any such promise that I will not make use of special powers' then those who did not want to accept office and those who wanted to accept office would march together and decide their course of action.

"I has been said by some that this condition of acceptance of ministry was unnecessary", said Mr. Rajagopalachari. "It has arisen not on the merits of the case but on the present situation of the country. You have started making this demand for an assurance. It has gone out and the Government has considered it. To withdraw now from this position would be fatally wrong. Your position will be misunderstood.

"You should not be afraid of the phrase 'within the constitution' or 'constitutional activities'. We are not undertaking by this, to give up our Congress policy. We are not going to give, as one member said yesterday, any bond of good behaviour to the Governor. This is a misreading of the whole position. Holding offices, as we do, we must demand conformation to the convention of the ordinary

parliamentary procedure of ministers that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference. I beg of you to pass this resolution without much dissent.

Concluding, Mr. *Rajagopalachari* pleaded: "If you do not take office, you will only give opportunities to the Governor to have recourse to one section of the Constitution instead of another. Having got the majority, if you are to remain in the Opposition, I think we had better reserve our energy and resources for other channels. But having spent them on the elections, we must follow up our success by taking office. If we distrust one another in the matter of the ministry there is an end of the matter. I greatly deprecate mutual distrust. Have we fought the fight all these years to distrust one another at the end? As soon as office becomes a burden, we declare openly, we are not going to stick to it. It is with that attitude I suggest that we should accept office."

"Let us not distrust each other. Do not think we are hankering after jobs. Have we given up our practices and worked all these twenty years for this purpose? As soon as office becomes a burden and our objective is achieved we will get out" With regard to deadlocks Mr. *Rajagopalachari* said his conception of deadlocks was different from that of certain others. Certain people believed that deadlocks should be created on the smaller issues but he favoured creating deadlocks on important and vital issues. They should know how to make use of them. They could create a deadlock immediately by not accepting offices. They did not want such a deadlock but they wanted a better one.

Dr. *Pattabi Sitaraniah* asked Mr. *O. Rajagopalachari* to illustrate as to how he would ask the Governor not to use the special powers.

Mr. *Rajagopalachari* said if he succeeded in squaring the budget he would suggest a reduction of the taxes on lands. It was in the power of the Governor in the interests of tranquillity, to prevent Ministers doing it. He would get an assurance from the Governor that he would not use those powers. Supposing the Congress was in the majority in Bengal, the leader would tell the Governor that he proposed to release all detenus as he was in charge of Law and Order. If he did not agree and wanted to use his powers the leader of the party would come out.

*Babu Purushottamdas Tandon*, supporting Mr. *Jairakash Narain's* amendment, said that Mr. *Rajagopalachari* in his speech had stated many things could be done by accepting offices that would benefit the masses instead of remaining in opposition. The speaker had no doubt that Mr. *Rajagopalachari* would do that. But he had forgotten that Congressmen had not entered the legislatures for the purpose of getting these minor benefits. It had been clearly stated in the manifestos that Congressmen were entering the legislatures for the purpose of combating the Act and to end it and not to co-operate with it. He wanted them to say that they had changed their policy and decided to work the constitution for what it was worth. He averred that the adoption of the resolution would lower the standard of the Congress, and change the mentality of the masses, which had developed the spirit of resistance as a result of seventeen years experience.

*Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit*, sister of the Congress President, who was cheered frequently, opposed office acceptance and said after hearing from Mr. *Satyamurti* and Mr. *O. Rajagopalachari* it was the duty of every member of the A. I. C. C. to come forward and give expression to his views on the office question. While all parties in the country had declared themselves opposed to the constitution it was left to the Congress to go a step further and say that it not only opposed the constitution but would end it. It was but natural for the fallen to grasp at anything which they suspected contained to strengthen the masses in their struggle for independence. So far as she was concerned she had no such illusion. She was visualising those thousands of men and women with sunken eyes and sunken cheeks and look of hunger on their faces walking tens of miles to cast their votes in favour of the Congress. They did not do so for minor amenities that had been suggested by Mr. *Rajagopalachari*—the opening of a school or a hospital or the closing of a toddy shop. It had been suggested that acceptance of office would strengthen the masses, but they did not require it. The masses had realised their strength to-day and were showing the way to leaders. What was the use of having control over the budget if they had no say whatever regarding the major portion of it? If office were to be accepted to-day what was going to happen to the glorious services and sacrifices of the veteran leaders who had carried on the struggle for the past few years? Was it for the few crumbs, she asked.

Mr. *George Joseph* said if the atmosphere was the same as in 1930 there would not have been a more effective appeal than that of Mrs. *Pandit*, but the whole

discussion was now taking place on a constitutional level and it was idle to expect that they could be raised to the emotional planes. Here was a practical problem. There were certain things which could be done under the constitution. They should try them as one more experiment. They had made magnificent experiments in the past and achieved magnificent success. If the spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice that Congressmen had displayed in the past continued, there was no danger of the authority of the Working Committee being defied.

Referring to the Press statement of Mr. Kidwai characterising the Working Committee as a Fascist council, Mr. Joseph said he agreed with him on one point, namely, that it should be the central authority, the Supreme Agency to express the views of the nation. The resolution had been framed by the Committee based on the views of a large majority of the provincial Congress bodies. Considering the spirit of the nation as a whole it was best for the country that the leadership of the Working Committee was not challenged or destroyed by any action taken by the A. I. C. C.

Bardar Mota Singh said that without the revolutionary spirit they would not be able to achieve their objective. It was not necessary for this purpose that there should be wars like those waged by Herr Hitler and Sigr. Musolini, but it was essential that not only the idea of accepting ministerships should be given up but they should also refuse to enter the legislatures.

Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, in a vigorous defence of the Working Committee resolution, declared that the A. I. C. C. should not be the slave of words. They should understand the reality of the situation and reality behind the ideas of being in office and being in opposition. He did not agree that office acceptance was inconsistent with the object of combating and ending the Act. Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's amendment was against the spirit of the resolution. The speaker analysed the votes of electorates in the recent elections and also the mentality of the masses which it revealed. He said his analysis showed that the masses were not ready for direct action now. The question was, could the Congress strengthen the masses better by being in the opposition or in office. But in neither case was it the intention that the constitution should be worked. They were all determined to put an end to it and he assured them that if the nation was wide awake no harm would come by acceptance of office.

Mrs. Kowaladevi said that the question had been discussed threadbare. Supporting Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's amendment she declared that the Congress made it clear that the object was to combat and end the Act. If that was so then why were they discussing acceptance or non-acceptance of office? If they were sincere and earnest they would do it under all circumstances and in any condition, but she opposed office acceptance because it meant the identification with the machinery of British imperialism. Socialists were opposing it on that one point. She did not see how Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's amendment was against the spirit of the resolution.

Mr. P. H. Patwardhan said that after a whirlwind campaign during the past few years which raised high hopes, the resolution before the House was one with defeatism writ large on it. Liberals mocked at the Congressmen when they went to jail. They called it an attempt to get cheap notoriety. This resolution showed that there was no difference between the Liberals and leaders like Mr. Rajagopalachari. Humble men like the speaker had to ask what they meant by the resolution. There could be no greater degradation than for Congressmen and Satyagrahis going humbly to the Governor and asking him not to use his special powers. When a great leader like Pandit Nehru said, "To hell with the Constitution," it was not an empty curse. It was for the country to stand behind him. Otherwise, it would be betraying him and stabbing him in the back, after having exploited him in winning the elections.

Mr. Bulabhai Desai, the Leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly, speaking in support of the official resolution, said the mere language of declaration would not serve any useful purpose. The country had rejected the Constitution, but that rejected had now to be translated into action. They could do it ultimately by resorting to direct action, but the immediate step was recommended in the resolution before the House. There was no doubt that the spirit of resistance and dynamic mentality aroused in the people should not be relaxed if, and so far as it lay in their power. It was no betrayal of that spirit or of the pledges that Congressmen had given, to accept offices. In taking office, they did not pledge themselves to continue the constitutional activities for any length of time.

The duration might be a few days or a few months. If office acceptance was inconsistent with the Congress mandate it would have been hypocritical to have postponed that issue till now. By accepting offices, they would only put the Government to the test and see if the Government was sincere in the grant of Provincial Autonomy and if that autonomy was real. There was no reason why in accepting office, they should not continue their silent preparation. There was no difference between the so-called reformist and the revolutionary. It was for revolution that both stood. But revolution would not come by calling for it and it would be a mistake to precipitate the issue now.

Dr. Nalinakshya Sanyal wanted to know what particular special powers that the Governor would not exercise were referred to in the resolution. Babu Rajendra Prasad replied that the special powers under the Governor's discretion or individual judgment or special responsibility were all included in the resolution.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, opposing the office acceptance, said that any decision that might be taken by the House to-day would affect future political life of the country. It was not proper for anyone to criticise the members of the Working Committee for one reason or another and exploit the difference that seemed to exist within the Cabinet. The House should not forget even for a moment the service and sacrifice of those responsible for the resolution in the cause of Indian freedom. On vital questions like acceptance of office and in the prevalent political conditions in the country it was not surprising there were two diametrically opposed schools of thought. It was not natural for some leaders to feel anxious to do some thing good for the starving millions of the country but it was for the A. I. C. C. to decide as to which method would take the people of India towards their cherished objective as early as possible. The future of the country would depend not on the past declarations from the Congress platforms, but on the decision of the present issue.

Closing down a few toddy shops and getting a few amenities for the people were not the objective of the Congress though they were necessities which ought to be looked into. The question of office should be decided after one had carefully weighed as to whether office would bring more gain than loss, whether it would take the country nearer to its goal or away from it. During the past 60 years the Congress has been demanding and fighting for the freedom of the country. It had passed through several phases in its struggle and experience had shown that pledges and promises given by British statesmen were forgotten by them soon after they were given. The objective during the last 15 years had been either Dominion Status or complete Independence, but nothing less than that. During the recent election the electorates had been told why the Congress were getting into the legislatures and told in no uncertain terms the Act contained nothing which would benefit the country. The people of India had declared their determination that the Act should be rejected by sending Congressmen in large numbers to legislatures. Now it was for the Congress to enforce the will of the nation and not to think of minor amenities. The Congress entered legislatures with a clearly defined objective and it was not for them now to discuss minor amenities to the people. Pandit Malaviya considered it a sin to accept offices in the circumstances.

Many seemed to have forgotten or lost sight of the centre. Nothing could be done so long as one had no power at the centre and vital problems like unemployment and poverty could never be solved by this constitution. Pandit Malaviya therefore appealed to the House to vote against office acceptance.

Lending his conditional support to the official resolution, Mr. M. N. Roy said that his criticism of the resolution was that it was not very explicit. It did not say that, by accepting office, we can wreck the constitution. "In my opinion, we can do it more effectively by accepting office than by a policy of non-co-operation. If the mover of the resolution would accept my two simple amendments which are designed to make clear the meaning which is implicit in it and which personally I have no difficulty in understanding, but which, I am afraid the average elector in the different constituencies would not so readily understand."

Continuing, Mr. Roy said, "Much has been said about the masses being moved with the idea of wrecking the constitution. It may not sound very heroic but my sense of political realism compels me to say that it is entirely wrong. The masses have understood that the Congress stands for them and they have been hoping that if the Congress goes to the legislatures, they would do something by way of improving their conditions. That is why they have cast the votes in favour of the Congress nominees. If we refuse to accept office and responsibility our enemies will go to the

people and say that the Congress is not doing anything for them. When that would be told to the masses, I doubt if the sentiment of the masses will still remain. The Parliamentary programme associated with the extra-parliamentary mass action will serve to develop the political consciousness of the masses and thereby strengthen the anti-imperialistic struggle."

Mr. M. R. Masani said that from 1934, the Congress had followed the policy of acting on its initiative in complete disregard of Government's action. Now the Congress was trying to come to an understanding with that foreign Government. He had hoped that they had given up the mentality of seeking co-operation and getting kicks in return. Lord Linlithgow had made no gesture but the Congress was making a gesture of its own. The first gesture was Mr. Gandhi's recent statement that Dominion Status would be sufficient and now this resolution was a further gesture. If they wanted to destroy the constitution would they ask for an assurance that they should be allowed to work in peace within it? The resolution was not an honest one. As for the argument that the country was not ready for direct action, Mr. Masani referred to what the Congress did in 1930 and said in January of that year. Mr. Gandhi said in Lahore the country was not ready for Civil Disobedience but in March he marched to Dandi and the country responded in a magnificent fashion. The Congress did not then talk of going into the Councils and taking office in order to prepare the country. The country is now equally ready as in 1930 if the leaders did not hold it down by defeatist talks. Again, if ministership was really so desirable, why were the tallest of their leaders, those who were next to Mr. Gandhi in influence, so reluctant to take office themselves?

*Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, in supporting the resolution of the Working Committee, said that the situation which faced the Committee today was more serious than the one they faced at Lucknow. The Working Committee had adopted the resolution after full consideration and with a view to avoiding harm likely to arise if they made a mistake in taking the final decision on the question. It was for them to consider the conditions of their people and decide the issue on that basis and not be guided by what was happening outside the country. Mr. Masani had asked why we did not enter the legislatures and stand for ministry. His reply was that he still had no belief in council but he was a realist and, having seen that Parliamentary mentality had come to stay with the people, he had adjusted himself to that. Both at Lucknow and Bombay they decided unanimously in favour of entering the councils and civil disobedience had been abandoned because it was found that the country was not in favour of it.

The question now was how they could achieve their objective, namely, to combat and end the Act. Was it by accepting offices or remaining in opposition? The decision to accept offices was not incompatible with the previous resolutions of the Congress. There were two kinds of deadlocks possible, namely, one like the deadlock created outside by the Dandi march and the other a constitutional deadlock. Having found the country not prepared for the first variety they had decided in favour of the second course. Of course he was convinced that the withdrawal of the constitution could not be achieved through councils, as it would depend upon work and support outside. If they did not accept office now, when they had a chance to do something for the people, they would be making the greatest mistake. If the country were ready for ending the Act by direct action, Mahatma Gandhi would not have retired but he would have led another Dandi march.

It had been made out that there was no difference between the Working Committee and the Liberals, but he would ask his critics whether Liberals would approve of even one of the items contained in the resolution. The Committee had placed items on its programme before the country which was only partial. Their objective was complete independence and the ending of the Act. The British Government were saying they had given Provincial Autonomy. They wanted to test it. He did not believe any Governor would be prepared to give an assurance but if they gave why should they not accept it? Why should they imagine that the country would fail if they accepted offices? If this was the only strength of the country it was false strength. If they did not test the constitution the Sardar warned the House they would have Satyamurties (laughter). He urged the House to give the policy a trial and assured them that nothing would go wrong. The resolution said "authorise and permit", which meant, that the provincial parties would have to decide whether they wanted to accept offices or not. For instance, it was open to any province to decide against it. Therefore he asked the House to adopt the resolution as it stood and not commit a mistake.

"Constitutional deadlocks will not end a constitution", said the Sardar. "For that you will have to turn your blood into water. A constitution can only be ended by outside agitation. But let us, at this juncture, accept office and if we have to come out, we will come out, and explain to the country why we came out. If we do not accept office our opponents will go to the people and say that we did not avail ourselves of the opportunity to do anything for them. When the time comes for mass action, we will not hesitate."

Referring to assurances, the Sardar said, "Let our Ministers accept offices with the dignified assurance of independent action and non-interference. If we can create power for our people why should we not do it? How do you think that, by accepting office, we will check the growth of the revolutionary mentality? Our proposal is not born of weakness. When we talk of weakness we will commit suicide. In our proposal nothing but the good of the country is the objective. We should have faith in our men and accept the condition imposed."

*Acharya Narendra Dev* made a statement explaining his position. He said he still held the same views on the question as he did two years ago, namely, that ministerships should not be accepted. He was still in favour of the Congress doing such work as would be conducive to strengthening the power of the masses. This work should be of a revolutionary character. A misconception seemed to have arisen in the minds of many people that the Government under the new constitution would be something like Self-Government and he warned them against deluding themselves into the belief that the legislatures would be reservoirs of mass power. The recent elections dispelled the illusion that the Congress was not a live body.

*Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose*, on an appeal from the Bengal delegates, also made a statement explaining his position so far as the Working Committee resolution was concerned. He said that he respected the convention that no member of the Committee was entitled to express his views contrary to the majority view in Working Committee. Hence he was not going to express his views on the resolution. He had openly declared his views on the question. He held that view as strongly and as warmly as he did six months ago in emphatic words. (Cheers.)

*Babu Rajendra Prasad*, replying to the debate, stated that it would not be possible for him to reply to individual speeches and his reply would be in general terms. He told the House that he did not want them to vote for the resolution because it had been placed before them by leaders who had been carrying on the work of the Congress. He did not want them to stop thinking about the question. He wanted them to come to their individual decisions and act accordingly. He was sorry that, by the way in which the question had been dealt with in the House the difficulties of the Working Committee had increased. Most speakers left the main issue alone and began discussing things which did not form part of the resolution. If what all had been stated by some speakers were to be taken into consideration then there was no need for the Congress to have fought the elections.

Many seemed not to have understood what was meant by ending or wrecking the Act. Some thought that creating deadlocks by accepting offices was ending the Act, while others felt that preventing the formation of ministries by being in the opposition and creating deadlocks was ending the Act. The only way by which the Act could be ended was by replacing the same by another framed by a Constituent Assembly. Such a replacement could take place not through the legislatures but through the strength of the masses and the activities outside in the country. That would have to be done. The activity of the masses in the country outside should force the British Government to withdraw the present constitution which could be replaced only with the consent of the people of the country.

It had been argued that if the Governor agreed to abstain from the use of his special powers it would mean that the Congress was throwing away the weapon of deadlock. *Babu Rajendra Prasad* contended that if the Governor gave such an undertaking that, in itself, was a triumph for the Congress. It would be a triumph even before they started working the Constitution.

It was never their intention to enter the councils and keep mum. He admitted that the work outside the legislatures was more important than the work inside but they wanted to link up both. The other argument was that by accepting office, they would only get small minor grievances redressed. But would they weaken the desire for Swaraj by remedying these grievances? He wanted them not to look

down upon any measures, however small, taken to remedy the grievances of the masses.

Babu *Rajendra Prasad* said that he did not want the A. I. C. C. to vote for the resolution because *Mahatma Gandhi's* name had been associated with it. They should vote on its merits. Proceeding, Babu *Rajendra Prasad* argued that, if they did not take office and a deadlock arose on the first day, their cause would not be advanced a step. In that case they would not convince the masses that no benefit could be got out of the Act and therefore in the fresh election their votes should be given to Congressmen again. As far as he could feel the pulse of the country there was no one who wanted an immediate deadlock. As for Mr. Roy's amendment all the points it contained were covered by the original resolution.

The *President* then put the amendments to vote. Before doing so he said that they fell into three parts and he took it if one amendment in each of them was lost the other amendments in that group were also lost.

Mr. *Jaiprakash Narain's* amendment was first put and rejected by 135 votes to 78. Other amendments were put one by one and rejected.

The original resolution with the verbal alteration made by Babu *Rajendra Prasad* was passed by 127 to 70 vote.

The last para in the resolution as amended and passed read :

"And on the pending question of office acceptance and in pursuance of the policy summed up in the foregoing paragraphs, the All India Congress Committee authorises and permits the acceptance of offices in the provinces where Congress commands a majority in the legislature, provided that ministerships shall not be accepted unless the Leader of Congress Party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly, that the Government will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities".

#### OTHER BUSINESS

The *President* then announced that the Subjects Committee of the National Convention would meet at 11 a. m. to-morrow and the open session of the Convention, at 5 p.m. the same evening.

Dr. *Pattabi Sitaramiah's* resolution on Indian States was referred to the Constitution Sub-Committee.

#### JUTE WORKERS' STRIKE

The resolution regarding jute workers' strike in Calcutta has been referred to the Working Committee for consideration. Speaking on this the *President* said that the jute workers were the most exploited section of the workers in India and therefore the question deserved careful consideration.

The A. I. C. C. then adjourned *sine die*.

# The All India National Convention

Opening Day—Delhi—19th. March 1937

The proceedings of the All India National Convention commenced at Ansari Nagar, Delhi on the 19th. March 1937. With about 800 Congress legislators from the different provinces and over 200 members of the All-India Congress Committee slowly pouring in and nearly 10,000 visitors occupying the visitors' galleries, the whole of the spacious pandal was humming with life. The picturesqueness of the occasion was further enhanced by the ceremonial entry of the Congress President punctually at 5 p. m. in a procession led by ex-Presidents such as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to the accompaniment of a military band.

Proceedings very appropriately commenced with the singing of the National Anthem "Bande Mataram", the assembly standing in reverential silence.

## The Welcome Speech

Thereafter *Pandit Indra* welcomed the delegates and visitors in a short speech.

*Pandit Indra* referred to the various difficulties under which they had to work and make the arrangements for the Convention owing to the shortness of time but accorded a hearty welcome of love and affection to the delegates. He said that when Mahatma Gandhi initiated the Satyagraha movement there were three great Field Marshals in Delhi, namely, Swami Shardhanand, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M. A. Ansari. When the first two passed away the burden of the National Movement in Delhi fell on Dr. Ansari. Paying a glowing tribute to the services of Dr. Ansari, the speaker observed that the death of Dr. Ansari had taken away a great worker and patriot from Delhi. He was the soul of National activity here. But still the spirit he had instilled into his comrades was working and the Congress movement was going on with unabated zeal, courage and fortitude.

He said, "The Congress movement has made tremendous strides during the last eighteen years. At the start we proceeded slowly, but, as we marched on, our speed accelerated and it gained a momentum which is very encouraging. The movement, which, at its commencement, was confined to the demand for a few Government jobs has ultimately transformed itself into a demand for fundamental rights and taken the shape of a fight. From the stage of passing pious resolutions and making rhetorical speeches we have come to the stage of direct action and holding out threats. The Congress, which consisted at the beginning of a handful of high class educated intelligentsia, gradually brought in its fold middle class people and now it comprises masses—peasants and workers who constitute its bulk. As will be evident from the recent elections the Congress has created a widespread national awakening throughout the length and breadth of the country. Probably we were not optimistic enough to expect such magnificent results. These elections have increased the responsibility of those who have been elected. The confidence which the masses have reposed in them makes their task heavier and onerous."

Proceeding *Pandit Indra* asked this Convention of the Congress legislators and members of the All-India Congress Committee to take a definite step forward and draw up a militant programme. Political tactics were good. Caution was better still. But more important than these were courage and good. Caution was better still. But more important than these were courage and imagination. We had reached a political stage where the latter qualities were required most.

"Our leaders do not lack these qualities. It is proved by the fact that, under their leadership, we have marched from stage to stage in advance. It is a matter of gratification that we have, at this juncture of our national life, a leader at the helm of Congress affairs who is eminently suited to the occasion. It will not be an exaggeration to describe Mr. Jawaharlal as an embodiment of the sorrows of the destitute and hungry millions of the country. We hope this Convention will give a correct lead to the country and serve the great purpose for which it has been called."

## The Presidential Address

Before delivering the presidential address *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* announced that he proposed to adjourn the Convention to-day after reading the form of the Pledge to be repeated by all members of the Convention present when he had finished his speech.



Referring to the Pledge forms which had been distributed among the members of the Convention the Congress President removed certain misapprehension that might be caused from the reading of the Pledge form as printed in Hindi and Urdu scripts and said: "The Pledge forms which have been distributed have been printed in Hindi and Urdu scripts. They have not been printed in English or any other Indian script or language. It is proposed that at a later stage in to-day's proceedings, I should read this out in Hindusthani slowly, a few word at a time, and ask all members of the convention to repeat these words together. It is wrong to describe that Pledge form as being only for Congress members of Assemblies or Councils. It is for all of us, irrespective of whether we are or are not members of the legislatures, provided we are Congressmen, as we all are, and are members of this Convention. Therefore, all of us will take part in it.

"There is another point. It is not to be signed and returned as the printed copies imply. But I should like, as a record of this Convention, to take the signatures of all those who attended in a book which we wanted to prepare to-morrow. That will be a memorable record of this Convention."

*The following is the full text of the address delivered by the Congress President:*

We are used to our Congress gatherings, vast and impressive and representing the will of the Indian people for freedom. Behind them lie half a century of our country's history and a tradition of growth and change and adaptation to fresh needs and new situations. But to-day we meet in this Convention under novel conditions, for this Convention has no background except what we choose to give it, has no future except such as we determine. Well-established institutions and organisations develop in the course of time, a certain will and momentum which carry them forward almost apart from the desires of their constituent elements. They have an individuality which expresses itself in its own particular way, a certain stability and steadiness of purpose, as well as a certain conservatism. They do not easily move out of their moorings; like an elephant, they are heavy of movement, but when they move, they have all the greater momentum, and they change the shape of things. Such is our Congress.

But this Convention is new and few people seem to know what it is or what it is going to be. Some doubt is justified; and yet all of us know well our moorings and our purpose, and though, as a Convention, we may be new, we have our roots in those past struggles which are written in the history of the Congress and our freedom movement. This Convention is a child of the Congress, looking to it for strength and guidance.

In writing this address I suffer from a disability. During the few days that will elapse between now and the meeting of the Convention, the major issues before us will be decided by the All-India Congress Committee. I do not know what these final decisions will be, and so, when this written message changes to the spoken word, much may have happened which might need variation or emphasis. And yet, whatever this variation might be, the Congress policy and programme are clear and fixed for us by repeated resolutions of the Congress itself and by our Election Manifesto. We must move within that orbit and any attempt to go out of it would be betrayal of that policy and of the larger interests for which the Congress has stood. Those of you who have been elected to the new legislatures have asked the suffrage of the people on the basis of the Congress election manifesto, and you must inevitably take your stand on this. The very greatness of your success at the polls is striking testimony of the response of the masses to this policy and programme. Millions have testified to their faith and confidence in this; they have given it the final seal of the approval of the Indian people.

The electorate was confined to a bare ten per cent of our people, but everybody knows that the lower down the scale we go, the greater is the Congress strength. The remaining ninety per cent are even more solidly for the Congress than the ten per cent who have supported us. Though our success has been overwhelming and has confounded our opponents, and swept away the representatives of the big vested interests who opposed us, it should be remembered that the whole machinery of election was so designed as to weaken us. The pressure of an autocratic and entrenched Government was exercised against us, and behind it were ranged all the reactionaries and obscurantists who always flourish under the shadow of imperialism. Yet we won in a resounding manner.

#### MUSLIMS & COSEGES

Only in regard to the Muslim seats did we lack success. But our very failure

on this occasion has demonstrated that success is easily in our grasp and the Muslim masses are increasingly turning to the Congress. We failed because we had long neglected working among the Muslim masses and we could not reach them in time. But where we reached, especially in the rural areas, we found almost the same response, the same anti-imperialist spirit, as in others. The communal problem, of which we hear so much, seemed to be utterly non-existent, when we talked to the peasant, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. We failed also among the Muslims because of their much smaller electorate which could be easily manipulated and coerced by authority and vested interests. But I am convinced that, even so, we would have had a much larger measure of success if we had paid more attention to the Muslim masses. They have been too long neglected and misled and they deserved special consideration. I have no manner of doubt that they are turning to the Congress to seek relief from their innumerable burdens and their future co-operation is assured, provided we approach them rightly and on the basis of economic questions.

We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it. And yet some people still talk of the Muslims as a group, dealing with the Hindus or others as a group, a mediaeval conception which has no place in the Modern world. We deal with economic groups to-day and the problems of poverty and unemployment and national freedom are common for the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh and the Christian. As soon as we leave the top fringe, which is continually talking of percentages of seats in the legislatures and State jobs, and reach the masses, we come up against these problems. This way lies the ending of what has long been known as the communal problem.

One of the most remarkable signs of the times is the ferment amongst the Muslims in India, both the intelligentsia and the masses. Without any effective leadership they have drifted aimlessly, and they resent this helpless position and feel that the communal leadership they have had has weakened them politically, in spite of the trivial and superficial gains which they are supposed to have got from an imperialism which seeks to wean them away from the national movement. Muslim young men and old, and the Muslim press, are full of this self-analysis, and the desire to get out of the communal rut and line up with the forces of freedom and progress is strong within them. They see how the Congress has swept away Hindu communal organisation, how it has captured the imaginations of the masses, and they feel a little desolate and left out. They want to share in the triumphs of to-day and to-morrow, and are prepared to take their share of the burdens also. And so this election and our campaign, though they resulted in the loss of Muslim seats as a rule, have been a triumph for us even in regard to the Muslims. They have gone some way to lay the ghost of communalism. It is for us now to go ahead and welcome the Muslim masses and intelligentsia in our great organisation and rid this country of communalism in every shape and form.

#### LESSONS OF ELECTION

The elections have many lessons to teach us but the outstanding fact is this: Where we went to the masses direct we won overwhelmingly. Our partial lack of success in some provinces was clearly due to the Congress organisation there being confined to the cities and having little contact with the peasantry. We must remedy these failings and speak more and more the language of the masses and fashion our policy to meet their needs. We must carry the Congress organisation to every village, the Congress message to every mud hut.

I have referred to some of our failings and some of our failures. It is well to remember these and not to allow ourselves to be swept away by success into forgetting them. We build for the future and our foundations must be well and truly laid. To win an election is a small matter for us; we are out to win the freedom of our people.

Having disposed of these failures let me refer to the success that has come to us, for it is this tremendous success, not surprising for us who know our people, but astounding and upsetting to others, that is the outstanding feature of these elections. How carefully and lovingly the Government had nursed the great vested interests of India, encouraged the big landlords and communalists, helped them to organise themselves to oppose us, and looked confidently for success in its evil venture! Where are they now, these pillars of imperialism in India and exploiters of the Indian people? Sunk almost without trace, overwhelmed by the sea of Indian humanity, swept away by the big broom of the masses from the political

scene. Like a house of cards, they have fallen at the touch of reality; even so will others go who oppose India's freedom, and a day will come when British Imperialism throttles and crushes our people no more and is a dream of the past for us.

We went to our people and spoke to them of freedom and the ending of their exploitation; we went to that forgotten creature, the Indian peasant, and remembered that his poverty was the basic problem of India; we identified ourselves with him in his suffering and talked to him of how to get rid of it through political and social freedom. We told him of imperialism and of this new Act and Constitution which bind us still further and which we were out to end and replace by *panchayati raj*, fashioned by a Constituent Assembly, a grand *panchayat* of the nation, elected by all our people. We read out to him our Election Manifesto and explained its substance. He and his kind gathered in vast numbers to hear us and, listening to the Congress message, his sunken eyes glistened and his shrunken starved body rose up in enthusiasm and the wine of hope filled his veins. Who that saw that vision can forget it, or that subsequent sight of thousands marching to the polling booths in disciplined array, ignoring pressure and threat, disdainig the free conveyances and free food offered to them by our opponents? It was a pilgrimage for them to give their allegiance to the Congress, to vote for the ending of the new Constitution, for the establishment of *panchayati raj* when they would themselves have power to liquidate the poverty that consumed them.

That is the significance of this election. If there is any meaning in democracy, if this complicated and expensive apparatus of election and voting has any sense behind it and is not an impertinent force, then the Indian people have spoken, so that even the deaf might hear, and proclaimed that they will not have this Constitution. They have given notice to quit to British Imperialism. This Constitution must therefore go, lock, stock and barrel, and leave the field clear for our Constituent Assembly.

We talk of and discuss our policy in the legislatures, but all this is vain and profitless parleying before the fundamental and dominant fact of the situation that this Constitution must go. So the people of India have decided and we shall be false and unfaithful representatives of our people if we allow ourselves to forget this fact contrary to that emphatic direction.

I know that there are elements amongst us who are too fond of slurring over these fundamentals, who look longingly to office and who have even compromised the dignity of our great cause and of the Congress by discussing the personnel of ministries long before the question of acceptance or non-acceptance of ministerial office has been decided by the All-India Congress Committee. Whatever their views may be on this issue, whatever the decision of the A. I. C. C. might be, I would have them remember, now and for the future, that no Congressman, worthy of his name, no Congress member of a legislature, can act except with the dignity and discipline that our cause and organisation demand. I would have them remember the Election Manifesto and the Congress resolutions on the basis of which they sought the suffrage of the people. Let no one forget that we have entered the legislatures not to co-operate in any way with British imperialism but to fight and end this Act which enslaves and binds us. Let no one forget that we fight for independence.

What is this Independence? A clear, definite, ringing word, which all the world understands, with no possibility of ambiguity. And yet, to our misfortune, even that word has become an object of interpretation and misinterpretation. Let us be clear about it. Independence means national freedom in the fullest sense of the word: it means, as our pledge has stated, a severance of the British connection. It means anti-imperialism and no compromise with empire. Words are hurled at us; Dominion Status, Statute of Westminster, British Commonwealth of Nations, and we quibble about their meaning. I see no real commonwealth anywhere, only an empire exploiting the Indian people and numerous other peoples in different parts of the world. I want my country to have nothing to do with this enormous engine of exploitation in Asia and Africa. If this engine goes, we have nothing but goodwill for England, and in any event we wish to be friends with the mass of the British people.

Dominion Status is a term which arose under peculiar circumstances and it changed its significance as time passed. In the British group of nations, it signified a certain European dominating group exploiting numerous subject peoples. This distinction continues whatever change the Statute of Westminster might have brought about in the relations *inter se* of the members of that European dominating

group. That group represents British imperialism and it stands in the world to-day for the very order and forces of reaction against which we struggle. How then can we associate ourselves willingly with this order and those forces? Or is it conceived that we might, in the course of time and if we behave ourselves, be promoted from the subject group to the dominating group and yet the imperialist structure and basis of the whole will remain more or less as it is? This is a vain conception having no relation to reality, and even if it were within the realms of possibility, we should have none of it, for we would then become partners in imperialism and in the exploitation of others. And among these others would probably be large numbers of our own people.

It is said, and I believe Gandhiji holds this view, that if we achieved national freedom, this would mean the end of British imperialism in India, and a necessary result of this would be the winding up of British imperialism itself. Under such conditions there is no reason why we should not continue our connection with Britain. There is force in the argument for our quarrel is not with Britain or the British people, but with British imperialism. But when we think in these terms, a large and a different world comes into our ken, and Dominion Status and the Statute of Westminster pass away from the present to the historical past. That larger world does not think of a British group of nations, but of a world group based on political and social freedom.

To talk, therefore, of Dominion Status, in its widest significance, even including the right to separate, is to confine ourselves to one group, which of necessity will oppose and be opposed by other groups, and which will essentially be based on the present decaying social order. Therefore we cannot entertain this idea of Dominion Status in any shape or form; it is independence we want, not any particular status. Under cover of that phrase, the tentacles of imperialism will creep up and hold us in their grip, though the outer structure might be good to look at.

And so our pledge must hold and we must labour for the severance of the British connection. But let us repeat again that we favour no policy of isolation or aggressive nationalism, as the word is understood in the Central European countries to-day. We shall have the closest of contacts, we hope, with all progressive countries including England, if she has shed her imperialism.

But all this discussion about Dominion Status is academic talk. It is many years now since India put that idea by and there can be no reversion to it. To-day, with the whole world in the cauldron of change and disaster threatening if, this lawyer's jargon seems strangely out of place. What counts to-day for us is to break and end this Constitution. What counts for the world is Spain and British rearmament and the French armament lean and the frantic and terrific race to be ready for war before this catastrophe comes to overwhelm civilisation. When will this come, suddenly and unannounced, and make a wreck of the modern world? That is the question for you and all of us, for on our answer and on our ability to cope with this crisis will depend the future of the Indian people. We have bigger decisions to take, graver choices before us, than those of lawyers' making.

Those decisions and that action require strength and perseverance and a disciplined nation. They require the masses in intelligent and organised movement for mass ideals and mass welfare. They demand that joint front of anti-imperialist forces, of which we have heard so much, and of which our National Congress is the living embodiment. It is not by mere votes in the legislatures, or petty reforms, or even artificial deadlocks, that freedom will come, but by the mobilisation of mass strength, and the co-ordination of our struggle in the legislatures with our struggle outside. For, essentially, we aim at the conquest of power, power for the Indian people to shape their destiny, and that power will only come through our own strength and will to achieve.

This is why the Working Committee has laid stress again on the extra-parliamentary activities of Congress members of the legislatures and on mass contacts. Our overwhelming success in the elections will be wasted if we do not keep up our intimate contacts with the masses and seek to serve them and mobilise them for the great tasks ahead.

With this background of principles and Congress policy we have to consider the narrower issue of what we are to do inside the legislatures. This narrow issue, and especially the question of acceptance or non-acceptance of ministerial office, has given rise to much controversy, and has often been considered divorced from the more fundamental factors of the situation. If we remember these factors, and the Congress and the Working Committee have stressed them again and again, the issue

becomes narrowed down still further. Indeed it hardly arises, except indirectly, for, as I have already stated, the outstanding fact of the elections is that the people of this country have given their verdict clearly, unequivocally and emphatically against this slave Constitution. If the British Government has any respect for democracy and still see virtue in democratic procedure, as it so loudly proclaims, then it has no alternative but to withdraw this Constitution and Act. That is our position and our demand, and so long as it is not acceded to we shall labour and struggle to that end.

Congress members of the Legislatures have their work out-cut for them by Congress resolutions. That work is primarily to fight the Act and press and work for a Constituent Assembly. Some people, in their ignorance, have imagined that this Convention is itself the Constituent Assembly, and that it is going to draft a new Constitution for India. This Convention is going to do no such thing. That is not its function and the time for drawing up India's Constitution is not yet. Nor is the Constituent Assembly a magnified All-Parties' Conference. The Constituent Assembly that we demand will come into being only as the expression of the will and the strength of the Indian people; it will function when it has sanctions behind it to give effect to its decisions without reference to outside authority. It will represent the sovereignty of the Indian people and will meet as the arbiter of our destiny.

How can this Assembly meet to-day when British imperialism holds forcible sway here with its armies of occupation, and spies and informers and secret service, and the denial of civil liberty? When so many of our loved ones and comrades languish in prison or detention camp? When this monstrous Constitution has been imposed upon us, despite our indignant repudiation of it?

Therefore, let us be clear about it. There is no room for a Constituent Assembly in India till we have in effect removed these burdens and obstructions, and the will of the Indian people can have sovereign play. And, till then, there is no room in India for any other constitution imposed upon us; there is room only, unhappily, for conflict and struggle between an imperialism that dominates and a nationalism that seeks deliverance. That nationalism is no weakling to-day and, though it may have to wait awhile for its deliverance, it will not tolerate domination and dictation.

So we are told by the Congress to go to the legislatures to co-operate, for this so-called co-operation would only be another name for submission to dictation, but to fight the Act. Whatever decision we might take on other issues, that basic policy remains and must remain. Inevitably it follows that we cannot have any alliances with individuals and groups who do not subscribe to this policy.

It is within this narrow framework that we have to consider the question of office acceptance. That question will have been decided by the All-India Congress Committee by the time we meet in Convention and I stand before you, and by that decision this Convention will be bound. So I cannot say much about it here. I have often given expression to my views on this subject and our electoral victory has not changed them in any way. But we have to remember that whatever the decision of the All-India Congress Committee might be, the whole logic of Congress resolutions and declarations and policy, leads us to maintain a spirit of non-co-operation towards this Constitution and Act. Ordinarily in a democratic constitution to have a majority means an acceptance of ministerial responsibility. To refuse responsibility and power when a democratic process offers it to us is illogical and improper. But we have neither democracy nor power in this Constitution; the illogicality and contradiction lie in the Constitution itself. Are we to twist and distort ourselves, to fit in with this perversion? Therefore, whatever else we might do that spirit of non-co-operation and struggle against British imperialism must pervade our efforts.

Many of you are eager and desirous of doing something to relieve the burdens of our masses, to help the peasant and the worker and the vast numbers of middle-class unemployed. Who does not want to do that? No one likes conflict and obstruction, and we have hungered so long for real opportunities for serving our people through constructive effort. They cry aloud for succour, these unhappy millions of our countrymen, and even when their voices are silent, their dumb eyes are eloquent with appeal. It is difficult to live in this country surrounded by this human desolation and misery, unspoken often and [the harder to bear because of that. We talk of Swaraj and independence, but in human terms it means relief to the masses from their unutterable sorrow and misery. Ultimately all that we work for resolves itself into that. And if we have a chance to give such relief even in a small measure, we cannot reject it.

But that relief must be for the millions, not for a few odd individuals. And if we think in terms of those millions, what relief does this new Constitution offer? I have read its relevant clauses again and again, over with a growing astonishment at the audacity of those who have framed it and thrust it on us, protecting all those who needed no protection, confirming their privileged position as exploiters, binding us hand and foot not to touch them in any way, and leaving the masses of India to sink deeper in the quoksaada of poverty. We cannot give adequate relief to the masses within the scope of this Constitution; that is a demonstrable impossibility. We cannot build any new social structures so long as special privileges and vested interests surround us and enfeeble us. We cannot carry out any policy, political, economic, social, educational or any other, when the whole executive agency and civil service is not subject to our control, and we may not touch the major part of the revenues. The "special powers and responsibilities" of the Governors and the Governor-General apart, the Act by itself is more than sufficient to disable any minister.

But we can do some other things. We can take upon ourselves the odium and responsibility of keeping the imperialist structure functioning, we can become indirectly responsible for the repression of our own comrades, we can take away the initiative from the masses and tone down their fine temper which we ourselves have helped in building up. All this may happen if we follow the path of least resistance and gradually adapt ourselves to existing conditions. I do not think that this will happen, for the temper of the Congress and the people will not allow it. We have gone too far for that.

Thus we do not seek the working of the new Constitution but the most suitable way of meeting and creating deadlocks, which are inevitable in this scheme of things, and of carrying on our struggle for freedom.

I can see no flaw in my reasoning, if the promises of the Congress resolutions are accepted, as accept them we must. Whatever the A. I. C. C. may decide on this question of office acceptance, we shall have to carry on the spirit and letter of those resolutions, in the legislatures as well as outside.

Our decisions must be All-India decisions, for it would be fatal to have variations in policy of suit the minor needs of provinces. The unity of India has to be maintained; so also the unity of our struggle against imperialism. Danger lurks in provinces acting separately and being induced to parley separately. Therefore as I conceive it, the chief virtue of this Convention, now or later, is to keep this all-India character of our work in the legislatures even in the forefront and to prevent fissiparous tendencies and the development of provincialism. A necessary counterpart of this is the maintenance of a uniform discipline among Congress members of all legislatures. Every effort is likely to be made on the part of our opponents to effect breaches in that discipline and all-India policy, but we must realise that without the self-imposed discipline and uniformity, our strength goes and we become isolated groups and individuals, ignored and crushed in turn by our opponents.

The wider policy that will govern us must inevitably come from the Congress and that policy must be loyally carried out by this Convention and its members. What other functions the Convention will perform will be laid down by the All-India Congress Committee and I do not wish to prejudge the issue in this written message of mine. But I can conceive the Convention or its representatives not only doing what I have mentioned above, but in times of national or international crisis playing an important role in our struggle for power and freedom.

You will soon go back to your provinces and constituencies and explain to our comrades there the decisions taken here in Delhi city, and prepare for the new forms of struggle that await you. We have some experience of this struggle for freedom and many of us have given the best part of our lives to it, and a variation in its shape or form will not deter us. But we must hold our old anchor and be swept away by passing currents. And we must remember that we live in a dynamic world where almost everybody expects sudden and violent change and catastrophe. That crisis, national or international, may seize us by the throat unawares sooner than we imagine. So we must be ever ready for it and we may not think or act in terms of static or slow-moving periods.

Our next task is the hartal of April 1st, and on the day I hope you will be in your constituencies to take part in that mighty demonstration against this slave Constitution and to declare again, with millions of our countrymen, that this Cons-

tification must be scrapped and must give place to another, framed by a Constituent Assembly and based on the sovereignty of the people of India.

#### THE OATH

The most spectacular part of to-day's session of the National Convention was the administration of the oath of allegiance by the Congress President to the Congress members in the legislature as well as to the members of All-India Congress Committee. It was indeed an impressive ceremony. And none could have failed to be thrilled and awed by the spectacle of a thousand representatives of the teeming millions of Indian masses standing up and repeating word for word the Pledge to serve India and to work inside legislatures and outside for the Independence of India and to end the exploitation and poverty of her people.

The Congress President at first read out the English rendering of the Oath, but the whole assembly was requested to repeat the Hindustani version which was separately read out by the President.

"I, a member of this All-India Convention, pledge myself to the service of India and to work in the legislatures and outside for the independence of India and the ending of the exploitation and poverty of her people. I pledge myself to work under the discipline of the Congress for the furtherance of Congress ideals and objectives to the end that India may be free and independent and her millions freed from the heavy burdens they suffer from."

The Convention session was adjourned at 7-50 p.m. to reassemble on the next day.

### Second Day—Delhi—20th. March 1937

#### WITHDRAWAL OF REFORMS ACT

When the National Convention resumed at 2-45 p.m. to-day, Mr. *Yakub Hassan* moved the first resolution demanding withdrawal of the Government of India Act, 1935, as it had been rejected by the people of India. Mr. *Yakub Hassan* said that the notice that Congress legislatures would give to the Governor in terms of the resolution would be the first test of British protestations that they were sincere in the grant of provincial autonomy. He strongly criticised Mr. *Jinnah* and Pandit *Malaviya* for opposing the Congress on the communal and religious plane and reaffirmed his conviction that Congress should extend its invitation to members of legislatures to a joint conference. Response to such invitation would be much bigger than had been generally supposed. It was quite possible that such a conference of legislators might serve the purpose of a Constituent Assembly. They had so often in the past failed to arrive at a communal agreement that there was no longer any scope for further exploration outside the legislatures. The Convention, the speaker asserted, should be extended so as to form a National Parliament which would be all-powerful and whose decisions would be irresistible.

Mr. *Pyarilal Sharma* seconded the resolution.

Mr. *J. C. Gupta* (Bengal) stressed the importance of the Convention from the viewpoint of those provinces in which the Congress was not in a majority. Left to themselves, those provinces would not be able to take such steps as the resolution demands. It was here that the co-operation and the strength of the provinces in which the Congress had majorities was necessary, although he had hopes that the resolution was so reasonable and so irresistible that even "minority legislatures" would carry it out on behalf of minority provinces. The speaker appealed to the other six provinces to give them their help by passing the resolution in the first instance.

Mr. *Godavaris Misra* (Orissa) protested that Congressmen were reasonable people and were prepared to get what they could out of the Constitution. But the Constitution was such that nothing could be got out of it.

Mr. *Parasuram Tahiramani* (Sind) said that Indians by traditional and intrinsic non-violence were best fitted to put forward a demand for ending exploitation. They were determined to demonstrate that they would not submit to coercion any longer. The caravan would not be allowed to go on. The demand should be put forward in every legislature, no matter whether it was defeated in those provinces where Congress had not a majority.

Mr. *Chandhary Krishna Gopal Datt* (Panjab) moved an amendment seeking to add in the third paragraph the word "economic" so as to make it clear that the

Convention stood for a genuine democratic state whose political and economic power had been transferred to the people as a whole.

Mr. *Nehru* said that political included economic.

Mrs. *Hansa Mehta* (Bombay) said that women wanted to justify their presence in the legislatures not by words, but by deeds as in the past. They had been returned to the legislatures on pledge of wrecking the Constitution, and replacing it by another framed by Indians. There was no need therefore for a fresh declaration of the same object. The resolution was put to vote and carried.

#### CONGRESS POLICY IN LEGISLATURES

Mr. *Achyut Patil-dhan* moved the second resolution regarding Congress policy in the legislatures and drawing the attention of Congress legislators to the Working Committee's resolution adopted at Wardha on 27th February.

Mr. *Patwardhan* emphasised the need for discipline among Congress legislators and warned them against drawing in undesirable elements in the process of coalitions.

Mr. *V. M. Ramaswami Mudaliar* (Madras), after referring to the signal success achieved by labour candidates in Madras, urged that Congress legislators should keep before them the need for releasing South Indian Railway strikers who were still languishing in jails. He also urged Congress legislators to consider the question of social insurance schemes for workers.

Mr. *A. M. Laman* (Bengal) opposed the resolution and expressed disagreement with it on two points, namely, hours of working and minimum wages. He maintained that eight hours was too long. Some workers in Bengal were even now working only seven hours and the resolutions would have an adverse effect on the position of those workers. Congress had fixed the limit of salaries as Rs. 500, but what about the minimum? He suggested that Rs. 40 adopted by the All India Trade Union Congress should be accepted. He also urged the Congress to take more real interest in the cases of workers.

Mr. *K. G. Gokhale* (Karnatak) declared that Congress legislators should prove true to the pledges given to the masses. Congressmen had entered the legislatures as loyal and true servants of the people and it was necessary that they should justify that by carrying out the people's mandate.

Mr. *Bhanjuram Gandhi* (N. W. F. P.) advocated reduction of taxes and retrenchment of expenditure on administration. He wanted the Congress to set an example in this matter.

Prof. *Ranga* (Madras) wanted a moratorium to be declared on rural debt and arrears of rent and revenue. This was necessary while Congress Ministers were taking measures to enquire and formulate detailed proposals for permanent relief from the burden of debt and revenue. He also wanted living wages not only for industrial workers but also for agricultural workers.

Mr. *Jawaharlal Nehru*, in the course of an explanation, said that he had received several amendments of the nature suggested by Prof. Ranga. The programme contained in the resolution was not an exhaustive one. It only indicated the broad lines along which work should be conducted. It was not possible to lay down a detailed programme while they were not sure how long they would remain in the legislatures. If they put forward a lengthy programme it would lessen the effect of coming conflicts.

Mrs. *Uma Nehru* supported the resolution and declared office would be accepted to end the Act as quickly as possible.

The resolution was put to vote and carried.

#### WORK OUTSIDE LEGISLATURES

Pandit *Madan Mohan Malaviya* moved the third resolution calling the attention of Congress legislators to work outside legislatures, particularly in their constituencies.

In the course of his speech he said that during the last 150 years of British rule over the country, the people had been completely impoverished. The new Act had no use for the people. It was essential that those who had been elected should carry on agitation among the people and not have peace till the Act is replaced by one which was framed by Indians themselves. It was a matter of shame that India, a country with a great past and of three hundred and fifty millions, should continue to be under foreign domination. It had been stated time and again that Congress was not representative of the people of the country. The people of India had amply demonstrated that Congress represented the country and was its mouthpiece. Now that the question of office had been decided once and



for all, it was not proper to carry on the controversy. Everyone should loyally abide by the decision of the A. I. C. C. It was now in the hands of Congress legislators and workers to carry on propaganda and agitation all over the country that every man and woman feels foreign domination and will vow himself or herself that they shall not sleep till the Act was replaced. It was not for the first time in the history of India that a resolution of the type was being placed before the Convention and every legislator took a vow to keep in constant touch with his constituency. Every legislator should see that fear among the people is killed.

*Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya* advised the Congress legislators to establish *grama panchayats* in every village whose duty it shall be to see that not a single soul starved. They should strengthen the organisation of masses and remove illiteracy by starting schools in every village. The resolution he had just moved provided them with plenty of scope to improve the lot of people. They should be able to make the masses feel that they were masters in their own houses. It was their duty to remove fear from the people of the police who were the servants of the people though all along they had been playing the role of masters.

Replying to a question *Mr. Jawaharlal* said that it was necessary for the Provincial Congress Legislative parties to work in consultation with Provincial Congress Committees so as to avoid conflict.

*Dr. Hussain Zahir* seconding the resolution said that it was absolutely essential for the Congress legislators to carry the Congress message to every nook and corner of the country.

*Sreemati Sharmada Thyagar*, in a spirited speech, emphasised the importance of work outside the legislatures, particularly in constituencies. After the resolution had been further supported it was declared carried.

*Mr. Jawaharlal*, winding up, said that many were vague about the Convention. The Convention was after all the creation of the Congress and had to carry out the orders of the Congress. Yesterday, he spoke of the Panjab workers' failure to achieve success at the recent elections. Many workers from that province had taken it to heart. He was sorry if he had offended them. Yet one felt such a great Congress Province should have failed in the elections.

Referring to the hartal on April 1, the President said that, apart from hartal, meetings should be held all over the country and resolutions passed.

In the course of his concluding remarks, *Mr. Nehru* reiterated its objects and declared that it had brought them together and served to promote that sense of unity and uniformity which was necessary to overcome fissiparous and provincial tendencies. It was a psychological thing which would counteract the danger of their getting involved in ordinary provincial troubles and struggles and thinking more of them than of the whole problem. This danger of provincialism was already present and might grow with the coming of provincial autonomy. Regarding the future of the Convention, frankly he did know what it would be. But they would remember that the Convention consisted of well-recognised constituent elements. It was not an odd gathering. There was no difficulty in getting them together. "It may be that a crisis or a grave trouble might arise and when it arises it is easy to get you together. When that will arise we do not know. It is quite possible that national or international crisis might arise, but for the moment we shall confine ourselves to the national problem. When it does arise there would be no difficulty for us to meet together and work together for India's freedom." He then declared the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

## The Working Committee Proceedings

Wardha—5th July to 8th July 1937

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha on July 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1937. *Shri Jawaharlal Nehru* presided. The members present were: *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, *Shrimati Sarojini Naidu*, *Shris Vallabhbhai Patel*, *Rajendra Prasad*, *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, *Jamnalal Bajaj*, *Bhulabhai Desai*, *Govind Ballabh Pant*, *Narendra Dev*, *Shankar Rao Deo*, *Achyut Patwardhan* and *J. B. Kripalani*.

Shri Rajagopalachari and Sarat Bose attended the meeting by special invitation. Shri R. G. Kher, N. B. Khare and Bishwanath Das attended for some time the meeting on July 6 and 7.

The minutes of the last meeting held at Allahabad already circulated were confirmed.

#### BY-ELECTION OF DELEGATES

On a reference being made from Bombay, the Committee reiterated its decision that the by-election of delegates is to be regulated by its resolution passed at Wardha, June-July 1936, which runs thus.—

"7. In a constituency where for any reason a by-election of a delegate becomes necessary, the members entitled to vote and be candidates for such a vacancy shall be,

- (a) those included in the list mentioned in Art. (VIa) and
- (b) new members enrolled since the closing of the said list and three months prior to the by-election."

#### ELECTION OF LEADER IN BOMBAY. SHRI NARIMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

##### WITH THE PRESIDENT

The Committee issued the following press communique :—

"Shri K. F. Nariman having made representations to the President in his letters dated May 13, June 23, July 3 and July 5, he was invited to come in person to make matters clear and explain what he desired to be done. Shri Nariman appeared before the Working Committee on July 8 and intimated to them that he had not intended to ask in his letters for the re-opening of the subject by the Working Committee and he definitely stated that he did not seek any reopening of the Committee's decision of March 30 and that he accepts it as finally deciding the question. He further stated that he does not want any other matter referred to in the correspondence to be inquired into by the Committee."

#### OFFICE ACCEPTANCE IN PROVINCES WITH CONGRESS MAJORITIES

The following resolution was passed :—

The All India Congress Committee, at its meeting held in Delhi on March 18, 1937, passed a resolution affirming the basic Congress policy in regard to the new Constitution and laying down the programme to be followed inside and outside the legislatures by Congress members of such legislatures. It further directed that in pursuance of that policy, permission should be given for Congressmen to accept office in provinces where the Congress commanded a majority in the legislature, and the leader of the Congress Party was satisfied and could state publicly that the Governor would not use his special powers of interference, or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to their constitutional activities. In accordance with those directions, the leaders of Congress parties, who were invited by Governors to form ministries, asked for the necessary assurances. These not having been given, the leaders expressed their inability to undertake the formation of ministries. But since the meeting of the Working Committee on April 28 last, Lord Zetland, Lord Stanley and the Viceroy have made declarations on this issue on behalf of the British Government. The Working Committee has carefully considered these declarations and is of opinion that though they exhibit a desire to make an approach to the Congress demand they fall short of the assurances demanded in terms of the A. I. C. C. resolution as interpreted by the Working Committee resolution of April 28. Again, the Working Committee is unable to subscribe to the doctrine of partnership propounded in some of the aforesaid declarations. The proper description of the existing relationship between the British Government and the people of India is that of the exploiter and the exploited, and hence they have a different outlook upon almost everything of vital importance. The Committee feels however that the situation created as the result of the circumstances and events that have since occurred, warrants the belief that it will not be easy for the governors to use their special powers. The Committee has moreover considered the views of Congress members of the legislatures and of Congressmen generally.

The Committee has therefore come to the conclusion and resolves that Congressmen be permitted to accept office where they may be invited thereto. But it desires to make it clear that office is to be accepted and utilised for the purpose of

working in accordance with the lines laid down in the Congress election manifesto and to further in every possible way the Congress policy of combating the new Government on the one hand and of prosecuting the constructive programme on the other.

The Working Committee is confident that it has the support and backing of the A. I. C. C. in its decision and this resolution is in furtherance of the general policy laid down by the Congress and the A. I. C. C. The Committee would have welcomed the opportunity of taking the direction of the A. I. C. C. in this matter but it is of opinion that delay in taking a decision at this stage would be injurious to the country's interests and would create confusion in the public mind at a time when prompt and decisive action is necessary.

#### SALARIES OF MINISTERS, SPEAKERS AND ADVOCATE-GENERALS

The following resolution was passed by the Working Committee at its meeting at Delhi, March 15-22 last :—

Apart from free provision to be made by the State for residence and conveyance the salaries of ministers, speakers and advocate-generals shall not exceed rupees 1,000 per month, as laid down in the Karachi resolution of Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme.

### All India Parliamentary Sub-Committee

#### DIVISION OF WORK

The All India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee met at Wardha on July 1937, and passed the following resolution :—

“Resolved that in cases of emergency, members named below be authorised to deal with matters coming within the purview of this Sub-Committee in the provinces mentioned against their names respectively :

Sri Vallabhbhai Patel :

1. *Bombay Presidency*, comprising the Congress Provinces of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bombay City and Karnatak.
2. *Madras Presidency*, comprising the Congress Provinces of Andhra, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Karnatak.
3. *Central Provinces*, comprising the Congress Provinces of Nagpur, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.
4. *Sindh*.

Sri Abul Kalam Azad :

1. *Bengal*, 2. *United Provinces*, 3. *Punjab* and 4. *North-West Frontier Province*.

Sri Rajendra Prasad :

1. *Bihar*, 2. *Orissa* and 3. *Assam*.

Further resolved that the Congress Parliamentary Parties in the Provinces be informed that in urgent cases, they should communicate with the member concerned regarding any questions requiring reference to this Sub-Committee. Any action taken by a member under this resolution should be reported by him to the Sub-Committee.

### Congressmen Joining Non-Congress Parties in Legislatures

The following note was sent by the President to the Bengal P. C. C. giving a decision in the case of Shri Niharendu Dutta-Majumdar and Bankim Chandra Mukherji who holding important positions in the Congress had joined in the legislature other than the Congress Party :

This matter was referred by the Bengal P. C. C. to the A. I. C. C. office for advice and decision in March last. Some correspondence took place and Messrs Majumdar and Mukherji were asked to explain their position to us, which they did in lengthy communications.

The question before us has arisen thus : Shri Niharendu Dutta-Majumdar and Shri Bankim Chandra Mukherji are both members of the A. I. C. C. from Bengal the latter is also a Vice-president of the Bengal P. C. C. Both of them are intimately connected with the Trade Union Congress and Labour Organisations in Bengal. As there was an attempt on the part of all concerned to co-operate to

ther on an anti-imperialist joint front and to recognise that the National Congress was the premier and outstanding organisation for this purpose, there were no marked conflicts in so far as political activities were concerned. A welcome and growing spirit of co-operation with the Congress pervaded various labour groups, and the Congress made an attempt on its part to develop greater mass contacts.

At the time of the recent general election for provincial assemblies, the question arose as to who was to nominate candidates for labour seats. The Congress position was that all such candidates should stand on the Congress ticket so that a powerful and disciplined anti-imperialist party should be built up in each legislature. Separate labour parties, even though they might be as advanced politically, or more advanced than the Congress, weakened the general anti-imperialist front. There was also the danger that individuals and small groups might utilize the labour or peasant cloak for a politically reactionary policy. The principal issue before the country was a political one—a fight against the new Constitution—and it was desirable to concentrate on this. This obviously could only be done by the Congress.

This position and attitude were generally understood and appreciated by labour and peasant groups, though there were occasional complaints as regards the choice of candidates on behalf of the Congress. In the country as a whole there was a remarkable co-operation in the election between the Congress and the various labour and peasant groups. The Trade Union Congress also co-operated in a large measure, with the important exception of a seat in Bombay where there was conflict. As a rule, in many provinces, the labour candidates set up by the Congress after consultation with various groups concerned, had the full support of the T. U. C. The President of the T. U. C. was himself a Congress candidate for the Assembly.

In Bengal, however, a number of labour and allied groups set up what was called "The United Front Parliamentary Board" to run candidates (presumably for the labour seats only) for the provincial assembly. This "United Front Parliamentary Board", it might be added, had nothing to do with the Congress. This policy was at variance with the all India policy in such matters and I think it was an unfortunate step under the circumstances. However, owing to the good sense of the Congress and the other people concerned upon conflict at election time was avoided. Several candidates set up by this Board were adopted by the Congress and stood for election on the Congress ticket. Shri N. Dutta-Majumdar and Shri Bankim Chandra Mukerji, however, stood only on the ticket of "The United Front Parliamentary Board." They were not Congress candidates, but they had the support of the Congress. Some financial assistance was also given to them by the Congress, though this is not of importance in considering the present question. They received messages of sympathy and support from me and other Congressmen. They succeeded in the election.

Neither of them joined the Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly. A separate party was formed by them called the Bengal Parliamentary Peasant and Labour Party. This party was a small group including some non-Congressmen and one person, Shri Kamini Kumar Dutta of Comilla, who, though a Congressman, had opposed the official Congress candidate and against whom disciplinary action had been taken. Later this group became smaller still by the resignation of two members, Messrs Aftab Ali and J. N. Gupta. These two resigned because Shri Dutta-Majumdar, speaking in the Assembly had fully associated himself with the views expressed by the leader of the Congress Party.

This Bengal Parliamentary Peasant and Labour Party is thus a very small group. Probably it does not contain more than half a dozen now, but I am not sure of the number. It does not contain all the labour members as several of the, including T. U. C. leaders, are members of the Congress Party. Shri Dutta-Majumdar is the leader of the party in the Assembly and Shri Bankim Mukherji is the Secretary. Shri Kamini Kumar Dutta represents the party in the Upper House.

As soon as this party was formed, the leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly asked us for advice as to whether it was open to Congressmen who were members of the Assembly to belong to other parties. The Working Committee was consulted in Delhi in March 1937 and, without going into any particular case, they laid it down that while labour and other groups might be armed informally, Congressmen should not belong to other parties, as this would mean their allegiance to another whip and to a non-Congress party.

The position thus is clear, though a certain difficulty arises from the fact that noted Congressmen deliberately chose to stand on another ticket and were permitted and even supported by the Congress in doing so. A labour member elected on a

Congress ticket obviously must belong to the Congress Party. A labour member or anybody else, unconnected with the Congress and standing on a non-Congress ticket, is equally obviously free to act as he chooses and is not under Congress discipline. But a Congressman of note who has been elected on a labour ticket alone has in a sense two allegiances and these may come into conflict. In actual practice there is no reason why there should be conflict. And indeed there are many labour and T. U. C. members who are in the Congress Parties. Even this particular case of Datta-Majumdar and Bankim Mukherji was referred to the head-quarters of the T. U. C. in Bombay and in their reply it was stated that the T. U. C. did not want separate parties to be formed in the Assemblies. The T. U. C. wanted its members to support the Congress Party on all political questions. But while they could not form a separate political party, they could form labour groups.

This attitude of the T. U. C. seems to me to be correct and in conformity with the general policy of the National Congress.

On general conditions it seems to me to be clear that the formation of separate parties for particular purposes is likely to injure the larger purposes we have in view, including the interests of labour. It will give strength to the disruptive tendencies and weaken us organisationally. For leading Congressmen and members of the A. I. C. C. to do so is to confuse the public. If Shri Datta-Majumdar's argument is correct then the Congress would tend to become a loose federation. We do not want that. We work for a strongly-knit party which can offer battle when the time comes.

While there should be only one Congress Party, the Congress permits of the formation of informal groups for particular purposes. Members interested in any such subject e.g., labour, agrarian matters, women's questions etc., can form a separate group. Shri Datta-Majumdar is thus free to form or belong to such an informal group, provided it is not a party issuing a whip and demanding allegiance. If he has any labour measures to put forward, in accordance with his labour programme, the Congress Party will not come in his way, though it may not necessarily adopt them. Thus he can remain true to the pledge he gave at the time of election.

Mr. Majumdar asks if it is obligatory for a person, like himself, who has been elected on a labour ticket with Congress support to join the Congress Party in the Assembly. I am not prepared to say that in such circumstances it is obligatory to do so but I do think that it is highly desirable to do so from every point of view, Congress and labour. Shri Majumdar will be able to do far more for labour through the instrumentality of a powerful Congress Party, of which he is a member, than through a small group which does not influence major parties much and which by its very existence as a separate unit, irritates other groups.

But though it may not be absolutely for him to join the Congress Party, I think it is obligatory for him not to join any other party than the Congress, so long as he holds a high position in the Congress. He cannot both be a member of the A. I. C. C. and a member of a non-Congress Party in the Assembly. He must choose between the two.

Therefore my advice to Shris Majumdar and Bankim Mukerji is to wind up their new party in the Assembly or to sever their connection from it. If, however, they are not prepared to do so then they should resign from the A. I. C. C. and offices in the Bengal P. C. C. They may however continue even then as primary members of the Congress. These are the two alternative courses they have to choose from.

I do not think any question of taking disciplinary action has so far arisen. Messrs Datta-Majumdar and Mukherji did not act in deliberate defiance of the Congress mandate but under a misapprehension. They can now retrace the step they have taken or otherwise conform to the Congress directions.

June 23, 1937

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

## Important Circulars issued to the P. C. Cs.

### The Resolution on Office Acceptance

Dear Comrade,

JULY 10, 1937

I need not draw your attention to the resolution of the Working Committee on office acceptance for that has already received sufficient attention from you. But I would draw your attention again to the directions of the Working Committee, given

in its earlier resolutions and endorsed by the A. I. C. C. to the vital importance of continuing with full vigour our organisational and other work outside the legislatures. They must continue to be our major occupation and without it legislative activity would have little value. The two forms of activity must be co-ordinated together and the masses must be kept in touch with what we do and consulted about it. The initiative should come from these masses.

The work of enrolling Congress members must continue vigorously as well as the formation of village committees. These committees should be encouraged to meet frequently to consider and discuss their own problems as well as the larger issues before the country. Our work in the legislatures will only bear fruit if it is followed closely and influenced by the Congress rank and file and the people generally. It must be the reflex of our larger freedom movement.

I should like to know what steps you are taking, in terms of the Working Committee's directions, to co-ordinate the activities of your Provincial Congress Committee with those of the Congress Party in the Provincial Assembly. In provinces where the area under the jurisdiction of both is more or less the same, few difficulties will arise. But there are composite provinces where the legislative province includes several Congress provinces. In such composite provinces care should be taken to work harmoniously and without encroaching on each other's preserves. The Provincial Congress Committee is the final authority for Congress purposes within that province. At the same time the Congress members of the legislature from that province belong to the Congress Party of the Assembly and owe discipline to that Party. To avoid misunderstandings a practice should be built up of mutual consultations. For this purpose the Parliamentary sub-committee of the Working Committee should be consulted.

During the ensuing months we want to keep in close touch with your provincial activities and we expect you to keep in direct and constant touch with your district and local activities. For this purpose a system of fortnightly reports must be kept up. We shall therefore expect to hear from you every fortnight giving a brief and concise account of the Congress work that is being done, the number of Congress workers enrolled, the number of village and Ward committees functioning, and other activities of the Congress.

## The Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations

Dear Comrade,

July 10, 1937

Some days ago I sent an article to the press in which I discussed our relation to labour and peasant organisations. This was produced in many newspapers and I presume that your attention was drawn to it. In this article I discussed the principles that should govern our work and I pointed out various difficulties that had to be faced. I did not go into the details of how to surmount these difficulties as conditions differ in various parts of the country and I could only deal with the general problem in that article.

Friends have written to me pointing out again some of their difficulties. I shall be glad to consider these fully and offer such advice as I can. A vital and growing movement like ours which touches the masses intimately must inevitably come up against such difficult problems. In considering them, however, the basic principles must be kept in view and this is why I draw attention to them.

I find that these problems and difficulties are more marked in areas where the Congress contacts with the rural masses are less than they should be. With the growth of Congress committees in villages and a large and fairly active rural membership, the desire of these rural masses for opportunities of self-expression is largely filled.

Obviously the first duty of every Congressman is to develop these direct contacts with the villages. That is the whole purpose of our mass contacts drive. We must make more and more members of the Congress in our rural areas and build up a network of village committees. The Congress agrarian programme must be placed before them for this is of greater interest to them than other issues. Their own immediate problems must be tackled and discussed with them and every possible help given in removing their grievances and teaching them to act in an organised and effective way.

Where genuine peasant organisations exist we should co-operate with them. We cannot oppose the formation of such organisations for it is the undoubted right of the peasants to organise for the removal of such grievances.

Where such organisations are politically reactionary they are not true peasant organisations and we cannot co-operate. Also where the peasant platform is utilised as a platform by opponents of the Congress, we cannot have anything to do with it.

But while we co-operate with peasant organisations our primary duty is to make the Congress in the rural areas as nearly a kisan organisation as is possible. Unless we do this in an ever-growing measure we shall lose living touch with the peasantry. Every Congressman must therefore bear this in mind and work accordingly.

I have previously discussed the question of the Flag. For the Congress and for every Congress function the only possible Flag is the National Flag. Indeed this Flag has already become the Flag of the Nation. Great as the Congress is, the Flag is something more than the Congress Flag.

The Red Flag has long been associated with the workers, especially industrial workers. It is not the flag of any particular country. Its origin is curious. In the early stages of the workers' movement, about a hundred years ago, the Red Flag was used by the State authorities when martial law was proclaimed and the workers were shot down and crushed under it. Thus it became associated in the mind of the workers with suffering and sacrifice for the cause; it came to embody for them their hopes and aspirations. They adopted this flag of their opponents and made it the symbol of their own solidarity. It became all over the world the international flag of the working class. As such it is right that we honour it. And if our workers adopt it as their trade union flag, it is right that they should do so in token of their solidarity with the workers of the world.

But to bring the Red Flag in token of hostility or rivalry to the National Flag is highly objectionable and leads inevitably to friction. Therefore all such displays of it must be avoided. More specially this is to be borne in mind in rural areas. The peasant has no such background in regard to the Red Flag as the industrial worker has. We have slowly accustomed him to the National Flag and he has grown to cherish it and consider it as his own. This flag represents, as no other does, the national struggle of independence. To lessen its value in the peasant mind, to confuse him in regard to flags, is to do disservice to our freedom movement. Therefore the peasantry should be encouraged to use the National Flag only and I would suggest to peasant organisations also to use the Flag. Let us make it the universal symbol of Indian independence, of political and social freedom for our Indian masses.

## Press Statements by the President

### Bombing and Kidnapping on the Frontier

Less than two months ago the British Government addressed a communication to the Spanish Government and the Insurgents in Spain asking both of them to refrain from bombing the civil population from the air. This remonstrance was sent to both the warring groups in Spain, but as a matter of fact the immediate occasion for it was the bombing of some of the towns in the Basque country, largely by German and Italian aeroplanes in the service of General Franco. For nearly a year, ever since the outbreak of the insurrection in Spain and its invasion by foreign forces, the world has been sickened by accounts of the barbarities perpetrated by the fascist-military clique in that unhappy country. Even so the bombing of Gueraica, an unfortified city, with incendiary bombs, the killing thereby of 800 civilians, and the destruction of a large part of the city came as a terrible shock to the peoples of the world.

The British Government sent a pious note of protest and remonstrance; that is its chief function now in foreign affairs. And yet, just then, that same British Government was indulging in bombing from the air across the north-west frontier of India. It was a strange and sufficient coincidence demonstrating in a flash the true nature and hypocrisy of modern imperialism.

How does the thing that is monstrous and horrible in Spain become justifiable in India across her frontier? Whatever the so-called justification might be, frightfulness remains frightfulness, and there are certain standards of conduct which can only be ignored and set aside at peril to the civilisation and culture which the world has so painfully built up through long years of travail. All over the world people realise this and raise their voices against this new barbarism of bombing of civilians from the air. But fascism and imperialism, twin-brothers, are impervious to this wide-spread opinion, are wholly insensitive to the suffering of innocent

human beings and to the crash of civilisation and the collapse of much that humanity cherishes. They carry on with their bombs from the air and destroy or maim impartially man and woman, boy and girl, and the child at the breast.

But humanity apart, let us examine this bombing business across the Frontier. The Congress has condemned it, as every sensitive person needs must, and it has further condemned the real motive force behind it, the so-called Forward Policy at the frontier. We are told, however, that the British Government indulged in this bombing in order to rescue and protect girls who had been kidnapped. It is strange that even the kidnapping of girls should fit in with the Frontier policy of Government, just as communalism fits in with its larger Indian policy. Memories of how the kidnapping of missionaries in various parts of the world helped in spreading the empires of various imperialist powers come back to us. Do we see a like process in operation at the Frontier?

Now it is clear and beyond possibility of argument that the kidnapping of girls is a barbarous and inhuman thing and we cannot tolerate it. A Government that cannot prevent it demonstrates its own incompetence. But it is also clear to every tyro in politics that air-bombing and military expeditions do not materialise unless there are important reasons of policy behind them. What that policy in India has been and is, we all know. For generations past it has messed about the frontier, ostensibly trying to solve the problem, in effect worsening it. One may argue whether this failure is due to sheer incompetence, or to a desire not to solve the problem, so that it may continue as a constant irritant and an excuse for periodical frontier operations and their inevitable reactions on Indian politics, or to both. But almost everybody is agreed that British policy on the Frontier has been a complete failure.

That is true on the face of it and yet that is too simple a statement to make, for the British people are no fools, and in framing their imperial policies they do not stop at the Frontier; they look far beyond it. In the old days they looked at the Tsar and his advancing empire; now the Tsar has gone past recall, but the same fascination forces them to look at the wide-flung Soviet territories which almost touch the frontiers of India. In this area of Central Asia they see threats to their Indian Empire, to the routes to India, to their world position. In the great crises that loom ahead, the Indian frontier and the adjoining countries may well have decisive importance. It is true that the Soviet Union desires peace more ardently than any other country in the world. It is true that the Soviet Union has tried hard to make friends with England. Yet the inherent antagonisms of the two systems remain and may become even more evident when crisis comes. We have seen how official England, even at the cost of minor interests and prestige, has indirectly aided the insurgents in Spain and supported the Nazi policy in Europe. The true kinship of imperialism with fascism affected British foreign policy more than many other considerations.

Thus the frontier of India and the lands beyond it are regarded by the Government as a probable theatre of war, and all their policy is directed to strengthening themselves there for war purposes. It is not a policy of pacification of and co-operation with the frontier tribes. It is ultimately one of advancing and occupying more territory so as to remove the theatre of war a little further away from their present base. The military mind, ignoring political and psychological factors, thinks only in terms of extending the bounds of an empire and thus, making it safer from attack. As a matter of fact this process often ends in weakening a country or an empire. In India we have the military mind at work even in the civilian departments, for the civilian considers himself, and rightly, as much a member of a foreign army of occupation as the soldier.

All this has led to the so-called "Forward Policy", at the frontier and because of this every excuse is good enough to be utilized for a forward move. It is with this background that we must consider recent events on and across the frontier.

This Forward Policy becomes an intense preparation for war, for the great war that is prophesied for the not distant future. Apart from our opposition and strong objection to this Forward Policy in itself, we have to oppose it as such a preparation for war. The Congress has declared itself against India's participation in imperialist war and by that declaration and policy we must stand, not for quixotic reasons but in the solid and permanent interests of the people of India and their freedom.

This Forward Policy has another aspect, a communal one. Just as the canker of communalism, weakens and injures our public life and our struggle for freedom, so



also the Forward Policy introduces that canker at the frontier and creates trouble between India and her neighbours. The policy of Britain at the Frontier has been alternately to bribe and terrorise the frontier tribes. That is a foolish policy, foredoomed to failure. That certainly can never be the policy of a free India towards them. The Congress has repeatedly declared that it has no quarrel whatsoever with our neighbours and that it desires to cultivate friendly and co-operative relations with them. Thus the Forward Policy of the British Government comes into direct conflict with our intentions and creates new problems which will be difficult of solution in the future. We must try to prevent that happening as far as we can and this makes it necessary for us to hold hard to these fundamental principles of ours and not allow ourselves to be swept away by anything else.

I am quite convinced that the trouble at the Frontier can be ended by friendly approach on our part, if we were free to make that approach. One man alone, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, loved on either side of the Frontier, could settle it, but under the British dispensation, he may not even enter his province. But even apart from Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, I can say with confidence that any approach by the Congress would meet with success. The chiefs of the frontier tribes would realise soon enough that our interests and theirs were not in conflict and they would cooperate with us in putting an end to the scandal of kidnappings and raiding expeditions. They would realise also that any other course than this would imperil the freedom that they have got, for British imperialism is determined to march further and further in pursuance of its Forward Policy. They play into the hands of this imperialism by giving it pretexts for action, and they create an unfriendly feeling in India by being parties to kidnappings and raids.

Let us examine briefly the recent occurrences on the frontier. A village girl of about 15 or 16, Ram Kuar, apparently eloped with some one. This incident which was a purely local and personal affair and had no larger significance, suddenly assumed importance and excited communal passions in the neighbourhood. Candidates for municipal and Assembly elections exploited it, such is the virtue of communal electorates. The matter was clearly one to be settled privately or through a court in accordance with the wishes of the girl herself. Neither Hinduism nor Islam profited or suffered by such an incident. A court intervened and it is interesting to note that the offence, for which the man who had accompanied Ram Kuar was ultimately sentenced, was based on the minority of the girl she being just under 16. It was not a case of forcible abduction. The girl made various contradictory statements, as almost any girl might have done under such extraordinary circumstances.

Perhaps the incident might have ended there. But the Assembly elections gave it further life for the candidates made full use of it. This incident had nothing to do with Waziristan or the Frontier tribes. In Waziristan about that time some trouble had already started; this had no connection whatever with Ram Kuar's case. The Waziris were acting against the British Government for some reasons of their own. But the growth of communal passions, chiefly due to the propaganda about Ram Kuar's case during the election campaign, affected the Waziris also and this produced unfortunate results soon after the election was over. Four Hindu girls were forcibly kidnapped by some Waziris aided by local bad characters, presumably to avenge Ram Kuar. This was followed later by many cases of dacoities.

All this, as far as I can make out, is confined to Bannu district. It is worth noting that it was in this very district that Congress candidates fared badly during the Assembly elections. Where Congress is stronger no such thing has happened. Communalism and trouble go hand in hand.

These kidnappings and dacoities had two obvious consequences. The small minority of Hindus living in the rural areas were naturally terrified and confounded. What frightened them most was the fact that as a rule their Muslim neighbours, who formed the large majority of the population, did not help them or protect them. Worse even than the actual occurrences were the rumours that were spread.

The second consequence was the advance of the Forward Policy. It had ample excuse now. Were they not going forward to punish those who kidnapped and committed dacoities on innocent and defenceless people? And so, claiming to be protectors of the weak, they marched ahead to fulfil the plans of British imperialism, and they bombed right and left with good will, and left a track of ruin and misery behind them.

It is easy to understand the reaction of the small minority of terrified Hindus. It is also easy to understand the anger of the hill tribes who saw this ruin and death surrounding them and to some extent connected it with the communal controversy. Nevertheless it was and is folly for both to think or act in terms of communalism for both are victims of that larger policy of imperialism which marches on regardless of human suffering. For the Hindus in the Frontier provinces to support imperialism and its policy is not only the height of folly and cowardice but also to invite ruin for themselves. They cannot live and prosper in that province except in co-operation with, and with the good-will of, their neighbours. For their Muslim neighbours in these villages to look on while kidnapping and dacoity take place almost before their eyes is to degrade themselves before the world. That is not the way of neighbours. For the Frontier tribes to associate themselves in any way with kidnapping and raiding is to discredit themselves and to imperil their freedom.

Our policy is clear. We cannot approve of the Forward Policy of Government, because that is a discredited policy, because it strikes at the very root of our struggle for freedom, because it makes enemies of our friends, because it is a preparation for war, and because it is an imperialist policy. We can never tolerate the barbarity and inhumanity of bombing from the air. Our approach to the Frontier problem would be entirely different; it would be based on friendship and co-operation and respect for the freedom of others; and an attempt to find an economic solution for their difficulties.

But it is equally clear that we cannot tolerate kidnapping and dacoities and raids. Our sympathies must go out to those who suffer from these, and it is our bounden duty to protect them. The surest protection, we feel, will come from a friendly approach and the removal of communal passions. Those who seek to feed these passions, either on the Hindu or the Muslim side, are friends of neither the Hindus nor the Muslims. The Congress has already done good work in the Frontier province in this respect and it is to be noted that the recent trouble has been largely confined to Hannu district where unfortunately the Congress organisation is weak. Dr. Khan Sahib, the Congress leader in the Frontier province, has already given a straight and brave lead and I trust that Hindus and Muslims alike will follow it. This is not a question of Hindu or Muslim, but of our dignity and good repute, our intelligence and good sense, to whatever religious faith we may belong, and of Indian freedom itself.

*June 26, 1937*

#### The Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations

Since my return from Burma and Malaya I have received many letters from Congress Committees and Congressmen enquiring about the duty of Congressmen towards labour and peasant organisations. Should these organisations be encouraged or not? And, if so, what form should they take, what relation, if any, should they bear to the Congress? These problems have arisen in many provinces and they require our serious consideration. Sometimes these problems are largely personal, sometimes they are mainly provincial, but behind them always there is the larger issue. In dealing with the local aspects of the problem, we must inevitably consider these peculiarities and even personalities. But we must be clear about the principles and the real issues before we lose ourselves in the forest of local detail.

How has this problem arisen? Not surely just because of a few persons acting in a particular way, but because of the dynamics of the very struggle in which we are engaged. It is a sign of our growth and the rising consciousness of the masses. For that growth the National Congress is mainly responsible and to it therefore must go the credit in a large measure for this new mass consciousness. The Congress has worked for it and if success comes to it, Congressmen must not fight shy of this. Therefore this new development is to be welcomed even though it might bring some occasional complications with it.

These complications are to some extent inherent in the situation. The Congress is predominantly a political organisation representing the urge of all classes of Indians towards national freedom. A labour or peasant organisation is essentially a group or class organisation primarily interested in the welfare and advancement of that group or class. The Congress thinks and acts mainly on the political plane, the workers' organisation on the functional and economic plane. Yet the differences are not so great as one would imagine and the development of our struggle and of political consciousness bring the two close to each other and they overlap to a considerable extent. The Congress because of its close touch with the masses,

because indeed it is by far the biggest mass organisation in the country, inevitably begins to think and act in terms of the economic grievances and disabilities of the masses, that is, the workers, peasants and others. The labour and peasant organisations are forced to the conclusion that economic disabilities cannot be removed to any large extent unless political freedom is achieved and power comes to the people as a whole. Thus the two overlap and the joint anti-imperialist front grows up.

In any country under alien domination the political aspect always overshadows other aspects. This in itself would make the Congress the dominant organisation in the country, but this predominance has been further intensified by the part that the Congress has played in recent years in our struggle for freedom. The Congress is thus to-day far and away the most powerful and the most widespread organisation in India; it has tremendous mass appeal and mass support; even the workers and peasants look up to it and are influenced by it far more than by their own class organisations. Other organisations are not even had seconds. The Congress has obviously not achieved this mass influence and support by its political programme only. It has done so by its magnificent record of service and sacrifice, and by its direct approach to the masses and its increasing economic orientation, which is understood by those masses more than the purely political objective. It is interesting to compare the organisational and basic strength of the Congress in various parts of India. This strength varies directly with the economic orientation and mass contacts.

Thus from the point of view of our freedom struggle, both in its political and economic aspects, it is essential that the Congress should be strengthened. Everything that weakens it, weakens that struggle, and weakens even the workers' and peasants' movements, for neither of these is strong enough to make much headway without Congress support. It is the realisation of this fact that has brought about the demand all over the country, and from all kinds of quarters, for a joint anti-imperialist front under Congress auspices. Indeed the Congress itself is increasingly considering this joint front.

But in spite of all this the Congress remains, and has to remain, a national organisation and it cannot always represent the functional or class interests of the workers and peasants. It cannot function as a trade union or kisan sabha. In actual practice, where its contacts with the peasantry are considerable, it almost functions as a kisan sabha. The general tendency is for the Congress to develop into a predominantly peasant organisation and this process is likely to continue, but the leadership is bound to remain with the middle classes, chiefly the lower middle classes, so long as the Congress remains the National Congress and does not undergo a sea-change into something entirely different.

But these are speculations about the future and it is the present that concerns us. The outstanding facts of the present are: (1) the Congress must be strengthened because it is the only organisation which can lead us effectively to our goal; and (2) the rising consciousness of and ferment among the masses. If these two facts are correlated then we have a powerful movement which grows in strength and leads us to success. This is the basic reason for and the *raison d'être* of the emphasis that is being laid on mass contacts. And be it remembered that this applies to all—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian masses. The cleavages of religious faith do not affect this programme at all. We talk loosely sometimes of Muslim mass contacts, but this is not a communal movement dealing with Muslims only. Our programme is identical in this respect for Muslim and Hindu or others; only in order to draw the attention of our workers to work amongst the Muslim masses have we talked of Muslim mass contacts.

Contacts with the masses can be of two kinds: direct contacts by means of Congress members and village committees among the workers' and peasants' organisations. The first of course is essential and needs no argument. Without it the second does not come into the picture at all, for the second can only be a corollary to the first. If the Congress has not got direct and widespread and deep contacts with the masses, it is bound to be influenced far more by the middle classes and will thus move away to some extent from the mass outlook which it has been its consistent aim to develop. It must therefore be the aim of every Congressman, and more specially those who have the interests of labour and the peasantry at heart, to develop these direct contacts by enrolling Congress members from the working classes and establishing village committees.

The second kind of contacts, that is some kind of organisational relation of the Congress with working class organisations, involving functional representation, has

been discussed for some time past and is still being discussed. It involves a basic change in the Congress constitution and I do not know when, if ever, it will be given effect to. Personally I am in favour of the principle being admitted and given effect to gradually as the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee has recommended. This will not make much difference to begin with, as the workers' and peasants' unions which are properly organised and capable of taking advantage of Congress affiliation are very limited in number; and then the conditions for affiliation would be laid down by the Congress. But this question does not arise now as the Congress constitution does not permit such affiliation or any kind of functional representation. It is a debatable question and we need not consider it further here. But this I should like to emphasise again: that those who are in favour of this change cannot bring it about from outside pressure; they can only do so by having a large enough Congress membership of workers and peasants who want such a change. If the outside pressure is at any time great enough to compel the Congress to bow to it against its own will, that will mean that the outside organisations are more powerful than the Congress, and if so, why affiliate? But this is a highly unlikely contingency.

While it is true that this question is beyond our purview at present, we see something vaguely similar to it developing all over the country. This is the increasing co-operation in actual work between local Congress Committees and working class organisations. Sometimes even joint informal committees have been formed. Often enough the leading spirits of those local organisations are prominent Congressmen and so there is no difficulty in having this co-operation. But there is something more in it than this common link; there is the demand for the co-operation and a realisation that it is highly necessary.

Having laid so much stress on the importance of bringing in workers and peasants directly into the Congress, let us now consider the desirability of having separate working class organisations. There can be no doubt whatever that both industrial workers and peasants have, or ought to have, the inherent right to organise themselves. That is in the nature of a fundamental right which the Congress has repeatedly recognised. There is no room for argument about it. The Congress has gone a step further and encouraged, in theory at least, the formation of such unions.

The case of industrial workers is clearer than that of the peasantry. It seems to me that any one interested in such labour must come to the conclusion that it is the bounden duty of the workers to organise themselves in trade unions and for others to help them to do so. The trade union movement is the inevitable counterpart of modern industry; it must grow as industry grows. The Congress with all its mass contacts cannot function as a trade union, and the numerous workers' problems and conflicts that arise can only be dealt with by a trade union. From the point of view of our larger freedom movement also the organisation of workers in trade unions is essential, for such organised workers develop strength and momentum and a high degree of political consciousness. Therefore Congressmen should help in the organisation of trade unions, and help also in so far as they can, in the day to day struggles of the workers. There should be co-operation between the local Congress Committee and the trade union. The trade union is of course in no way within the Congress organisation, nor is it subject to official Congress control. But it must recognise that in political matters the lead of the Congress has to be followed and any other course will prove injurious to the freedom struggle and even to the workers' movement. In economic matters and those relating to workers' grievances, the union can have whatever programme it chooses, even though this may be in advance of the Congress programme. Congressmen, in their individual capacities, can and should be members or friends of the union and as such will of course give it their advice. But a Congress Committee as such should not try to control a trade union. Recently a case came to my notice when the Congress Committee tried to interfere with the elections to the executive committee of a labour union. This seems to me highly undesirable. It is unbecoming for a Congress Committee to do so an unfair to the Union. It is bound to lead to conflict or to the conversion of the union into something which is not essentially a labour union. Congressmen, of course, who have served the cause of labour, have every right to take part in the affairs of the union.

Transport workers stand on exactly the same footing as other industrial workers and their organisation in special unions is highly necessary. It is also desirable to organise separately and functionally those workers in cities who carry on particular professions and whose economic interests are allied, such as tonga-wallas, ekkawallas,

wallahs (fishermen and boatmen), stone-breakers, petty clerks, press workers, sweepers, and the like. All this should of course be brought directly into the Congress fold as primary members, but they have special problems of their own, and a functional organisation gives them strength and self-reliance. It is easier for them later on to take part in Congress work. This of course presumes that Congressmen are in intimate touch with their special organisations and give them every help in time of need.

Mixed labour unions and mardar sabhas in a city, consisting of workers from various trades and businesses are usually not successful. There is no functional unity amongst them, no common urge to cooperation or action; and if a political unity is desired the Congress is there to give it.

The important problem of the peasantry remains, and this after all is the most important of our problems. In the term peasantry I include the peasant proprietors as well as the tenants, the petty zamindars of the Punjab and elsewhere, the kisans of the U. P. and Bihar and the krishaks of Bengal and Orissa. The same method of treatment will not apply to all these; there will be variations. But for the movement I am dealing with the Congress approach to their special organisations.

The Congress has fully recognised the right of the peasantry to organise themselves, and in theory the considerations I have advanced in favour of trade unions apply to them also. But there is a difference. It is relatively easy to organise factory workers and the like; they are a closely-knit group, working shoulder to shoulder and obviously suffering from common disabilities. It is far more difficult to organise the peasantry, loosely scattered and thinking almost always in terms of the individual and not of the group. We have experienced all these difficulties in the course of our Congress work, and thus we find that while Congress influence over the peasantry is very great, our organisational strength among them is much less. Tens of millions look up to the Congress and own allegiance to it, but the actual membership is counted in hundreds of thousands only.

Where Congress Committees are working effectively in village areas, an effective kisan organisation in the same area would largely overlap. There would be duplication of effort and waste of energy. The Congress itself is usually considered by the peasantry as their own organisation, and that is as it should be. Thus we find that in such areas separate kisan organisations have not grown up, although the movement, as a part of the Congress and more or less within its fold, is strong. Where, however, Congress Committees are not functioning effectively in the villages, the gap is bound to be filled sooner or later by peasant organisations. The important fact to be borne in mind is that there is deep ferment in the peasantry all over India and a powerful, though partly unconscious, desire on their part to do something to get rid of their many burdens, which have become quite unbearable. Fundamentally this is due to economic conditions, but also there is the fact that the political movement, under the leadership of the Congress, has raised mass consciousness and made them resent many things which they used to bear silently like dumb beasts. They have also had a glimmering of the effectiveness of organisation and united mass action. So they are expectant and if the Congress call does not reach their ears, some other will, and they will respond to it. But the call that will find echo in their hearts must deal with their own sufferings and the way to get rid of them.

Because of this we find to-day all manner of strange people who have never had anything to do with the peasantry before, talking in terms of economic programmes and trying in their uncouth way to woo the peasantry. Even political reactionaries of the deepest dye discuss unctuously agrarian programmes. Nothing will or can come of this, for far-reaching agrarian reform will never come out of political reaction. But this attitude of theirs shows us the way the wind blows.

The wind is blowing to the villages and to the mud huts where dwell our poverty-stricken peasantry, and it is likely to become a hurricane if relief does not come to them soon. All our political problems and discussions are but the background for the outstanding and overwhelming problem of India—the land problem.

The Congress has realised this in a large measure, and in spite of its political pre-occupations it has laid down an agrarian programme. This programme, though it does not go to the root of the problem, is substantial and far-reaching and undoubtedly would bring relief to the peasantry. So far as I know, agrarian programmes drawn up by peasant organisations do not differ greatly from this. But the drawing up of a theoretical programme is not enough. It must be given the fullest publicity among the peasant masses and the organisation must reach the village. Further we

must draw up definite schemes and proposals on the basis of this programme. These proposals will vary in different parts of India as conditions differ. It is the business of Provincial Congress Committees and Congress Assembly Parties to draw up these proposals. It is true that we may not be in a position to give effect to this full programme under present conditions. But we must be ready with it, to the smallest detail, so that when the time comes we can go ahead confidently and with speed.

I have pointed out that present conditions in India and the very dynamics of the situation are leading to the organisation of the peasantry. The example of other countries points to the same conclusion. Therefore it seems to me inevitable that peasant organisations will grow up. Where the Congress is itself largely a peasant organisation separate kisan sabhas and the like will not function effectively as organisations, though they may offer occasional platforms for the ventilation of kisan grievances. Where Congress contacts with village folk are weak, the kisan organisation will develop more. In any event the growth of peasant organisations, weak or strong, will take place. What should be our attitude to them?

We cannot say that there should be no peasant organisations. That would be contrary to the declared Congress policy; it would be wrong in principle, and it would come into conflict with that living movement and ferment that we see all around us. Nor can we say that a kisan sabha should be just a wing of the Congress, each member of the sabha being also a primary member of the Congress. That would be an absurdity, for under those conditions it is hardly necessary to have a kisan sabha. It seems to me also out of the question to place peasant organisations in the same category as the All-India Spinners' Association or the Village Industries Association. Such restrictions will not stop the growth of separate peasant organisations; they will only result in putting them outside the pale of the Congress and make them look upon it as a partly hostile body.

It is important that there should be no thought of rivalry between the two for this will be injurious to both, more specially to the peasant organisation which is bound to be much weaker. If large numbers of peasants are direct members of the Congress and leading Congressmen are interested in the peasants' grievances, there will be no rivalry and in effect, though not organisationally, the peasant organisation will be a kind of wing of the Congress.

There are of course difficulties in such vague contacts and possibilities of friction. These difficulties are inherent in the situation and we have to face them. The more real our politics are, the more they deal with the problems of life and the many facets of a vast and complex and dynamic movement, the more we have to face fresh problems and adjust ourselves to changing situations. For life itself is complex and everchanging. Any advice I may give to-day on this or any other subject may not hold good some time later for conditions may change.

And then principles may be good but it is not always easy to apply them in practice. Thus we find to-day that sometimes the kisan sabha platform is used in opposition to the Congress. Sometimes political or communal reactionaries try to do so; more often, some Congressmen who do not approve of the local Congress [Committee or its office-bearers find the kisan sabha platform a convenient place from which to attack them. A rival Congress group thus may exploit another organisation to gain power in the Congress itself. Thus the kisan sabha sometimes becomes a temporary home for the recalcitrants of the Congress, or even those against whom disciplinary action has been taken by Congress Committees. I have had reports of kisan conferences being organised within a couple of miles of a district Political Conference on the same day and at the same time. This was intentionally done to injure the Congress Conference and attract some people away from it. I have further had reports of processions organised to interfere with Congress Conferences, of slogans offensive to the Congress being shouted there, of flag conflicts being deliberately engineered.

This kind of thing is highly objectionable and all Congressmen must oppose this folly and this exploitation of the kisan movement in the interests of particular groups and individuals. It does not injure the Congress ultimately, except in so far as it produces confusion in the minds of the unsophisticated and simple-minded peasantry. It injures far more those who indulge in such practices. I have previously written about the flag and I want to repeat that any attempt to dishonour the National Flag, by whomsoever committed, cannot be tolerated. We have no grievance against the Red Flag. For my part I like it and honour it, as the symbol

of the workers' struggle and sacrifices. But it is grossly unfair to that Flag to treat it as a kind of rival of the National Flag.

Nor can we tolerate direct attacks on the Congress and offensive slogans. Persons who indulge in them do grave injury to the cause they claim to have at heart. This of course does not mean that criticism of Congress policy is not to take place. Full freedom of criticism is as the breath of life to living and growing organisations.

All such incidents have a local significance and are usually connected with local affairs. They should be dealt with locally or, if necessary, reference can be made to the A. I. C. C. office. When any Congressman indulges in persistent attacks on the Congress or in activity which is definitely harmful to Congress work and prestige, his case should be considered separately and referred to the P. C. C. or A. I. C. C.

But we are concerned much more with the larger problem and we must not be led away from it by local peculiarities. To face and solve that problem we must develop direct contacts with the peasantry. I think also that we should develop and maintain friendly and cooperative relations with peasant organisations and Congressmen should belong to them in large numbers. But we must avoid the development of any sense of rivalry between the two. The principles we follow are clear enough but the human factor is equally important, and if the latter functions properly, there should be a minimum of trouble and friction.

### The Kottapatam Summer School

While I was in Malaya I read a brief report in the papers of the Madras Government's ban on the Summer School at Kottapatam and the subsequent lathi charge on the students. Such a step would have been surprising and reprehensible even during the course of the civil disobedience movement. At the present moment it came as a shock to me. Since my return I have looked further into the matter and the sense of astonishment and shock has not lessened. This incident has illuminated, as by a flash of lightning, the real nature of the new Constitution and the way the Madras Ministry is functioning for it is this Ministry that is obviously responsible for the steps taken. We see that this Ministry is as much a police ministry suppressing elementary rights of free speech and association as the previous Government was. We see what the new Act means to the people. The same intolerable state of affairs continues and all the soft words thrown out at us cannot stop the aggressive suppression of civil liberty or the use of the lathi on the bodies of our youth. The lathi remains still under the new Ministers as it was before the true symbol of Government.

Some other important considerations arise. The police reporters tried to force entry on the Summer School. Very rightly this was objected to. We have been giving facilities to police reporters at our public meetings but this does not mean that we admit their right to attend our committee meetings and summer schools and the like. This cannot be agreed to. Summer schools for the study of political and economic problems have been held in many places in India. This is a healthy development which I trust will continue, for only by study and discussions can we understand our problems and find the way to their solution.

Another question that arises is the right of an individual or group to refuse to obey an order which it considers objectionable. It is patent that civil disobedience having been suspended disobedience of orders is not desirable. Where such objectionable orders are made reference should immediately be made to superior Committees for advice. But sometimes cases arise when immediate decisions have to be made and the burden of such decision must lie on the individual or group concerned and cannot commit the organisation. I can conceive of instances of orders which are so derogatory to the dignity of the individual or of the Congress that the individual prefers to disobey them on his own responsibility. This has nothing to do with civil disobedience. It is the inherent right of an individual. This right however must be exercised with every care and so as not to injure the large purposes we have in view, and the individual must take the risk of being judged by the organisation.

### The Communal Settlement

Rajendra Prasad—Jinnah Talks, 1935

The following statement was issued by the General Secretary contradicting Mr. Jinnah's statement that the Congress was not prepared to come to an agreement with the Muslim League in 1935.

In the course of a speech delivered in Bombay on May 21, 1937, Mr. M. A. Jinnah is reported to have said that "In 1935 he spent four or five weeks holding conferences with Babu Rajendra Prasad (the then President of the Congress) and trying to get the Muslim viewpoint accepted at least by the Congress leaders, if not by the Hindu Mahasabha. But he did not succeed".

If this report is correct Mr. Jinnah has apparently forgotten what took place in 1935. The conferences between him and Babu Rajendra Prasad resulted in substantial agreement on the points discussed. Mr. Jinnah, however, was of opinion that the Hindu Mahasabha leaders must also agree and this agreement was not obtained. Mr. Jinnah considered that it was not worth while to proceed further with the matter, or to give publicity to the substantial agreement with the Congress, unless the Hindu Mahasabha also agreed. It was because of this that no publicity was given to what had taken place.

The Congress Bulletin of March 20, 1935 confirming an Associated Press message to the same effect, stated as follows :

"As far as Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah were concerned the prolonged negotiations had brought about a substantial measure of common agreement, and left to themselves they would have reached a settlement, which they have every hope would have been endorsed by the Congress and the Muslim League. But their attempt to make others outside the two organisations agree to the same failed. Accordingly negotiations were abandoned".

To this during the course of a Press statement Mr. Jinnah gave the following reply :

"Mr. Kripalani referred to my Bombay speech of May 21, in which I said that in 1935 I spent four or five weeks holding conferences with Babu Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Indian National Congress, trying to get the Muslim point of view accepted at least by the Congress leaders, if not by Hindu Mahasabhaists. But I did not succeed. With reference to his speech I am accused that I have a short memory and in support of this accusation the Congress Secretary relied on a press message as his authority. Surely a man who has risen to the position of the Indian National Congress ought to know better than rely on press reports. The statement which I made in my speech is absolutely true and I repeat it.

"At times it is very difficult to say who are Congress leaders and who are Mahasabha leaders, for the line of demarcation between the two with regard to a large number of them is very thin indeed.

"Neither Babu Rajendra Prasad nor I had any authority to come to a binding agreement, as the talks were naturally subject to a confirmation by the Congress and the Muslim League. Babu Rajendra Prasad tried to ascertain the consensus of opinion among Congress and Hindu Mahasabha leaders regarding the formula, which he himself had approved but it was found that not only the Hindu Mahasabha leaders rejected it out of hands but even a certain section of influential Congress leaders were deady opposed to the formula, which therefore had to be dropped, as it was useless to proceed further."

Babu Rajendra Prasad thereupon issued the following press statement correcting Mr. Jinnah :

"I have read Mr. Jinnah's statement of July 8. In the conversations which I had with Mr. Jinnah in 1935 we were able to evolve a formula. I accepted it not only in my personal capacity, but as the President of the Congress, and offered to have it ratified by the Congress. I was keeping in touch with prominent Congressmen while the conversations were going on and had received universal support for it from them. There were several members of the Congress Working Committee at Delhi at the time and they were in full agreement with me. There was absolutely no difference among Congressmen and I was successful in obtaining the support of the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha of the Punjab also. But Mr. Jinnah insisted on having the signature of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and other leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha. This I was unable to secure and the matter had to be dropped. It was not dropped because Congressmen were not agreeable, but because those leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha on whose signature Mr. Jinnah insisted were not agreeable. It is not correct to say even that a certain section of influential Congress leaders were deady opposed to the formula which, therefore, had to be dropped.

"I had gone further and told Mr. Jinnah that the Congress and the League should accept the formula and the Congress would fight those Hindus who were opposed to it as it had fought them during the recent Assembly elections quite



successfully in most of the provinces. But this was not considered enough by Mr. Jinnah and as it was impossible to fulfil his demand that the Hindu Mahasabha should also join the matter had to be dropped. I dare say that Mr. Jinnah will himself recall all this conversation if he charges his memory a little. I kept full notes of the conversations from day to day and they are in the Congress office."

## Interference with Civil Liberties

*April 28, 1937—July 11, 1937*

The following cases of arrests, convictions, internments, externments, searches, seizure of literatures, gagging order and the like have been compiled from the daily newspapers. The list is not exhaustive :

Two Congress leaders, one of whom was a member of Bombay Legislative Assembly, were taken into custody by the Police and many received blows in a baton charge on April 28 as a sequel to a hostile demonstration against a member of the Bombay ministry.

A number of houses were searched at Cawnpore soon after the celebration of May Day, in search, it is reported, of communist literature.

On May 3 the house of a schoolmaster was searched at Dibrugarh and some literature was seized.

In Madras Mr. Chinnaaswami, a Congress volunteer, was sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for failing to report himself to the Police which he was ordered to do under the Criminal Tribes Act.

On May 4 Master Roor Singh, a prominent Socialist of the Punjab, was interned within the limits of his village for a period of one year.

Same day Mr. Ashutosh Ganguli, an employee of the Lucknow Railway workshop and a member of the Railway Union, Lucknow, was arrested while taking delivery of a parcel of literature.

Mr. Thakur Singh, a prominent member of the Howrah Labour Union, was convicted on a charge of inciting to commit violence and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. He was later enlarged on bail.

About 40 workers of an Amritsar mill, were arrested on May 4, as a sequel to the picketing by them in furtherance of strike.

An order to quit Karachi by the next available train was served on Mr. Fateraj, a Congress volunteer belonging to Jodhpur State.

The office of the Bengal Kisan Committee was searched on May 5 after which Mr. Ramendra Dutt, the Office Secretary and Mr. Helaram Chatterjee, a peasant leader, were taken into custody.

On May 6 Mr. Tej Pal, a Congressman, was sentenced by the City Magistrate of Delhi to six months' rigorous imprisonment on a charge of obstructing a Police officer. He was arrested while proceeding with a procession that was organised to welcome Pandit Nehru on the eve of the Delhi Convention.

Mr. C. R. Swamy, Secretary, Bangalore District Congress Committee was convicted on May 6 and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 50 or in default to undergo simple imprisonment for 15 days for making a speech on the Independence Day defying the District Magistrate's order.

Messrs. Raghu Prasad, Rambabu and Pannalal were convicted on May 10 under the Explosive Substances Act and sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment each.

Mr. Ajit Das Gupta, a labour leader of Bengal, was arrested at Delhi on May 10 on a charge of issuing an alleged objectionable poster.

A police Magistrate of Calcutta convicted on May 11 Mr. Madar Khan, a labour leader and sentenced him to four months' rigorous imprisonment on a charge of delivering an objectionable speech.

It has been reported from the Frontier that Malik Mohd. Zaman Khan, a well-known member of Musta Khel family of Kurram Pass has been sent to prison by the Political Agent for three years on his refusal to furnish a surety of Rs. 3,000 to be of good behaviour for three years. His offence was that he was connected with the Red Shirt organisation in the Frontier Province and that he had demanded equal political rights and privileges in the Kurram agency with the rest of the province.

It was reported on May 11 that Mr. Kalicharan Talukdar, a youngman of Gauhati (Assam) was arrested for alleged possession of arms and ammunition.

The District Magistrate of Poona prohibited all anti-coronation processions within the municipal limits of the city on May 13.

The Bombay Police raided on the night of May 13 the residence of Dr. M. R. Shetty, labour leader.

Maulana Nooruddin Behari, a well-known Congress worker of Delhi and Assistant Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind was ordered on May 13 to quit Delhi and not to return within 6 months. Maulana Abdul Majid, Vice-President, Delhi District Congress Committee, was ordered on the following day not to take part in any political meeting or demonstration. Both were engaged in enlisting Muslim members for the Congress.

On May 14 the houses of Mr. S. Rangarajan, an ex-convict in the Madras Conspiracy Case and Mr. Paramaswami, District Congress Secretary, Madura, were searched and some papers and pamphlets seized.

Dr. N. S. Hardikar, a prominent Congress leader of Karnatak, and organiser and secretary of the Hindustani Seva Dal, was served with an order on May 15 prohibiting him from making any speech in some of the Talukas in the Mysore State.

The Government of Madras, at present run by the interim ministry, declared on May 19 the Summer School of Economics and Politics and the training Camp at Kotapatam an unlawful organisation under the Criminal Law Amendment Act on the ground that "it has for its object interference with the maintenance of law and order and constitutes a grave danger to the public peace". Following the ban which was defied by the members of the school, District Magistrate ordered a lathi charge which resulted in injury to fifteen persons and arrest of 60.

The Sub-divisional officer of Basirhat (Bengal), promulgated orders banning all public meetings within the jurisdiction of his sub-division. He also directed Mr. Niharendu Datt-Mazumdar M. L. A. and Mr. Bankim Mukerji M. L. A. not to address any meeting in that sub-division.

It was reported from Beawar State (Rajputna), on May 20 that a security of Rs. 500 was demanded from the editor of "Rajasthan" which serves the cause of the Indian States subjects.

The police raided the khadi depot at Hajipur (Bihar) on May 25 and seized some books.

Mr. Cherian Manjran, a labour leader of Cochin, was arrested on May 26 for delivering alleged seditious speeches.

On May 27 Pandit Shati Swarup, a Congress M. L. A., was convicted and sentenced to a term of six weeks' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 50 on a charge of giving false information to a public servant with a view to injuring another person. His 'offence' was that following the death of a person in suspicious circumstances he had written to the District Magistrate alleging that the man had been beaten to death by State officials because he was a supporter of the Congress.

Two College boys, Messrs Anil Das Gupta and Ralqul-Islam of Barrisal (Bengal), were arrested without any definite charge against them following their tour in the district in connection with the organisation of peasants' associations.

The Lahore Police searched the offices of the Socialist Weekly "Kirti Kisan" in the early hours of May 28.

Mr. Provash Chandra Sen, a labour leader of Bengal, was arrested on May 28 while attending a public meeting in connection with the observance of Frontier Day. He was produced before a Magistrate who later framed a charge of sedition against him.

Two detenus interned in Nonkhali were arrested on May 29 for alleged violation of the internment rules.

The office of the Patna Town Congress Committee was searched on May 29 and a register was taken away.

Several printing presses at Lahore were searched by the Police on June 3 in connection with a book that was proscribed by the Punjab Government. In this connection the security of Rs. 1,000 of the Yuvak Press has been forfeited and a security of Rs. 500 demanded from the Jagatjit Press.

The Delhi Police raided on June 4 the house of Mrs. Chando Bibi, President of the Delhi Workers' League, and took her into custody. The search and the arrest took place in connection with the publication of a poster.

It was reported on June 9 from Hyderabad (Deccan) that Mr. Vishwanath Rao Taljapurkar, President of the Vidyarthi Sangh (Students' Union), was arrested by the State Police on a charge of violation of the externment order passed on him by the Nizam's Government some time ago.

The Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta convicted on June 9 Mr. Kamal Sarkar, a labour leader, under the Press Act and sentenced him to pay a fine of Rs. 200 or to undergo imprisonment for six weeks for bringing out a poster in connection with the May Day celebration.

On June 14 two students of the Allahabad University were arrested by the Lucknow Police on suspicion of complicity with the banned Communist party.

On June 15 Mr. Ram Dularey Trivedi was arrested at Cawnpore on a charge of sedition for delivering a speech during the National Week.

Four persons were convicted on June 15 by a special Magistrate of Faridpur (Bengal) under the Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act and Arms Act and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment for possession of unlicensed fire arms.

On June 16 Sambhunath Bose, a detennee, was prosecuted at Rajshahi for violation of the conditions of his internment.

A security of Rs. 4,000 deposited by the "Siyasat" a Urdu Weekly of Lahore, was forfeited by the Punjab Government in connection with certain articles published in that paper criticising the Premier and the High Court. A similar amount deposited by the same Paper was forfeited some time ago.

All the 16 persons sent up for trial in connection with the ban on the Summer School at Kottapatam, were convicted on June 16 and sentenced to 6 months' R. I. each and fines varying from Rs. 200 to Rs. 100, in default another 6 weeks' R. I. for each.

It should be mentioned in this connection that following the denial by the Madras Government of the charge that lathi was used for the arrest of the accused, the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee appointed a committee of enquiry which has now submitted its report, "there was a lathi charge at Kottapatam on May 21 in the sense that lathis were used on arrested persons and on-lookers and injuries inflicted". The report also says that "the employment of any form of violence by the Police was entirely uncalled for to effect arrests."

On June 19 Maulana Hussain Ahmad of Deoband, Vice-President of Jamiatul-Ulema-i-Hind, was served with a notice banning his entry in Delhi for six months without previous permission.

Syed Sajjad Zahir, Secretary, Allahabad Town Congress Committee, was arrested at Mussorie on a charge of sedition. Bail was rejected by the Magistrate but has since been granted by the Sessions Judge.

Mr. Kamal Nath Thakore, an internee under Public Safety Act was arrested in Darbhanga district on June 20 for alleged participation in the Darbhanga Political Conference.

The application of Mr. Ganesh Prasad Verma, a home internee of Bihar, for release or, in the alternative subsistence allowance, has been turned down by the Bihar Government.

Pandit Laxmi Narayan Mishra, President, Sambalpur District Congress Committee, was arrested on June 21 on a charge of sedition. Proceedings under Section 108 Cr. P. C. (sedition) for some of his earlier speeches are already pending. Bail was opposed by the Public Prosecutor but was ultimately allowed.

A security of Rs. 1,000 was demanded by the District Magistrate of Poona from the publishers of a prospective Socialist Weekly "Yugantar" as the result of which the project had to be abandoned.

The Punjab Government are reported to have refused to grant a passport for Australia to Mr. M. A. Majid who had been convicted and sentenced in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

Part of the security deposit of "Navasakti", a Hindi Weekly of Patna, amounting to Rs. 250 was forfeited by the Behar Government on June 24 for publication of a few humorous paragraphs on the visit of the Nawab of Chhattari to Mr. Yunus, Premier of Bihar. Fresh security of the like amount was demanded from the publisher of the journal on June 26.

Pravash Chandra Sen Gupta, a School boy of Calcutta, was convicted on a charge of sedition on June 25 for delivering a speech in connection with the Jute Strike and bound over with a bond of Rs. 150 with one surety of the like amount to be of good behaviour for one year.

Mr. Yusuf Meher Ally was arrested at Calicut on June 26 for violation of an order of the District Magistrate under Section 144 Cr. P. C. requiring him not to deliver any speech within the four taluquas of Calicut, Ernad, Walluvanad and Ponnani for a period of one month.

Dr. Jugal Kishore Narayan Singh M. L. A. was arrested at Jahanabad on June 26 under Section 153 I. P. O. and was bailed out.

Sroomati Mira Ben (Miss Slade) was followed by the C. I. D. Police while on her way from Pathan Kot Railway station to Dalhousie in the Punjab where she had gone for a change. The car in which she was travelling was stopped by a Police constable at the outskirts of Dalhousie and her name, address, destination etc., were recorded.

It was reported on June 29 that an order prohibiting the making of any speech regarding the present situation in Waziristan was served on Moulana Ghulam Ghaus, President of the Ahrar Party, N. W. F. Province.

Mr. P. K. Pratihari, President of the Outtaok District Congress Committee was convicted by the Assistant Sessions Judge on June 30 and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 or in default two months' additional imprisonment. He was taken to the Cuttaok Jail from the court on foot along the main thoroughfares handcuffed and with a rope round his waist.

Sardar Bhagwat Singh, secretary of the State Peoples' Society, Punjab was served with an order of the Punjab Government on June 30 requiring him to quit the province within 24 hours and not to return within 12 months.

Mr. Ashoka Kumar Bose was arrested on June 30 at Cawnpore on a charge of sedition. No bail was allowed.

Mr. Yusuf Mohorally was convicted by the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Calcutt on June 30 and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment for disobeying an order restraining him from addressing a public meeting.

He has however been released on the Congress Ministry taking office in Madras.

Three Congress volunteers were fined Rs. 10 each or, in default, simple imprisonment for a week for taking out an unlicensed procession on the anti-constitution day, by the S. D. O. of Muzaffarpur on June 30.

A Simla Message dated July 2 stated that Mr. Reginald Reynold's book, "White Sahibs in India" has been proscribed.

Mr. G. R. Swamy, Secretary, City Congress Committee, Bangalore, was arrested on July 2 on a charge of disobedience of the Magistrate's order and asked to execute a bond for Rs. 1,000 with two sureties for the like amount pending the disposal of his case.

On July 3 Mr. Surya Narayan Singh, a political internee, was arrested on a charge of violation of the terms of his internment.

Mr. Brojendra Nath Gupta, Editor of "Advance", a Calcutta Daily, was convicted and sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 on a charge of sedition in respect of an article on coronation. Immediately after conviction a security of Rs. 4,000 was demanded from the paper for publication of another article on the same subject in a subsequent issue. The Indian Press has characterised this action of the Bengal Government as application of a double-edged sword.

Mr. Abdul Wahab, a member of the Muslim Mass Contact Committee, Berar, was served with a notice on July 5 warning him that a speech delivered by him was highly seditious and that prosecution would be started against him if he delivered similar speeches in the future.

Mr. Dayaram Beri, a prominent Congress and Labour Leader of Calcutta, was convicted on July 5 on a charge of sedition and sentenced to 9 months' rigorous imprisonment.

Mr. Ramani Chakravarty, Secretary of the Workers' League, Calcutta was convicted on July 6 on a charge of sedition and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment.

It was reported on July 6 from Rangoon that the Burma Government had demanded securities of Rs. 500 each from the Burmese "Daily Sun" and the weekly "Saitan" for publishing alleged objectionable articles.

Sahibzada Ghulam Rabbani was arrested at Lahore on July 6 on a charge of sedition.

Maulana Abul Kasim was arrested and placed before the District Magistrate of Allahabad on July 7 on a charge of sedition.

The security of Rs. 5,000 deposited by the keeper of the Rajasthan Printing and Litho Works Ltd., Akola was forfeited by the C. P. Government for two articles published in the "Matribhumi", and one article in "Navo-Rajasthan". In November last the Government had forfeited a sum of Rs. 1,000 deposited by the same Press when a fresh security of Rs. 5,000 was demanded. As a sequel to the forfeiture of

this huge amount of security money the "Matribhumi" has been obliged to stop publication.

A case was filed at New Delhi against Shrimati Chando Bibi and two other Congress workers under Section 19 of the Press Act for distribution of alleged objectionable leaflets. The case will be taken up on July 7.

An order under Section 144 Cr. P. C. was promulgated at Bhimavaram (Madras) prohibiting the celebration of the birth-day anniversary of the late Mr. Aluri Sitaramraju which was planned by the Congress Socialist Party.

It was reported on July 8 that Mr. Debotosh Das Gupta, President, Bengal Radical Party was served with an order restraining his movements in Calcutta for a period of 3 months.

Several houses at Meerut were searched on July 9 in connection, it is stated, with the find of arms and ammunitions near Delhi.

Following a house-search at Calcutta on July 9 four Bengalees were taken to the Police headquarters for interrogation.

On July 10 Mr. Tej Singh, Labour worker at Cawapote was arrested for promotion of dissension among different classes of people.

Mr. Manindra Narayan Ray of the Congress Foreign Department was served with an order on July 10 directing him not to enter, remain or reside in Bihar for a period of one year. The order was the renewal of an old order of externment that was due to expire on July 15.

Mr. Krishna Kant Ashok, a Congress worker of Meerut, was arrested on July 11 in connection with the find of some arms near Delhi.

### President's Burma and Malay Tour

Early in May the President visited Burma and toured extensively throughout the country, chiefly by sea-plane, for two weeks. His visit attracted great interest and huge crowds flocked to listen to him in towns and villages alike. Hundreds of addresses of welcome were presented to him by public bodies. The recent political separation of Burma from India had raised new problems not only in regard to the position of Indians in Burma, their trade and commerce and Indian labour, but also in regard to the freedom struggle in both countries and how to coordinate it in future. The question of the future place of Burma in the Congress constitution had also to be considered. The President discussed these matters with congressmen and others in Burma. In his public speeches he conveyed the greeting and goodwill of the Indian people to the people of Burma and pointed out to them that political separation could make little difference to the innumerable contacts between the two countries or to their joint struggle against imperialism. This separation had not taken place because the people of Burma desired it, but because British imperial policy demanded it. From the point of view of future struggle in the Far East Burma with its rich mineral resources, especially oil, had great importance, and it was therefore necessary to isolate her as far as possible from the powerful nationalist movement for Indian independence. So far as the people of India were concerned they recognised the right of the people of Burma to determine their own future and shape their destiny. But that destiny had been closely linked with that of India in the past and innumerable bonds held the two together in the present. Their joint struggle for freedom against the same imperialism also required full co-operation and joint action.

The President's tour in Burma forged fresh links between the two countries and assumed a special importance, coming as it did soon after the political separation of Burma from India.

From Burma the President went to Malaya and toured extensively there for two weeks, visiting the colonies of Penang, Malacca and Singapore and the Federated Malaya States. He paid brief visits also to some of the unfederated States. He received an extraordinarily warm welcome everywhere he went from Indians as well as the Chinese and the Malays. He came in contact personally during this tour with the problems of Indians overseas, more especially the problem of Indian labour abroad.

Both in Burma and Malaya, the President was presented with numerous purses for public funds. For the general Congress Fund the sum of Rs. 69,267-13-5 was received in this way.

### Notes

May 28 was observed as the Frontier Day to protest against the Forward Policy of the Government and air-bombing. The day was organised by some anti-imperialist organisations. But Congressmen everywhere joined the demonstrations.

June 31 was observed as the Zanzibar Day when meetings were held in the big cities throughout India protesting against the Clove Monopoly Bill the final reading of which was fixed for June 24.

Shri Saohindra Nath Bakhshi a life convict Kakori prisoner went on hunger strike on May 31 in protest of the continued detention of political prisoners and detenus in U. P. even after the inauguration of provincial autonomy. He however gave up his hunger strike after 40 days on July 9 after Shri Rajendra Prasad who had an interview with him assured him that as soon as popular ministries begin to function they will do their best to release all political prisoners and detenus.

Sjt. Kali Charan Ghose has now been released after nearly 6 years' detention in Buxar and Deoli camps and in jail and village internment. It will be recalled that the Foreign Department of the All India Congress Committee draw the attention sometime ago of French authorities both in India and in France and the League of Rights of Man in Paris to the fact that French Indian citizens were denied, under British law and contrary to international usage, of their personal liberties. Now with the release of Sjt. Ghose who is suffering from an acute type of colitis, two other French Indian citizens, Sjts. Tinkori Makerji and Prakash Chandra Das, continue to be detained under British jurisdiction. It is hoped that the French Government will take a determined stand in regard to the other two detenus. The release of Sjt. Ghose has however been effected under severe restrictions and he is not permitted to reside or remain in any territory of British India within the Presidency of Bengal.

### Congress Ministries

The decision of the Working Committee at Wardha to shoulder the responsibility of office was followed by the resignations of the interim ministries in the six provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislatures namely, Bombay, Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. The leaders of the Congress party were consequently invited by the respective Governors to assist them in the formation of new Cabinets. The interviews having been regarded as satisfactory the Leaders consented to form Cabinets and submitted to the Governors the names of their colleagues. In some provinces the ministries have not been completed so far.

#### The Personnel of the Congress Ministries

##### *Bombay :*

1. Shri B. G. Kher—(Premier), 2. Shri A. B. Latthe, 3. Shri K. M. Munshi, 4. Dr. M. D. Gilder, 5. Shri Morarji R. Desai, 6. Shri L. M. Patil, 7. Shri Yasin Nurio.

##### *Madras :*

1. Shri C. Rajagopalachari—(Premier), 2. Shri T. Prakasam, 3. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, 4. Dr. P. Subbaroyan, 5. Shri Yakub Hasan, 6. Shri Munuswami Pillai, 7. Shri S. Ramanathan, 8. Shri V. V. Giri, 9. Shri K. Raman Munon, 10. Shri B. Gopala Reddy.

##### *United Provinces :*

1. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant—(Premier), 2. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, 3. Sri-mati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 4. Shri Pyarelal Sharma, 5. Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, 6. Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim.

##### *Central Provinces and Berar :*

1. Dr. N. B. Khare—(Premier), 2. Shri Ravi Sanker Sukla, 3. Shri Durga Shanker Mehta, 4. Shri Dwarak Prasad Misra, 5. Shri P. B. Gole, 6. Shri R. M. Deshmukh, 7. Shri Mohammad Yusuf Shareef.

##### *Bihar :*

1. Shri Srikrishna Singh—(Premier), 2. Shri Anugrah Narayan Sinha, 3. Dr. Syed Mahmud, 4. Shri Jaglal Choudhury.

##### *Orissa :*

1. Shri Biswanath Das—(Premier), 2. Shri Nityanand Kanungo, 3. Shri Bodhram Dabey.

## The Congress and Office-Acceptance

By the end of February 1937 General Election in the Provinces under the new Government of India Act 1935 was over and in Six out of Eleven Provinces nominees of the Congress were returned in a majority. At a meeting of the Congress leaders held at Wardha at this time with Mahatma Gandhi conversation centred round whether the Congress members would accept office in the Provinces where they were in a majority. Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have hinted that the Congress party may be dishonouring its words to the Electorate if it accepted office without receiving any gesture from the Government indicating any change of heart. This gesture can be obtained only if the Viceroy agrees to some parley or makes speech hinting that the verdict of the electorate has changed the Government's view about Congress. While Madras Congressmen were vehemently supporting acceptance of office some Congressmen in other Provinces held out that acceptance of office after a gesture from the Viceroy might involve reciprocal obligations and weaken their hands in handling the affairs of the Government in the manner they might wish to.

Subsequently, this matter was debated at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee held for the purpose at Delhi on the 15th March 1937 where it adopted unanimously a resolution favouring conditional acceptance of office on lines suggested by Mahatma Gandhi. The formula drafted by Mahatma Gandhi provides that Ministerships can be accepted only if the leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly in each Province is satisfied and is able to declare publicly that he has sufficient assurance from the Governor that the special powers should not be used so long as the Ministry Acts "within the Constitution."

On the same day, His Excellency the Viceroy made a significant gesture in the course of his speech delivered at the Dinner given in his honour by Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy declaring :—

"I have faith in the zeal and public spirit of those into whose hands the electorates have entrusted opportunities for useful and honourable service to the community. It will be both duty and privilege of the Governors of the provinces and of the Governor-General in his proper sphere to collaborate with several provincial Ministries in their most responsible tasks in a spirit of sympathy, helpfulness and co-operation."

"If all concerned will approach in faith and courage the great charge which is laid upon them, determined to do their utmost faithfully to serve the highest interest of the people, then I am very confident that those apprehensions and doubts, sincerely held I know, which now trouble many minds will disappear like mists of morning before the rising sun.

As an earnest to this appeal the Governors of the Six Congress majority Provinces invited the Congress leaders to discuss the formation of a Ministry. The negotiations however broke down for the following reasons :—

The Governors of Bombay, Madras, Orissa and C. P. having refused to give the assurance demanded of them by Congress party leaders in terms of the All-India

Congress Committee's resolution regarding the exercise of their special powers, the negotiations for formation of Congress Ministries in those provinces have broken down.

The United Provinces and the Bihar Governments issued communiques stating the reasons why the Governors of these provinces refused to give the assurance which the Congress party leaders demanded in terms of the A. I. C. C. resolution concerning the use of special powers by the Governors.

The communique issued by the U. P. Government said that "the obligations laid upon the Governor by the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Instructions are clear and specific,.....It is clearly not in the power of the Governor to meet such a demand"

While any Government which takes office under the provisions of the Act can rely on his Excellency's fullest and most considerate support and confidence within the framework of the Act, there can be no question of any limitation of the obligations imposed on the Governor under the terms of the constitution.

The Bihar Government communique says that the terms of the Act are mandatory and even if the Governor wished to divest himself of the obligations imposed on him by the Act and by the Instructions he had no power to do so.

#### Bombay Government Communique

The following communique was issued by the Bombay Government on the 27th. March :—

The Governor of Bombay invited Mr. B. G. Kher to meet him on March 25 to discuss the formation of a Ministry. At that interview Mr. Kher intimated that he could only accept the invitation to form a Ministry if his Excellency could give him a definite assurance in the following terms : "That his Excellency would not use, in regard to the constitutional activities of the Cabinet, his special powers of interference, or set aside the advice of his Ministers." His Excellency pointed out to Mr. Kher that under the Government of India Act, 1935, it was impossible for the Governors to give any assurance as regards the use of the powers vested in them under the Act. The terms of the Act are mandatory and the obligations imposed on the Governors by the Act and by the Instrument of Instructions in respect of the use of the special powers and the safe-guarding of the interests of minorities are of such a nature that even if a Governor wished to relieve himself of them, it was not in his power to do so. His Excellency, having fully explained the legal position to Mr. Kher, went on to assure him that although it was not possible for His Excellency to give the assurance which Mr. Kher asked for, Mr. Kher could rely on receiving possible help, sympathy and co-operation within the four corners of the Act in the event of his undertaking to form a Ministry.

His Excellency requested Mr. Kher to meet him again this morning and at the outset of the interview his Excellency formally invited Mr. Kher to assist him in forming a Ministry. Mr. Kher again intimated that he could only accept office on the basis of the demand set out above. His Excellency once more pointed out the impossibility of giving any such assurance, whereupon Mr. Kher informed his Excellency that he would be, therefore, unable to accept the invitation to assist in forming a Ministry.

His Excellency very much regrets that events should have taken this turn. The terms of the Act are unambiguous and as the demand put forward by the Congress party is constitutionally impossible, the responsibility for adhering thereto must rest with the Congress party. His Excellency wishes to make it clear to the people of the Bombay presidency, as indeed he has already made it clear to Mr. Kher, the leader of the Congress party in Bombay, that any Government which takes power under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, can rely on his full support and sympathy consistent with his statutory obligations. At the same time, he wishes to emphasize that there can be no question of any undertaking from him in regard to restrictions or limitations of the obligations imposed on the Governors under the terms of the Act.

#### Orissa Government Communique

The following Communique was issued by the Orissa Government on the 28th. March :—His Excellency having invited Mr. Bishwanath Das, Congress leader in the Orissa Assembly, to see him in connection with the forming of the Ministry,



gave him an interview on the morning of March 24 and formally invited him to assist him in forming a Council of Ministers.

Mr. Das intimated to his Excellency that he was unable to accept the invitation unless his Excellency agreed to give him an assurance that he would not use his special powers of interference or aside the advice of Ministers in regard to constitutional activities. Mr. Das stated that without such an assurance he could not be satisfied to be able to state publicly that the Governor would act in that manner.

His Excellency explained to Mr. Das that it was completely impracticable for constitutional reasons to give any such assurance. The power and duty of exercising his individual judgment in certain circumstances are placed on the Governor by the Act itself and para 8 of the Instrument of Instructions. The Governor is expressly enjoined to be guided almost in the whole sphere of executive business in the province by the advice of his Ministers unless, in his opinion, so to be guided would be inconsistent with the fulfilment of any of his special responsibilities which are by the Act committed to him or with the proper discharge of any of the functions which he is otherwise under the Act required to exercise in his individual judgment. His Excellency explained to Mr. Das that it might be unquestionably constitutional activity of Ministers to tender a certain advice which the Governor could not in view of his special responsibilities or other directions of the Act, affect (except?) if that were his individual judgment in the particular case before him and he had already given the assurance desired by Mr. Das. The Governor could either (1) by accepting the guidance his Ministers have to act in flagrant conflict with the Instructions which he is in virtue of his office strictly bound to obey, or (2) by setting aside the advice of his Ministers lay himself entirely open to the charge of the greatest possible breach of faith with Mr. Das. While making clear his own constitutional position, His Excellency assured Mr. Das that if he was prepared to lead the Ministry he could count on getting from his Excellency all possible sympathy, co-operation and support.

Mr. Das expressed his appreciation of the assurance which his Excellency had given, but in a very friendly spirit intimated that he could accept the office on the basis of nothing less than his full demand.

His Excellency took this to mean a definite refusal of the offer of office but learning that Congress members of the Legislative Assembly were further considering the situation, he invited Mr. Das for a second interview which took place on the morning of March 26. He ascertained from Mr. Das that he had not altered his attitude and further explained his own constitutional position, assuring him that he would give the closest examination of and the fullest consideration to the advice of the Ministry; but he could not give any assurance in the limitation of his constitutional powers. He enquired whether he must now take it that Mr. Das finally refused office and whether there was any possibility of the Congress Ministry being formed in the near future.

Mr. Das intimated that he desired to lay the matter once again before members of his party and to this His Excellency agreed.

Early on Sunday morning March 28, his Excellency heard from Mr. Das that in the circumstances it was not possible for him to accept the responsibilities of office.

His Excellency greatly regrets that the discussions should have reached this conclusion but the decision is one which members of the Congress party had to make for themselves.

His Excellency is now taking other steps to form a ministry.

#### The Behar Government Communique

The following official communique was issued by the Behar Government on the 29th March :-

His Excellency the Governor invited Babu Shrikrishna Sinha, leader of the Congress party in the Bihar Legislative Assembly to assist him in the formation of a Council of Ministers and had discussion with him on Wednesday and Thursday last. On the first occasion Babu Shrikrishna Sinha after showing the Governor the resolution of the A. L. C. C. stated that he could only accept the invitation to form Ministry if he were to issue a statement containing the words 'I have been assured by his Excellency that he will not use, in regard to the constitutional activities of the Cabinet, his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of my Cabinet.' This, he explained, he could only issue if the Governor established a convention not to use special powers. His Excellency explained that it was impossible for him for

constitutional reasons to agree to any such convention. At the same time the Ministry, if formed by the Congress party, could rely upon receiving from him all possible help and support in carrying out their duties. Babu Srikrishna Sinha, while appreciating his Excellency's offer of help and support, said it was necessary for their constitutional position to be made clear by the establishment of the convention suggested. He was unable to modify his position and intimated to his Excellency today his refusal to accept his invitation to assist in forming a Council of Ministers.

His Excellency much regrets that this has been the final issue of his discussions with the leader of the Congress party. He had hoped that after the decision of the Bihar P. O. C. no difficulties would arise and a Congress Ministry would be formed that would deal with the many and difficult problems with which the province was faced. The responsibility for this decision not to accept office rests on the Congress party for the terms of the Act are mandatory, and even if the Governor wished to divest himself of the obligations imposed on him by the Act and—by the Instrument of Instructions, he has no power to do so. The occasions on which the Governor differs from his Ministry may not be numerous but to agree in advance not to use special powers in any possible contingency would deprive some of the interests of the protection afforded by the Act. As was explained to the leader, any ministry which takes office can look to the Governor for full support and sympathy within the four corners of the Act but there can be no question of any understanding restricting or limiting the obligations on the Governor by that document.

#### The Madras Government Communiqué

The Private Secretary to the Governor issued the following statement on the 27th, March :—

On March 26 His Excellency the Governor invited Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, the leader of the Congress Party in the Madras Legislature, to assist him in forming a Ministry. Mr. Rajagopalachariar at his first interview intimated that he could not accept the invitation unless an assurance was given by the Governor that he would not use his special powers or exercise the functions which are by law left to his discretion or individual judgment. His Excellency replied that it was impracticable for constitutional reasons for him to divest himself of the responsibilities and duties which have been placed upon his shoulders by Parliament and that it was, therefore, not within his power to give any such guarantee. At the same time his Excellency intimated Mr. Rajagopalachariar that he could rely upon receiving all possible help, sympathy and co-operation in the event of his forming a Ministry. After a series of very amicable conversations Mr. Rajagopalachariar has, while expressing appreciation of his Excellency's assurance, finally intimated to-day that he is unable to accept the invitation to assist in forming a Ministry.

His Excellency, while greatly regretting this outcome of the discussions, wishes to make it plain to the public that the decision is that of the Congress Party themselves, that the terms of the statute are mandatory and that the obligations imposed by the Act and by the Instrument of Instructions on the Governors in respect of the use of special powers are of such a nature that, even if he wished to be relieved himself of them, it would not be in his power to do so.

On the other hand, his Excellency wishes to state as the representative of the King-Emperor in this presidency, that he is above party politics altogether and that within the four corners of the Government of India Act he will always be willing and indeed anxious to extend the utmost help, sympathy and support to any Ministry, from whatever section of political opinion it may be drawn. At the present juncture his Excellency believes that time should be given for a reconsideration of the position. An interim Ministry will, therefore, be formed at once in order that the King-Emperor's Government may be carried on and His Excellency hopes that by thus providing a period for such reconsideration, it will eventually be found possible to form a Ministry which will command the confidence of the present Legislature.

#### The C. P. Government Communiqué

The Private Secretary to the Governor of C. P. issued the following statement to the press on the 28th, March :—

On March 26 the Governor gave an interview to Dr. Khare as the leader of the majority party in the Provincial Legislative Assembly and invited him to assist him in forming a Ministry in accordance with the terms of sec. 51 (1) of the Govern-

ment of India Act, 1935. Dr. Khare intimated His Excellency that he could only accept the invitation on the condition that he received the assurance which had been laid down in the resolution passed by the A. I. C. C. and was thus able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities.

In reply his Excellency called Dr. Khare's attention to sec. 54 of the Act and to instruction 8 in the Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governor thereunder. He explained that for legal and constitutional reasons it was not within his power to give any assurance or enter into any convention affecting the use of the powers entrusted to him by Parliament. On a recent public occasion His Excellency had given an assurance in unmistakable terms as to the spirit in which he intended to use those powers and had declared that whatever Ministry was in power could rely upon receiving from him, as from one who stood apart from parties, all the help, sympathy and co-operation for which it asked. Further than that he had no power to go.

In view of the refusal of the leader of the majority party in the C. P. Provincial Assembly to accept office His Excellency sent this afternoon for the hon. Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao and requested his assistance to forming a Ministry in accordance with sec. 51 (1) of the Government of India Act, 1935. The hon. Mr. Rao informed His Excellency that he would be willing to form a Ministry and would communicate with his Excellency on the subject again on March 30, 1937.

Mr. Khare then said that he quite understood his Excellency's point of view but he must consult others before he gave a definite answer.....and a further interview was then arranged for March 29. The interview was conducted in the friendliest spirit and both the parties endeavoured to understand and appreciate the point of view of one another.

To-day on March 28 His Excellency received a letter from Mr. Khare in which he stated that as his Excellency was unable to give the assurance for which he asked, he regretted that he could not take the responsibility of forming a ministry and he therefore saw no object in having any further interview.

His Excellency deeply regrets the turn which the matters have taken but it has been beyond his power to avoid it. The provisions of the Act with regard to the powers of the Governor are mandatory, and the issue has been a simple one—does the Congress accept those provisions or does it not? The Delhi resolution if put into plain words means that it does not; for there are many 'constitutional activities,' especially those affecting Berar and minority communities with which the Governor might be bound to interfere and the obligations imposed upon him in these matters are of such a nature that he could not relieve himself of them even if he desired to do so. One single example should suffice to make the position plain to everyone. If the future ministry were determined to cut down the amount of expenditure from the common purse in Berar to a figure, which the Berar opinion would be perfectly 'constitutional' but his Excellency if he agreed with the opinion would be bound to use the special power given to him by section 53 (2) of the Act.

It is needless to stress the fact that readiness to accept office upon a condition which is definitely impossible is not acceptance but refusal and his Excellency wishes to make it clear beyond any question that the responsibility for the regrettable decision which had been reached must rest solely and entirely upon the shoulders of those who adhered to the condition. As he has declared publicly that any Government which takes power under the Act, now or in future, can rely on his fullest help and support within the four corners of the Act, but there can be no question of any understanding in regard to the express provisions of that document nor of any attempt to restrict or limit the obligations which are imposed upon the Governor under its terms.

#### The U. P. Government Communique

The following communique was issued by the Director of Publicity, U. P. on the 29th. March :—

His Excellency the Governor on March 24 invited Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, leader of the Congress party in the U. P. Legislative Assembly, to assist him in forming the Ministry. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant referred his Excellency to the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee which permitted acceptance

of offices only if the leader of the Congress party in the legislature was satisfied that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of his ministers in regard to their constitutional activities and said that he could only assume the responsibility of forming Ministry if he received an assurance in terms of the Congress resolution. He explained that the words 'in regard to their constitutional activities' covered the whole ground of administration and the policy of the Ministry. He stressed the point that he did not regard this request as being inconsistent with the constitution.

His Excellency informed Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant that it was impossible for him to give any such assurance as it would amount to renunciation by the Governor of the special responsibilities placed upon him by the Government of India Act and would be in conflict with the express directions given him in the Instrument of Instructions. At the same time his Excellency assured Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant that he was most anxious that the Congress party being in majority in the Assembly should form the Ministry and that in that event he could rely on receiving from his Excellency all help, sympathy and cooperation in the spirit of the constitution. The conversation was conducted throughout in the most friendly and frank spirit and with a genuine desire of both the parties to understand the position of the other.

The conversation was resumed this morning and after a restatement of the position on both the sides Mr. Pant informed his Excellency that as his Excellency was unable to give him the assurance described above he regretted he could not accept the invitation to assist in forming the Ministry.

His Excellency greatly regrets that events should have taken this turn. The decision is that of the Congress party. The obligations laid upon the Governor by the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Instructions are clear and specific. The Congress have made it plain that they are not prepared to accept office unless one of the important features of the Act, namely, special responsibilities of the Governor, is in effect abrogated, and the Governor undertakes not to use special powers in any circumstances to set aside the advice of his Ministers. It is clearly not in the power of the Governor to meet such a demand. While any Government which takes office under the provisions of the Act can rely on his Excellency's fullest and most considerate support and confidence within the framework of the Act, there can be no question of any limitation of the obligations imposed on the Governor under the terms of the constitution.

His Excellency will now apply himself to the formation of another Ministry.

### Mahatma Gandhi on Ministry Crisis

Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement on the 30th. March :—

Having brooded over the refusal of Governors to give assurances asked for by invited Congress leaders in majority provinces, I feel I must give my opinion on the situation that has arisen in the country. I have had three cables from London shown to me asking for my opinion. Friends in Madras too have expressed for its publication. Though it is a departure from my self-imposed rule, I can no longer withstand the pressure, especially as I am the sole author of the office-acceptance clause of the Congress resolution and the originator of the idea of attaching a condition to office acceptance. My desire was not to lay down any impossible condition. On the contrary, I wanted to devise a condition that could be easily accepted by Governors. There was no intention whatsoever to lay down a condition whose acceptance would mean any slightest abrogation of the constitution. Congressmen were well aware that they could not, and would not, ask for any such amendment.

Congress policy was, and is, not to secure an amendment but an absolute ending of the constitution which nobody likes. Congressmen were and are also aware that they could not end it by mere acceptance of office, even conditional. The object of that section of the Congress which believed in office-acceptance was pending the creation by means consistent with the Congress creed of non-violence, of a situation that would transfer all power to the people, to work in offices so as to strengthen the Congress which has been shown predominantly to represent mass opinion.

I felt that this object could not be secured unless there was a gentlemanly understanding between Governors and their Congress Ministers that they would not exercise their special powers of interference so long as Ministers acted within the constitution. Not to do so would be to court an almost immediate deadlock after enter-

ing upon office. I felt that honesty demanded that understanding. It is common cause that Governors have discretionary powers. Surely here was nothing extra constitutional in their saying that they would not exercise their discretion against Ministers carrying on constitutional activities. It may be remembered that the understanding was not to touch numerous other safeguards over which Governors had no power. A strong party with a decisive backing of the electorate could not be expected to put itself in the precarious position of the interference at will of Governors.

The question may be put in another way. Should Governors be courteous to Ministers or discourteous? I hold that it would be distinctly discourteous if they interfered with their Ministers in matters over which the law gave the latter full control and with which Governors were under no legal obligation to interfere. A self-respecting Minister conscious of an absolute majority at his back, could not but demand an assurance of non-interference. Have I not heard Sir Samuel Hoare and other Ministers saying in so many words that ordinarily Governors would not use their admittedly large powers of interference? I claim that the Congress formula asked for nothing more. It has been claimed on behalf of the British Government that the Act gives autonomy to the provinces. If that is so, it is not Governors but Ministers who are during their period of office responsible for the wise administration of their provinces. Responsible Ministers sensible of their duty could not submit to interference in pursuance of their daily duty.

It does, therefore, appear to me that once more the British Government has broken to the heart what it has promised to the ear. I doubt not that they can and will impose their will on the people till the latter develop enough strength from within to resist it but that cannot be called working provincial autonomy. By flouting the majority obtained through the machinery of their creation, they have in plain language ended autonomy which they claim the constitution has given to the provinces.

The rule, therefore, will now be the rule of the sword, not of the pen nor of the indisputable majority.

Any way that is the only interpretation which, with all the goodwill in the world, I can put upon the Government action. For, I believe in the cent per cent honesty of my formula whose acceptance might have prevented a crisis and resulted in the natural, orderly and peaceful transference of power from the bureaucracy to the largest and fullest democracy known to the world.

### Lord Lothian's Broadcast

Lord Lothian broadcasting from London on March 29 on the new Indian Constitution referred to the 'last two days' difficulties'. The Governors, he said, clearly could not undertake not to use the special powers. Lord Lothian, however, remarked:—

That the acute controversy which had now arisen in India as to whether the Congress should accept office, could not have been unexpected by anyone who had followed recent events. The Congress decision to take office in the terms of the Delhi resolution did not mean that the Congress had abandoned opposition to the constitution or that there might not be serious difficulties when Federation was brought into force a year or two hence—but it did not mean that a majority recognized that the policy of civil disobedience, of absolute non-cooperation, had exhausted its usefulness and the time had come when if the Congress could assume responsibility for the provincial Government it must do so.

'Personally I am glad,' said Lord Lothian, 'that the Congress won this resounding victory. It has long been the largest and most disciplined party in India and the central focus of its political life, and it is far better that where it has a majority it should assume the responsibility for Government.'

'In the last two days difficulties have arisen because Provincial Congress leaders apparently interpreted the Delhi resolution to mean that they should not accept office until the Governors have undertaken not to use their special powers. This the Governors clearly cannot do. I hope that on second thoughts Congress leaders will take another line. As Mahatma Gandhi said to me, the real need of India is to be free to assume responsibility for its own government. This under the constitution the majorities in the legislatures in the provinces can now do.'

'The system of responsible government is the most successful system yet discovered and whenever it has been put into force it has led inevitably, and by fairly rapid stages, to full national self-government.'

'The correct constitutional course is for the Congress when it has a majority, to assume office, formulate its programme of reform and advise Governors that they are prepared to assume the responsibility for the consequences of its policy.

'Then it will be for Governors to decide whether they will accept the advice or not and so long as a ministry is prepared to accept the responsibility for the consequences of its policy, it will be most difficult for the Governor not to follow its advice—because to reject it might be a greater menace to peace and tranquillity than to accept it.

'The only real alternative to acceptance of office on the lines I have described, is to revert to Civil Disobedience and that course leads once more to repression and revolution and may lead also to estrangement between Muslim India which is willing to assume responsibility and Hindu India which is not. We in Europe know the terrible cost of trying to base our programme on revolution and of losing European unity by its division into separate sovereign states. That is by far the greatest disaster which could overtake India.

'Whatever we may think of the constitution, its greatest merit is that it enables Hindus and Muslims in 11 provinces to live together as members of a single federation and because it is based on a system of responsible government which has worked so well in other parts of the British Commonwealth. I believe it makes it possible for India to attain the ideal of the Congress itself, full national self-government, by constitutional, not revolutionary, means.'

### Lord Lothian on Mahatma's Statement

Observing that Mahatma Gandhi's statement of March 30 regarding Congress reasons for refusing office had not the publicity it deserved in Britain, Lord Lothian in a letter to the 'Times' cites the statement and writes :—

The statement seems to be based on a complete misunderstanding of the way in which the system of responsible government works in practice and of paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Instrument of Instructions to Governors.

Responsible government has been the method by which the Canadian and Australian Federation and South Africa and New Zealand each have attained full national self-government by constitutional means, often in the early days against the opposition both of Governors and the British Government. In every case the Governor or Governor-General was endowed with veto powers and other responsibilities of his own.

I venture to assert that in no case has a Ministry possessed of a majority in the legislature asked, and that it certainly never received any assurance that the Governor would not use his special powers. Yet those powers and responsibilities in the hands of Governors have not prevented steady advance to full self-government.

That is because the issue turns not so much on the legal power as on the responsibility—that responsibility Mr. Gandhi once told me himself was India's first need to exercise.

I do not think, therefore, that Mr. Gandhi had hitherto any legitimate ground for saying that the British Government flouted the majority or failed to give effect to the principle of provincial autonomy.

Governors simply acted in the manner always contemplated at the Round Table Conference and repeatedly proclaimed by Ministers as being the ordinary practice under the system of responsible government.

I am sure that British public opinion hopes and expects that majorities returned by the new electorate will take over responsibility under the constitution for the Government of their provinces. If Congress leaders take the course ordinarily adopted under responsible government and without asking for assurances, accept office, formulate their practical proposals of reform, pass them into law and advise the Governor that they will find themselves endowed with both power and responsibility for the Government of their provinces.

I am sure Mr. Gandhi will find by following this step that he will have taken a tremendous step towards that transference of power from the bureaucracy to the largest and fullest democracy known in the world which he hopes to bring about.

### The Congress Communique

The following communique was issued by the All-India Congress Committee office :—

A section of Indian politicians have all on a sudden developed a great desire that the Congress should accept office. They have filled the columns of Indian and Anglo-Indian papers to prove to the Congress that the salvation of the country lies in their accepting office. They are surprised that Congress leaders are not disturbed or perturbed on the refusal of the Governors to make the gentleman's agreement. Not only those opposed to office but even those in favour do not seem to be much bothered about the refusal of the Governors to accede to the condition laid down in the Congress resolution. These politicians do not seem to be disturbed even by the appointment of minority ministries consisting of political reactionaries. They therefore straightaway conclude that the Congress never wanted to accept office and the Delhi resolution was just an eye-wash. It was passed to throw dust in the eyes of the public. It was passed merely to cast the blame on the Governors for refusing, as they and their advocate say, to contract themselves out of their legal obligations under the Act. Even after the clear and lucid statement of Gandhiji our friends do not seem inclined to believe that Congress was honest in its desire to accept office.

Why are these politicians so anxious that the Congress should accept office? They were not friendly at the time of the elections! Why then this sudden affection and anxiety? Is it that they have been converted by success achieved at the polls? Has it changed their apathy into affection? Let us examine the pathology of this conversion a little closely.

It is no love of the Congress that has inspired the anxiety that Congress should not refuse office. It is rather the inveterate constitutionalism of this variety of politicians. If the majority party does not accept office the constitution breaks down. If there is no constitution or if it breaks down, what becomes of the constitutional means, the sole lever for the transference of power and the only weapon for bringing about their variety of Indian Swaraj? So the constitution must be saved at all costs. Bad as it is, it must be worked however humiliating the conditions.

Their legal pandits at Allahabad, Bombay and elsewhere are therefore at pains to prove from the provisions of the Act that the Governors could not possibly contract themselves out of the Act and the demand of the leaders of the Congress Party was not constitutional. One of them has gone so far as to opine that the Governors are entitled by the Act to appoint minority ministries. Our friends once again, as is usual with them, are anxious to justify the ways of Government to the dull heads of Congressmen, who they think have neither understood the constitution nor its legal implications.

But is it really so? Congressmen understand the constitution and its legal implications as well as any of the legal luminaries, in other parties. The fact is there is a fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and these constitutionalists and this the latter lose sight of amidst the legal and constitutional cobwebs of their own creation. While they are thinking in terms of law and constitution, Congressmen are thinking in extra-legal and extra-constitutional concepts, in terms of politics, democracy and the will of the people as expressed by their vote. A Congress lawyer may join issue with a lawyer of any other party about the legal and constitutional position, but he is not worried by that. He believes that the Governor can give the undertaking asked for, even within the terms of the constitution, if not mechanically and formally interpreted. He, however, knows that it may be argued otherwise. If the Governor cannot, he must refer the matter to his principals, to those who have power over him and who in their interpretation are not handicapped by legal forms but are guided by political considerations.

As a matter of fact it is an open secret that this liberal and legal interpretation under which the Governors have taken cover, is only an eye-wash. They have their orders from their masters in Whitehall. The masters wanted the Governors to take refuge under legal forms provided by the constitution, sympathy because they were not at this stage prepared to hand over the least little bit of their power to the popular representatives. Whitehall therefore directed the Governors to insist upon their pound of flesh to which they were entitled, in terms of the new constitution. The Mahatma had put the condition deliberately to test the intentions of those in power. The possible legal difficulties must have been in the legal region on his mind. Even if they were not, these must have been brought to his notice by the Pandits of law of whom there is dearth in the councils of the Congress. He must have satisfied his companions by taking them beyond

these legal difficulties and put before them the pure political question. The political issue is whether the cabinet is willing to hand over even partial power to popularly elected ministers. The reply is an emphatic no. This clear issue is sought to be clouded in legal subtleties which may deceive moderate minds but do not deceive the Congressmen.

But, say these politicians, the Congress should have seized the opportunity and not allowed it to slip. As if by seizing apparent opportunities the Congress can gain any position of real power! It might have been in office for a few days or a few months. But that would have been so much time wasted postponing the ultimate struggle. It would not have been time saved but time lost.

Our friends still argue that the Congress even in that little while would have done something to mitigate the lot of the peasants. The Congress however is quite confident that the little they could have done will be done even by Chhataris, Raos and Raddys. Here is the programme of the European group in Bombay. It calls itself the Progressive party and stands for 'progress as against Congress'. The main policy of the party will be to raise the standard of living of all classes, rural and urban, and to that end they will try to develop the resources of the presidency. They say, there is demand for reduction of land revenue which is a justifiable demand. Part of the policy of the party will be to undertake the early revision of settlement so as equitably to adjust the incident of land revenue, etc. Not to talk of minority parties, even if the Governors took up the reins of provincial Governments, without this camouflage of minority ministries, they will have to introduce all these mild and moderate reforms which the Congress party would have undertaken but which they may not have been able to carry through because of the special reserve and discretionary powers of the Governors. Therefore ministry or no ministry the little good to the masses is guaranteed to them by the fact that they have returned the Congress party in a majority to the legislatures.

Even then it is held that the Congress has made a tactical blunder. That time alone can prove. Congress however does not believe in mere tactical advantages. It knows that the British imperialism that crushes life out of the Indian people cannot be dislodged by mere tactical and temporary advantages. Tactics must therefore ever hold a subordinate place in its programme.

Apart from this if constitutionalism were the only sheet anchor of the Congress as it is of some others, it would not allow such little tactical advantages to slip by. The Councils are but a part and a minor part of the Congress programme. The best from it that could be got, namely, the reaching to the masses and rousing them was done at the time of the elections. The little more that remains will be done by their opponents with the sword of the majorities ever hanging over them. The Congress could have gone beyond, only if the Governors had been allowed by Whitehall to give the undertaking asked for. As this has not been forthcoming the Congress naturally remains unperturbed. Acceptance of ministries was not an end in itself for Congressmen.

The Congress still has the temerity to believe that real power can flow to the people only as the result of a grim struggle where power is pitched against power, unless of course Imperialism wishes it otherwise. The test that it wishes otherwise was provided for by the proviso attached to the A. I. C. C. resolution. They have rejected it and thereby rejected the constitutional game of rule by majorities. The only thing left for them is as Gandhiji says, the rule of the sword.

### Statement in the House of Lords

In the House of Lords, on the 8th. April, the *Marquess of Lichian* made a request for information as regards the circumstances in which the leaders of the Congress refused to accept office. After requesting for statistical information as regards the elections, he said that it was with surprise that the people of Britain had heard that no agreement had been possible after the first discussion between the Government and the Congress leaders. There were good many reasons for this unfortunate development. The first and most important was that the people of India were not very familiar with the practical working of the institution of responsible government. Therefore, in studying the text of the Bill and even the Instrument of Instructions, they did not do so with the full knowledge of the way in which the system worked. There was one remarkable sentence in Mr. Gandhiji's statement which bore out that view. Mr. Gandhiji said that it was his hope that it would be possible to arrange for a natural, orderly



and peaceful transference of power from the bureaucracy to the largest and fullest democracy of the world.

Lord Lothian added that he could not invent a better description of responsible government than that. If that could be understood in India, it might have the deepest effect on the events of the next very important three or four months.

Replying to certain criticisms, he said that the Governors had no constitutional right or duty to interfere until certain circumstances would arise. The idea that the constitution gave Governors wide and irresponsible powers was a complete illusion.

Replying to the *Lahore Tribune's* contention that what the Congress leaders wanted was a way out and not an assurance that special powers never would be used in any circumstances but only that they would not be used to nullify the constitutional activities of Ministers, Lord Lothian thought that there was ground for ascertaining whether that was the view because that view seemed to open a way for a reasonable settlement because there was no intention under the Act of interfering with those activities.

The second difficulty arose from suspicion or lack of understanding between the Congress and Britain. They ought to do their best to bridge the misunderstanding rather than argue whether their view was right or wrong. He thought that the problem was in a great measure psychological and that the basis of understanding must be an explanation rather than a misunderstanding. There was enormous room in India for an explanation of a human kind, involving contact between the Governors, and even the Viceroy and the peoples of India. He thought that the situation was more critical than most people in Britain realized. It was a great opportunity and if it was missed the inevitable logic of the situation must lead to more difficult situations and once more the emergence of something like a revolutionary situation.

The *Marquess of Zetland*, Secretary of State for India, welcomed the opportunity afforded by Lord Lothian to make a statement with regard to the present position in India. He reviewed briefly the events leading to the refusal of the Congress to accept invitations to form ministries in the provinces in which it commanded majorities. He regretted that he was not yet in possession of information to enable him to reply to Lord Lothian's request for statistics with regard to the electorates in different provinces, but he proposed to publish the information when received in a White Paper. It was sufficient at present to remind the House that at the conclusion of the elections the Congress Party was in a majority in six of the eleven provinces.

It was natural in view of the attitude the Congress had taken all along towards the Constitution Act that speculation should at once become rife as to the attitude they would adopt towards the question of accepting office, and it was brought to his notice at an early stage of the events which followed the elections that an attempt would be made to secure from the Governors, as conditions to acceptance of office by the Congress, certain assurances in regard to the use by the Governors of their special powers. In these circumstances the Viceroy with his full approval reminded the Governors that while they were fully entitled, and while indeed he hoped they would, to offer to the Congress leaders in the provinces the fullest support possible within the framework of the constitution, Parliament had imposed upon them certain obligations of which without the authority of Parliament they could not divest themselves.

The scene shifted to Delhi where on March 18 the Congress Committee adopted a resolution which he quoted. Lord Zetland confessed that there seemed to him to be a certain ambiguity about the phrasing of the resolution, particularly the words "in regard to their constitutional activities". In India it was widely assumed in the press and elsewhere that the formula was one which would enable the Congress leaders in the provinces to satisfy themselves as regards the attitude of the Governors towards them without requiring the assurances they could not give and when in each of the six provinces in which the Congress were in majority invitations were issued to their leaders by the Governors to discuss the formation of ministries it was generally supposed that the matter was satisfactorily settled.

It was at this stage that a complete change came over the scene. Acting on instructions from the Congress headquarters, those invited by the Governors in each of the six provinces declined to accept office, unless they received the very assurance which it was constitutionally impossible for the Governors to give. This was made clear to the public in a series of statements issued by the Governors and by

the Congress leaders in explanation of the failure of negotiations. The tenor of these statements was the same throughout. He need not do more than quote one of them.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who was invited by Lord Erskine to form a ministry in Madras, said in the course of his statement, 'I explained that I and my Cabinet should be given the fullest freedom of action inside the scope of provincial autonomy, said to be given under the Government of India Act, and that, while we remain in office and undertake the responsibility for the Government of the province, his Excellency should assure us that he would not use any special powers of interference or set aside the advice of the Ministers. I regret to say that beyond a general offer of good-will and co-operation, His Excellency refused to assist me with any assurance of non-interference, formal or informal. I had, therefore, no option but to express my inability to take office under the conditions and respectfully decline the invitation to form a ministry.'

That was the position when, on March 30, a most surprising statement was issued by Mr. Gandhi to the press, in the course of which he claimed to be the sole author of the formula authorizing the Congress to accept office, and made the following observations: 'My desire was not to lay down any impossible condition. On the contrary, I wanted to devise a condition that could easily be accepted by Governors. There was no intention whatsoever of laying down a condition whose acceptance might mean the slightest abrogation of the Constitution. Have I not heard Sir Samuel Hoare and other Ministers say in so many words that, ordinarily, the Governors would not use their admittedly large powers of interference? I claim that the Congress asked for nothing more.'

In other words, Mr. Gandhi now claimed that what he was asking for from the Governors was a small thing, a thing, moreover, which Sir Samuel Hoare's authority in saying that, while often he expressed the view that no occasion for use by a Governor of his reserve powers need necessarily arise, he never uttered a word which could possibly suggest that he ever contemplated that a Governor would be pledging himself in advance not to use his special powers.

Mr. Gandhi's statement was so astonishing that it appeared to be explicable only on the assumption that either he had never read the Act and the Instrument of Instructions or the report of the Select Committee, or that, if he had done so, he had completely forgotten, when he made his statement, the provisions embodied in those documents respecting the special responsibilities vested in the Governors. It was all the more unfortunate that he should have made such a statement in that large numbers in India were accustomed to accept any statement made by Mr. Gandhi as necessarily correct.

That being so, it was desirable, in order to remove the misapprehension, that he should make it clear, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the demand made of the Governors was one which, without an amendment of the Constitution, they could not possibly accept. The simplest way of doing so was, perhaps, to consider some concrete examples of the position which might arise if the assurances asked for were given. It should be remembered that, under sec. 52 of the Act, certain special responsibilities were imposed on the Governor, among them being the obligation to safeguard the legitimate interests of the minorities and, in so far as any such responsibility was involved, he should in the exercise of his function, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken.

What precisely did that mean? If any one doubted the meaning, he would find his doubts dispelled by a reference to paragraph 8 of the Instrument of Instructions, which he quoted.

Continuing, Lord Zetland said: Now let us suppose, by way of an example that in a province in which the Hindus were in a majority, or in a province in which the Moslems were in a majority, the Ministry proposed an action which would have the effect of curtailing the number of schools available to the Moslems in one case, and to the Hindus in the other. Their action would clearly come within the Congress formula, for such a measure would be within the legal competence of the Ministry to propose and of the legislature to enact; and it could not, therefore, be described as other than constitutional activity on the part of the Ministry. It was precisely because it was realized that such action would be possible within the Constitution that Parliament inserted the safeguards provided for by the imposition of special responsibilities on the Governors.

In the case which he was considering, it was clear that the special responsibility for safeguarding the legitimate interests of the minorities would be involved, and, in accordance with the provision of the Act and the Instrument of Instructions, the

Governor would be bound to exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken. But if he had given the assurance which the Congress demanded, he would no longer be free to exercise his individual judgment, because he would have pledged himself not to set aside the advice of his Ministers, and he would be disabled, therefore, from discharging the duties specifically imposed upon him. He hoped that he had made it clear by his simple example that Governors could not give within the framework of the constitution, the assurance which was asked for, and that Mr. Gandhi was in error in asserting that they could. But he could add that, even if the constitution admitted of a pledge of this kind being given, the giving of it would have involved a grave breach of faith with the minorities and others in India, who were promised the measure of protection against the arbitrary rule of the majority afforded by the special responsibilities of the Governors and by the powers conferred on them of making the safeguards effective.

Opinions might differ as to the extent of and the necessity for such safeguards, but it could not be doubted that the minorities in India themselves attached the utmost importance to them. It was an Indian newspaper which compared the Congress demand for non-interference by Governors to incendiaries demanding the assurance that fire-engines would not be used to put out the conflagration which they had started.

Lord Zetland expressed profound regret at the refusal by the majority to accept office. In those provinces—Bengal, the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Assam—where the Congress were not in a majority, ministries had been formed and were now functioning. In provinces where the Congress were in a majority minority ministries had been formed. He could not refrain from giving expression to his appreciation, which he felt sure, must be felt in all quarters of the House, of the public spirit which had been shown by the members of these ministries in undertaking what must quite obviously be a difficult and distasteful task. They might well applaud not only their public spirit but also the sense of the realities of the situation which they had displayed, and offer to them their good wishes in the discharge of their onerous duties. He had noticed suggestions to the effect that the appointment of such ministries was unconstitutional. His Majesty's Government were altogether unable to accept as valid any such suggestion. The Act contained the mandatory requirement that there shall be a Council of Ministers to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.' That makes ministers an indispensable part of the machinery for carrying on provincial government under Part III of the Act; and it is further provided that the functions of the Governor respecting the choosing of his ministers should be exercised by him in his discretion.

It was true that the assumption underlying the Act was that any Council of Ministers appointed should, if possible, be selected from persons who commanded a majority in the legislature; and that this should be so necessitated by the fact that without support from such a majority no ministry could count upon obtaining from the legislature its essential legislation and the supply necessary for carrying on the government. Accordingly, paragraph 7 of the Instrument of Instructions has enjoined on the governor to use his best endeavours to select his Ministers in a manner which would ensure that they would have such support in the legislature. But this injunction in the Instructions was necessarily not a hard and fast one. The wording was purposely chosen, so as to make allowance for the circumstances in which a rigid injunction might have been impossible to carry out. Hence the expression, 'use his best endeavour'.

The King's Government must be carried on, and if the situation was such that the representatives of the majority party in the legislature had refused to accept office, it was unquestionably open to the Governor to invite other persons to form a Council of Ministers for the purpose of enabling the King's Government to be carried on under the Act, and if such persons accepted the Governor's invitation, there was nothing in the Act which rendered their action or that of the Governor either unconstitutional or illegal.

It had also been suggested that the Viceroy should send for Mr. Gandhi in the hope, presumably, of persuading him to modify the attitude towards office-acceptance which at his instance, the Congress had taken up. Lord Zetland confessed he found it difficult to see what purpose would be served by such an action. That was a question of Government in the provinces under a system of provincial autonomy, the outstanding feature of which was the relaxation of control by the Centre; and, as he had already explained, the Governor in each of the six provinces had already taken the initiative by sending for the leading Congressmen and in-

viting them to take office. It was Congressmen who declined the offer, and unless they wished to modify the attitude which they had taken up, there was obviously for the present no more to be said.

On the other hand, if their decision had been due to a genuine misunderstanding of the constitutional position of the Governors, and if Mr. Gandhi or anyone else representing the Congress, recognizing now the real constitutional position as he had endeavoured to explain, was to express a desire, in these altered circumstances, to see the Viceroy, he little doubted that the Viceroy would approach the request with every desire to reach an understanding as to what the position of the provincial representatives of the Congress in the matter actually was. But it was clearly for those who had been under a misapprehension, if such be the case, to say so.

As regards the future, that would depend on the attitude of the legislatures—the Act required that they should be summoned not later than six months from the date of the coming into operation of the Constitution. It might be that the policy of the minority Governments would meet with the approval of the legislatures. If so, well and good. If, on the other hand, it did not, it would be open to the legislatures to express their disapproval in the recognized way. It would then be open to the majority, in accordance with the universally accepted practice under the system of responsible self-government, to form a Ministry and to accept the responsibility for their action in displacing those who were in office.

Preceding, Lord Zetland said that Lord Lothian, in a letter to the *Times* on April 6, had stressed the magnitude of the opportunities which were now open to public men in India, if only they were willing to make use of them; and it was surely little less than a tragedy that they should fail to do so and should, at the very outset, place a stumbling block in the way of orderly and constitutional progress which, he believed, the vast majority of thinking men in India desired.

Lord Zetland said in conclusion that there should be no misunderstanding as to what he was now saying. The reserve powers were an integral part of the Constitution and could not be abrogated except by Parliament itself, and the Governors could not treat the Congress as a privileged body, exempt from the provisions of the Constitution by which all other parties were bound. On his part, he gladly repeated what had been said on many occasions, both by Sir Samuel Hoare and others, namely, that there was no reason why the reserve powers of the Governors should ever come into play. Whether they did or not must depend upon the policy and the action of the Ministers themselves, and it was in that spirit of cordial co-operation and sympathetic understanding of the position of the Ministers that the Act would be administered.

Lord Snell said that they ought to face the situation as quickly as possible in the hope that they might do something to solve the difficulties. Certain broad principles emerged on which their judgment must finally rest. He agreed that the Governors could not swear away from their responsibilities under the constitution and added: 'All of us would accept that immediately and I personally do not admire the method of asking a Governor to do what it must have been known beforehand he could not do and had no power to do. I can not feel that a constitution of that magnitude could be inaugurated by a process of political manoeuvre. On the other hand let us understand what the difficulties are. Whilst I believe the Governor must be treated fairly, I also want to see treated fairly the Indian people and the difficulties they have to meet.'

Continuing, Lord Snell said: 'Speaking for myself and the party it has always been our hope and belief that the Indian people instead of despondence would loyally agree to work the constitution as far as it went and in the minority report we have specifically made that plea.'

Lord Snell added that the Labour party occupied the same position to-day but the question arose as to what should be done in the difficulties with which they were faced. The difficulties had to be surmounted in some way very quickly. He confessed he was disappointed at the fact that Lord Zetland offered so little encouragement on the positive side of the question and that his suggestions were not vivid enough to capture the imagination of the Indian people. Lord Snell did not believe that a stiff correctness of that kind was appropriate to the difficulties they had to face. 'Merely to say: "here is the constitution; take it or leave it", will not help us to bridge the gulf which has arisen. We have to remember the people with whom we are dealing—people possessing great pride who are easily appeased and even more easily hurt and they are apt to take at the face value a good many admonitions addressed to them. It is very well for his Majesty's Government to

give stern and lofty advice to members of the Labour party. We listen to them patiently. We bleed under stripes given to us but we get accustomed to them. We know his Majesty's Government and though we are afflicted, we pick up and start on our work as though nothing had happened. I cannot help feeling that this is what the Indian people should do.

Lord Snell added that the Government should remember that this disaffection went far outside the ranks of the Congress. People like Mr. Srinivasa Sastri did not dissent from what was proposed without having some real understanding behind them. He asked them to consider the psychology of the Indian people. They confessedly were disappointed with the Act. They saw reservation after reservation piled up, and on the other hand, there were almost no promises for the future. The words 'Dominion Status' were too horrid to be used. If the Government had been bold enough to say frankly and openly 'at the end of all this, some time or other, but cannot say just now when it will mean full Dominion Status', the Indian people would have taken it and had been satisfied with it and had accepted the details as on the way to Dominion Status, but in fact, the Government had done very little to reassure them and the present attitude of the Indian people towards the Act was a measure of their distrust. 'In our work with each other we live mostly by faith and behind it all we have a living faith in the decency of other fellows. That is what we have to develop in India itself.

Lord Snell did not feel that it was a question of language because Mr. Gandhi knew the English language as well as they did. It was lack of knowledge with regard to how democratic processes worked. He asked Indian leaders to reflect upon the point that democracy by its very nature was difficult to work. It was easy for dictators but when they had to take the whole people with them the process was slower and more difficult. He felt as one who on the Round Table Conference and on the Joint Select Committee with his colleagues did what they could to satisfy the legitimate hopes of the Indian people, that they had some right to ask them to accept their experience as a reasonable basis on which they could work. On the other hand concession could not be all on one side. The Government had got to try to build a bridge between these two peoples and he felt the Viceroy could do much. Nobody knew better than he the difficulties involved in shaping the Act. He did not ask the Viceroy publicly to invite Mr. Gandhi to come and see him. Things had not to be done that way, but the Viceroy could remove the misapprehension and clear away some fears. He could perhaps give some kind of general assurance and that all would be helpful.

Nobody knew better the psychology of the Indian people than Lord Zetland. So the Government was really well-equipped at present to undertake work that might be fruitful beyond all their expectations. 'We do not want to say anything about the reservations, except that we made it clear in our minority report that the success of provincial Governments would be shown just in so far as such power has not to be exercised. We consider that the powers given to the Governors must be adequate but should essentially be emergency powers, to be used only where a break-down threatens and not to be part of the ordinary operation of government. Surely some assurance of that kind, if conveyed to the Indian people, would be helpful at present. I hope the Indian people will think again and see if they cannot arrive at some understanding with regard to the working of this Act.

Lord Snell concluded that he did not think it sufficient that explanations should be given by the Government or that books should be placed on Indian libraries. He believed that what was needed in India, more than all else, was that the people who were accustomed to work the democratic machinery in their own country and who knew its frustrations as well as its advantages should be able to come in personal contact with the Indian people and give them assurances they ought to have. The Indian people take upon themselves an un-evidable responsibility, and will not be forgiven by the future generations of Indian people if they do not work this Constitution for what it is worth while, at the same time, hoping for its future enlargement. In that work of pacification our party will be privileged to give any assistance we can.

Lord Rankellour said that he did not see that either Lord Zetland or the Viceroy could have acted otherwise than they did, and that, so long as they resolutely maintained and asserted the Constitution with the powers it still gave them, he believed and hoped that they would have the support even of those who were most bitterly opposed to the Act.

The debate closed.

### Statement in the House of Commons

In the House of Commons, on the same day, *Major C. R. Attlee* (Lab.) by private notice, asked *Mr. R. A. Butler*, Under-Secretary of State for India, if he had any statement to make on the situation in India. *Mr. Butler* replied :—

'I explained the main facts of the situation in India in my answer to *Mr. Morgan Jones* (Lab.) on Tuesday. They are briefly that in each of the six provinces where the Congress has obtained a majority in the legislature, the Governors took the correct constitutional course of approaching the first leader of the majority party and invited him to form a Ministry. These invitations were, however, declined, the reason for the refusal being that the Governors were unable to give an undertaking which was demanded as a condition of forming Ministries, that they should promise then and there that they would not use their special powers conferred upon them by the Act.

'I feel sure that no doubt will be felt in any quarter of the House that it was impossible for any Governor to give the undertaking sought from him (Cheers.) Had he done so, he would have had to divest himself of the responsibilities specially placed upon him by Parliament through the Act and the Instrument of Instruction and also by doing so, to have ignored the pledges given to the minorities and others. It is, of course, possible that the provincial Congress leaders, in making this demand were not conscious of its effect and implications and that there existed such misunderstandings as were disclosed by *Mr. Gandhi's* statement issued on March 30, which have been the cause of so much confusion both here and in India.

'If that is the position and if *Mr. Gandhi*, or anyone else, representing the Congress and recognizing the real constitutional position as it has now been explained here to express his desire in these altered circumstances to see His Excellency the Viceroy, I have little doubt that His Excellency would be most willing to approach any such request with every desire to reach an understanding as to what the position of provincial representatives of the Congress really is. Meanwhile, the King's Government is being carried on in these six provinces by Ministers, whose public-spirited action in assuming the responsibility in the most difficult circumstances the House will wish fully to recognize. (Cheers.)

'This is the position so far as it is possible to explain it within the limits now open to me. I can only express the sincere hope, which I am sure the members on all sides of the House will share, that further consideration will lead the representatives of the majority party in the six provinces in question to reconsider their refusal to assume responsibility, which their return by their constituents as the majority party in the legislatures has imposed upon them, and that they will before long realize the magnitude of the opportunities available to them. If they do so, they may be confident, as they have already been assured, that they can depend upon most cordial co-operation and support from the Governors.'

### Mahatma's Arbitration Proposals

#### Lord Lothian's Reply

\* *Mahatma Gandhi's* suggestion of arbitration evoked a reply from *Lord Lothian* in a letter to the 'Times' on the 12th. April in which after remarking that *Mr. Gandhi* courteously commented on his letter to the 'Times' of April 6, the writer says, 'It seems clear that after many years of imprisonment and repression as a result of their policy of civil disobedience the Congress want to be assured that where they have majorities they will be allowed to assume the responsibility of Government in the provinces without constant interference by the Governors with what their Delhi resolution calls their "constitutional activities". That surely is a matter which can be cleared up by a little common sense and some human personal contacts.

*Lord Lothian* describes *Mahatma Gandhi's* proposal of arbitration as a 'helpful suggestion' but draws attention to the difficulty in that and asks, 'Would the arbitrators also be asked to decide what activities of the Ministers were "constitutional activities"? If the arbitrators said the Governors could constitutionally give the assurance which the Congress Committee ask, would not the minorities in each province protest vehemently against their giving this promise and would not such an undertaking conflict with the basic principle of constitutional democracy, namely, that

neither the party in the majority nor the Governor should be able to exercise arbitrary power without appeal to anybody.

I am inclined to think that the real key to the solution lies in the recognition that under a system of responsible government the ultimate decision against abuse of power comes to rest with the electorate. It is quite clear that ordinarily the Governor has no right under the constitution to interfere with the responsibility of his Ministers. He is bound to act on their advice. That right only arises in cases where he considers his special responsibilities become involved. Lord Zetland speaking in the House of Lords last week with perfect constitutional correctness said that while in such cases "the Governor would be bound to exercise his individual judgment on the action to be taken, it does not follow that because he was exercising individual judgment he would differ from the advice tendered him by his Ministers. He might or might not". That, of course, is the central point. The discretion which the Governor has to exercise is whether his special responsibility will be better discharged by accepting or rejecting the advice of his ministry when attempts at an agreement fail.

His decision, as all past history shows, largely depends on whether the majority in the legislature is united and resolute and whether it can count on the support of the electorate in the event of dissolution. If it is, the Governor has usually decided not to provoke a constitutional crisis from which there is no solution save the suspension of the normal functioning of the constitution. That is why responsible government has always led to self-government. If on the other hand the Ministry is pursuing a policy which raises vehement opposition to the point of imperilling the peace and tranquillity of the rights of the minorities, it is right that the first remedy is in the hands of the Governor should be to refer the matter to the electorate. That is a true safeguard for democracy itself. Is it not the most promising way out of the present difficulty to recognize that once responsible government is in being, the ultimate "arbitration" will almost inevitably be exercised by the electorate?"

### Mahatma's Reply to Lord Zetland

Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement on the 10th April in reply to Lord Lothian's letter to the 'Times' and Lord Zetland's statement in Parliament:—

I have read Lord Lothian's appeal to me with the respect it deserves. I have a vivid recollection of the talks with him, among other friends. The provincial autonomy then pictured was a real stuff unlike what the present constitution is supposed to give. Lord Zetland's elaborate statement confirms my view and hardens the universal suspicion of British statesmen's intentions. So long as they wish to bolster up the imperialistic design, India which the Congress represents will never reconcile itself to them. I believe in friendship with Britain, not with imperialistic exploitation. I am free to confess ignorance of the Government of India Act and greater ignorance of the Select Committee's report.

My advice to the Congress to adopt my resolution of conditional acceptance of office was based on the assurance of lawyers among Congressmen that the Governors could give the required assurance without the infringement of the Act. I do not, therefore, need even Sir Samuel Hoare's past declarations to support me. If, therefore, he disclaims having ever made the statement which I ever having heard him make, I accept his disclaimer without argument. The dismal fact stares India in the face that the British statesmen impose an Act on India against her declared wishes, and then instead of leaving its interpretation to impartial tribunals, impose their own upon her and call this transaction autonomy. Lawyers—Mussalman, Parsi and Hindu—whom the Government have hitherto honoured with their patronage declare that the Governors can without infringement give the required assurance. I regard the British statesmen's interpretation as non-judicial, arbitrary and interested. At the same time I recognise that other lawyers give an interpretation favourable to the British Government.

Therefore, I invite them to appoint an arbitration tribunal of three judges, of whom one will be appointed by the Congress, another by the British Government with power to the two to appoint the third to decide whether it is competent for the Governors to give the required assurances described by me, and since the legality of the present ministries has been questioned, I refer that question also to the proposed tribunal. There is a precedent for such a course. If they would accept my proposal I would advise the Congress to do likewise. I mean every word of my previous

statement. I want the right to prevail. There is here no question of diplomacy with India. It is a question of life and death. Office will be accepted, not otherwise. It, therefore, pains me to find Lord Zetland playing upon the old familiar tune of divide and rule.

The Congress cannot exist for two days if it disregards the interest of the minorities. It cannot bring about mass rule by dividing India into factions. The Congress ministries, if they ever come into existence, will dig their own graves without the Governor's safeguards the moment they trample upon the rights of the minorities or resort to injustice otherwise. I regret to have to say it, but to be true I must say that Lord Zetland's speech is that of one who is conscious of his sword rather than of his right. His Lordship is again misleading when he says that the Congress wants to be treated as a privileged body. It does not. Anybody representing a most decisive majority like the Congress would want the gentlemanly assurance that the Congress has asked for.

### Mahatma's Telegraph to the "Times"

Mahatma Gandhi telegraphed to the *Times* from Wardha on the 14th April as follows :—

"I have carefully read the '*Times*' comment on my statement. It seems to beg the question when it invites the Congress to test *bona fides* by taking office unconditionally. My advice to the Congress has always been that office acceptance will be a fatal blunder without a previous understanding regarding the safeguards within the Governor's discretion.

"In the teeth of first class legal opinion to the contrary, I regard Lord Zetland's interpretation as unacceptable. The refusal to submit his interpretation to an examination by a legal tribunal, will raise a strong presumption that the British Government has no intention of dealing fairly by the majority party whose advanced programme they dislike.

"I prefer an honourable deadlock to dishonourable daily scenes between the Congressmen and the Governors. For, in the sense the British Government mean, the working of the Act by the Congress seems impossible. It is, therefore, for the British Government to show to the Congress by every means open within their Constitution that the Congress can advance towards its goal even by taking office.

"I wish every one concerned to believe me that with me there is no question whatsoever of false prestige. My function is that of a mediator between the Congress and the Government which, unlike many Congressmen, I believe to be capable of being converted under moral pressure as it is being coerced under physical pressure.

"After the above prepared telegraphic summary, Lord Lothian's reasoned letter to the *Times* was placed in my hands. His argument is based on an assumed position to which India is an utter stranger. One sees not the slightest regard for the majority view. I regret, therefore, that his letter calls for no alteration in my opinion as stated above.

### Mahatma's Reply to Foreign Press Interviewer

Mahatma Gandhi replying to several questions of a foreign press correspondent clarifying the Congress standpoint said :—'Under the assurance that I have contemplated I have not envisaged a reduction of those rights which are guaranteed by the Act itself whilst the Act remains in force. I want an absolutely honourable understanding which is incapable of double interpretation by honourable parties.'

Mahatma Gandhi added, 'What I want before Congressmen accept office is the assurance which I still hold is within the power of Governors. The assurance contemplates non-interference and not non-dismissal (of Cabinet).

Mahatma Gandhi declared : 'But if Governors are responsible, Ministers who are worth their salt are surely still more responsible for peace and tranquillity. There is one thing, however, if I were a Congress Minister I could not be willingly responsible to—I mean the rights of the services. By that one guarantee, in my opinion, the framers of the Act have reduced autonomy to a farce.'



Concluding Mahatma Gandhi says that if the assurance is given, 'Ministers even acting within the constitution, can compel a repeal of the Act and hasten the day of the meeting of a constituent Assembly whose act will be accepted by the British people, unless they want to govern India by the naked sword'.

### Mr. Butler's Statement in Commons

In the House of Commons, on the 26th. April, Mr. Butler replying to Mr. Thomas Williams said that the proposal for an arbitration tribunal had been considered by the Government. They are unable to accept the suggestion, that it is for such tribunal to decide whether the Governor can or cannot consistently with the Act and his instructions divest himself of the duties imposed upon him in specific terms by Parliament through those documents'.

Mr. Butler continued: If on the other hand the Congress resolution was not intended to necessitate their so doing the only authority in a position to establish this fact is the author of the resolution himself. The Government's attitude towards the Conference has already been indicated. I observed from the recent statement made as regards the intention of the Congress resolution that the main apprehension appears to be lest the Governors should use special powers for detailed interference in administration. Let me make it plain that the Government have no intention of countenancing the use of special powers for other than purposes wherefor Parliament intended them. It is certainly not their intention that the Governors by a narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities should trench upon the wide powers which was the purpose of Parliament to place in the hands of the ministries and which it is our desire that they should use in furtherance of the programmes they advocated.

Mr. Butler's statement was in reply to two questions by Mr. Thomas Williams. The first enquired the attitude of the Government on the proposal that the Viceroy should take the initiative for arranging a conference with Mahatma Gandhi or other Congress representatives. The second enquired of the Government's attitude as regards Mahatma Gandhi's proposal to appoint an arbitral tribunal.

Mr. Williams later asked whether it was not to be in the interests of peace and good government of India if such misunderstanding could be removed on the spot. Mr. Butler replied that he had already indicated the general opinion of the Government. If Mr. Gandhi or any other leader wishes to make a request to the Viceroy we shall give it consideration.

Mr. Pethick-Lawrence suggested that the government might go a little further. Mr. Butler answered that he had already indicated the Government's attitude.

The Duchess of Atholl asked: Was there some misunderstanding on Mr. Gandhi's part because he had not read the Government of India Act?

Mr. Butler replied he thought the latter statement was perfectly true.

Mr. Graham White asked whether the Government had considered Mr. Gandhi's latest pronouncement.

Mr. Butler repeated that only the original author of the resolution was in a position to state its meaning.

### Congress Working Committee on Deadlock

The Congress Working Committee adopted the following resolution on the constitutional deadlock after 28 hours' deliberations during the last three days from the 26th. to 28th. April:—

'The Working Committee approves of and endorses the action that leaders of Congress parliamentary parties in the provinces took in pursuance of the resolution of the A. I. C. C. of March 18, on being invited by Governors in their respective provinces to help them in the formation of Ministries.

'In view of the fact that it is contended by British Ministers that it is not competent for Governors, without amendment of the Act, to give assurance required by the Congress for enabling Congress leaders to form ministries, the Committee wishes to make it clear that the resolution of the A. I. C. C. did not contemplate any amendment of the Act for the purpose of required assurances.

The Working Committee, moreover, is advised by eminent jurists that such assurances can be given strictly within the constitution.

'The Working Committee considers that pronouncements of policy of British Government made by Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler are utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the Congress, are misleading and misinterpret the Congress attitude.

'Further the manner and setting in which such pronouncements have been made are discourteous to the Congress.

'The past record of the British Government as well as its present attitude show that without specific assurances as required by the Congress, popular Ministers will be unable to function properly and without irritating interference.

'The assurances do not contemplate abrogation of the right of the Governor to dismiss the Ministry or dissolve the provincial Assembly when serious differences of opinion arise between the Governor and his Ministers. But this committee has grave objection to Ministers having to submit to interference by the Governor with the alternative of themselves having to resign their office instead the Governors taking the responsibility of dismissing them.'

### Statement in the House of Lords

In the House of Lords, on the 6th. May, *Lord Snell* asked if it was not the opinion of the Government that the misunderstanding, which seemed to stand in the way of the majority party in a number of provinces accepting office, might be removed as a result of a discussion between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy. He said that as they watched from day to day the news from India, most of them wished that they could be present on the spot with an opportunity of trying to persuade the people of both sides of the controversy to do something to bridge the gulf dividing the people of India and the Government.

*Lord Snell*, proceeding, said that the difficulty confronting them seemed to be due, for the most part, to a clash of temperaments rather than to substantial material barriers. On one side they appeared to have emotional resentment against the barriers that the Indian leaders think had been erected. Their difficulty might be one of tone rather than of real substance. On the other hand, they had the Government while allowing all the difficulties facing it, stiff in the traditional aloof manner. A little more grace in phrasing and more sympathetic understanding of the Indian people might have had an altogether different result. In any case, they had growing impatience in which the prospects of a real settlement were in danger. Therefore, the time had come when they should ask both sides to make another effort in the task of an agreement.

*Lord Snell* added that he specially asked the Government to try to remove any misgivings that might exist. He did not personally regard Mahatma Gandhi as an entirely tactless negotiator. On the other hand, he did appear to have been genuinely surprised that his words had not meant the same thing to the Indian Government and the India office as they had meant in his own mind. If that were so, then both sides might, in this crisis, bend a little and try once more to secure a settlement.

*Lord Snell* especially appealed to the Government to make a gesture of willingness to remove any misapprehensions, and to give the leaders of the Congress Party any assurance possible that the reserve powers of the Governors would not be used unnecessarily and that the will of the Legislature and Ministers would prevail in everything that was for their rightful decision within the provisions of the Government of India Act. He specially urged this because he did not want to let things drift until it was too late. Every week's delay sharpened the tempers and increased both dangers and difficulties.

*Lord Snell* proceeded that the most immediate need was to give the people of India an assurance that their wishes and work would not be continuously thwarted either by the Government of India or by the Indian Office. *Lord Snell* appealed to the leaders of the people of India to try out this great experiment and not to lead the people of India into the mere wilderness of barren negation. He added that he should like to express to the Indian people his sincere belief that the British people would not tolerate the Governors needlessly thwarting their wishes or harassing the Ministers in their work.

*Lord Snell* also expressed the belief that the Governors of the provinces would desire to win the trust and friendship to those among whom they worked. Their dearest wish would be to return to their own country at the end of their service with a record of reserved powers entirely unused. He mentioned the name of Mahatma Gandhi in connection with the question but that included a desire that

Government should avail itself of any other helpful method of contact and appeasement.

*Lord Salisbury* opined that the wisest course to pursue was not to try to interfere with the administration of the Act. Let both sides in India be as conciliatory as possible but it would be a great pity if it was through that the Governors' powers were unimportant and insignificant.

*Lord Lloyd* disagreed that the difficulties were due to a clash in temperaments. He said that the Congress attitude was one of resolute hostility to the whole spirit of the conception of the Act, which should not be forgotten in considering whether there could be any useful approach in the present difficulties. *Lord Lloyd* believed that there were some very able leaders in the Congress who, if the Government did not interfere, might itself split from the Extremists and there might yet be an easier solution of the difficulty than some people had supposed.

*Lord Gaisford* hoped that *Lord Zetland*, Secretary of State for India, would indicate to the Indian population the conciliatory attitude of the Government in trying to effect a settlement.

The *Marquess of Zetland* replying to *Lord Snell's* question said: The suggestion seems to rest on the assumption that as a result of discussion between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, a short and simple formula—an alternative to Mr. Gandhi's—could be discovered to regulate the manner in which the Governors will exercise reserved powers. I need not repeat what I said in reply to the question by *Lord Lothian* as regards the impossibility of Governors divesting themselves of the obligations imposed by the Act, but I feel bound to call attention to a further difficulty in the way of any such general assurance as it is suggested the Governors might give, namely, that it would inevitably lead to differences in interpretation in particular cases and consequently charges of breach of faith.

'If a quasi-legal formula could be devised to regulate varied and changing relationships between the Governor and the Ministry, it would have been embodied in the Act. It was just because there was no such formula that it was emphasised again in the course of discussions preceding the Bill that it would be of the first importance for its success. It is here that such unfortunate misunderstandings have arisen. In some quarters a great deal more has been read into that part of the Act which imposes certain obligations upon the Governor than it actually contains.

'In its most recent pronouncement the Congress declared that the past record and present attitude of the British Government showed that without the assurances demanded a popular Ministry would be exposed to constant irritating interference. This differs so profoundly from the picture of a popular Ministry functioning under the Act as I have always seen it that it is perhaps desirable that I should describe the working of the constitution in Indian provinces as I always contemplated it. Since I was a member not only of the Select Committee but of the Round Table Conference I may claim to know something of the intentions of those who framed the measure and the spirit in which it was conceived.

'First let it not be supposed that the field of Government may be divided into two parts in which the Governor and Ministry operate separately at the risk of clashes between them. The essence of the new constitution is that the initiative and responsibility for the whole government of the province, though in form vesting in the Governor, passes to the Ministry as soon as it takes office. It will be the Governor's duty to help the Ministers in their task in every way, particularly by his political experience or administrative knowledge.

The reserved powers of which so much is made by the Congress, will not normally be in operation: indeed, they only come into the picture if he considers that the carefully limited special responsibilities laid upon him by the Act and impressed upon him by the Instrument of Instructions are involved, but even if a question of their use does arise—here is emphasised the spirit in which it was intended that the constitution should be worked—it would be altogether wrong to assume that the Governor would immediately set himself in open opposition to his Ministry.

'That is the last thing in the world that I should either expect or desire. A Governor whose advice and support have been valuable to the Ministry in the conduct of its own affairs, will surely be able to lay his own difficulties before them the moment he sees the risk that he and his Ministers may not see eye to eye in a matter for which special responsibility has been laid upon him by Parliament. Just as Ministers can count upon the assistance of the Governor in their difficulties, so

could he in his turn rely upon receiving the sympathetic consideration of his Ministers for a difficulty in his own position which may be or could be met by some modification of their proposals that would not materially affect the Ministry's programme.

'In any case, discussion of the matter between men working together for a common purpose is likely at least to secure that points of difference between them are narrowed. It will then be for each, having regard to the interests of the province as a whole, to consider whether points of difference so narrowed and defined, justify a break in the fruitful relationship. It will doubtless be too much to hope that occasions will never arise in which neither side can with good conscience give way. But if my picture of the working of Government under the Act is true and if the relations between the Governor and his Ministry are those of partners in a common enterprise, there can be no possible question of Governors interfering constantly and embarrassingly in the responsibilities and the work of Ministries.'

The Marquess of Zetland repeated the assurance given by Mr. Butler when he said: 'His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing the use of special powers for other than purposes for which Parliament intended them. It is certainly not the intention that Governors by a narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities, should trench upon the wide powers which it was the purpose of Parliament to place in the hands of Ministries and which it is our desire that they should use in furtherance of programmes which they advocated.'

Continuing the Marquess of Zetland said: 'In the Working of the Constitution as far as it is at present possible to judge, I find a happy confirmation of the picture as I have always seen it. Both in the provinces in which Ministries are working with majorities in the legislatures and those in which minority Ministries are functioning, bold programmes have been drawn up, as far as I know, without the smallest attempt on the part of any Governor to interfere. Is it too much to hope that those who so far have hesitated to accept the responsibilities of office from a mistaken sense of fear lest they should be unduly hampered in their tasks, will derive reassurance and encouragement from the object lesson provided by the actual working of the constitution in their midst? I need hardly say that I hope devoutly and in all sincerity that it may be so.'

Lord Snell expressed thanks to Lord Zetland for his speech which, he considered, had carried them further than they were when the debate had begun. The debate then terminated.

### The Mahatma on Lord Zetland's Speech

Interviewed by the Associated Press on Lord Zetland's speech in the House of Lords on May 6, Mahatma Gandhi said:

'So far as the tone is concerned, it is an undoubted improvement upon his last speech on the subject. But I fear it is no contribution to the removal of the deadlock.'

'The last resolution of the Working Committee is the clearest possible annotation of the All-India Congress Committee's resolution, in accordance with which assurances were asked for. Now the world knows what was meant. Surely it is no strain upon the constitution Act for the Governors to give the assurance that whenever a situation is created which to them appears intolerable, they will take upon their shoulders the responsibility of dismissing the Ministers which they have the right to do, instead of expecting them to resign or submit to the Governor's wishes.'

'Citing the performances of Ministries formed by Governors in the face of universal opposition, does not improve matters but strengthens suspicion. In my opinion the Congress is in earnest and wants to make a serious effort, if it takes office, to make a substantial advance by that method towards its unequivocal goal of complete independence in so far as it is constitutionally possible to make that advance.'

### The "Times" Interview with the Mahatma

The 'Times of India' published an interview by its special correspondent with Mahatma Gandhi at Tithal (Bulsar) in the course of which Mahatma Gandhi said: 'The only obstacle as far as it can at present be seen is the Congress demand that in the event of a serious disagreement between the Governor and his Congress

Ministers the Governor should dismiss them. I personally would be satisfied, however, if the Governor gave an undertaking that in such a case he would demand his Ministers' resignation.

'I am very anxious that Congressmen should take office but only if the Government show their willingness to conciliate the Congress,' declared Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi added: 'If, as has been said, the Marquis of Zetland had conceded all but the question of dismissal, the Congress asks the Government to come a little way to meet it. The conciliatory moves so far have come from the Congress. It would have been easy at Allahabad to close the door by putting a narrow interpretation on the Delhi resolution. Instead it kept it open.'

Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to say that he would personally be satisfied if the Governor would give an undertaking that in case of disagreement he would demand Ministers' resignation. Mahatma Gandhi refused to agree to it as a small matter for the Congress, because his idea was to make the Governor think fifty times before he took the responsibility for dismissing the Ministers. The Congress critics had said that this demand was merely a trifle. 'If that is so,' said Mahatma Gandhi, 'why not give the Congress the trifle?' The object of the Congress demand was to test the sincerity of the British Government. Did they want the Congress in office or not? The Congress did not demand any legal change. But it was being talked at instead of being talked to. It would appear, added Mahatma Gandhi, that British statesmen and provincial Governors were addressing the world and not the Congress. In fact, they might be accused of attempting as ever to discredit and isolate the Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi did not see any constitutional obstacle or impropriety in the Viceroy taking steps in an attempt to end the deadlock. It was known that the Viceroy conferred with the provincial Governors before they summoned the Congress leaders. Surely then there would be no obstacle to his asking the Congress President to meet him. Mahatma Gandhi did not mean this was necessary, it was enough if the Congress demand was complied with.

Envisaging the consequences of the continuance of the deadlock, Mahatma Gandhi said it would end in the suspension of the constitution. He was prepared for this and its possible consequences but this was the last thing he desired. It would increase the existing bitterness and hatred between Britain and India. He himself would die in an effort to prevent the tragedy but there must come a time when his effort would be fruitless.

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that the Congress having gone as far as it could go, the next move must come from the Government if they really wanted the Congress to take office.

### Ministers' Resignation—Lord Zetland's Statement

In the House of Lords, on the 8th. May, *Lord Zetland*, speaking in reply to a debate on India, said that Mr. Gandhi's suggestion involved that in the event of a serious difference of opinion between Ministers and Governors where Governors' responsibilities were concerned, Governors should dismiss Ministers or call for their resignation. He added that it would not be wise to lay down that Governors must necessarily call for the resignation of Ministers.

The debate was initiated by *Lord Lloyd*, who asked with reference to a reply in the House of Commons to a question relating to the disturbances at Lucknow, if Government proposed to refuse information to members of Parliament on matter relating to provincial Governments in India.

*Lord Lothian* said that the question at issue related really to the points at which the responsibility of Parliament began and ended. He did not think there was any question that members of the House were entitled to ask for information about events going on in India; but, he said, it was now a well established convention, at any rate in the House of Commons, that a question could not be asked of a Minister on the ground that he was responsible for those events if the responsibility for government or some portion of government had been transferred by Acts of Parliament to the local legislature.

Lord Lothian hoped that Lord Zetland would make it clear that where responsible Ministers had accepted the responsibility of office, the primary responsibility for law and order, as definitely provided for both by the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Instructions, rested primarily upon those Ministers.

Alluding to the refusal of Congress majorities to accept office in six provinces, Lord Lothian opined that public discussions which had taken place with regard to the nature of the Act particularly were wholly admirable and that the statement made by Lord Zetland on May 6 had immensely cleared the air. They had made much clearer to all sections of the community in India what exactly was involved in provincial responsibility and provincial autonomy established under the Act.

Lord Lothian expressed the hope that before very long, it would be possible for the Governors perhaps to summon the legislatures with the object of discovering whether, in view of the explanations given in the House and elsewhere, a basis could not be found on which the majority in those legislatures would now be prepared to assume the responsibility for Government in the province, which was quite definitely within their rights and powers under the Act. That probably was the best step, which was most likely to produce a satisfactory solution of the problem.

Lord Lothian proceeded to quote the following extracts from the statement made by Mr. Gandhi, recently published in the British press, regarding acceptance of office :—

'I am very anxious that the Congress should take office, but only if Government show a willingness to conciliate the Congress. The only obstacle, as far as can at present be seen is the Congress demand that in the event of serious disagreement between a provincial governor and his Congress Ministers, the Governor should dismiss them. I personally should be satisfied, however, if the Governor gives the undertaking that in such a case he would demand the Ministers' resignation.'

Lord Lothian added that the exact meaning of those words was open to discussion, but, broadly speaking, it seemed that the difference now left was not very wide and was not one that would not be bridged by commonsense and goodwill on both sides.

Proceeding, the speaker said that under the system of responsible government the difference between dismissal and resignation practically disappeared in actual operation. After quoting the silent points in Lord Zetland's previous statement, Lord Lothian asked what the position would be when a break was actually reached, when, after all the process of discussion with a view to reaching a compromise had been exhausted, there still remained a definite difference of opinion which could not be bridged. He said that the responsibility for tendering advice which led to that breach would rest on the Minister who, therefore to that extent, would be responsible for the consequences of tendering that advice and being unwilling to withdraw it. But the responsibility for rejecting the advice would be the responsibility of the Governor, for which he would be responsible to the Secretary of State and to this House and to the electorate in this country.

Lord Lothian added that if they had studied the working of the responsible government all over the world, the difference between dismissal and resignation was not really such an important point. The more the Congress studied the way in which the system of responsible government, even with special responsibilities, worked in practice, the more readily would they see that the statement made by Lord Zetland on May 6 was a really satisfactory answer to the doubts and difficulties they felt. Parliament had deliberately applied to India a system which had worked very well in every other part of the British Commonwealth, and the more their Indian friends studied the operation of that system, the more would they find that the very anxieties they felt would best be met by India following exactly the same procedure which had such excellent results in the rest of the world.

Lord Zetland, replying, said that Lord Lloyd's question had already been answered in clear terms by Lord Lothian. The salient feature of the new constitution, so far as the government of the provinces was concerned, was surely a transfer of responsibility from the Parliament of the United Kingdom to popularly elected bodies in India itself. Under the Act of 1935, Parliament had quite deliberately transferred responsibilities to Indian Assemblies, and the Instruments of Instructions specifically instructed Governors except under certain limited circumstances, to act upon the advice of their Ministers who were responsible not to the Parliament of the United Kingdom but to Indian Legislatures to challenge the policy and administrative action of Indian Governments, so was it to those Assemblies that Indian Ministers were answerable.

Lord Zetland proceeded to say that to the extent to which the Parliament of this country had divested itself of the responsibility for the government of the provinces, it had relinquished the right to hold inquests upon the Governments of Indian

provinces by means of the machinery of questions and answers to the British Parliament. He had not the right to demand from provincial Governments the information necessary to answer a question which might be put to him, and, if he was to demand information, Indian Ministers would be perfectly within their rights in declining to supply it. This principle was, of course, subject to certain qualifications. The Parliament of this country had reserved to itself a potential measure of control in a certain limited and clearly defined sphere—the special responsibilities of Governors. Since Governors, when acting in respect of their special responsibilities were responsible both for Acts of commission to the Parliament of this country, he could naturally be prepared to answer any question bearing upon the discharge by Governors of their duties within that sphere.

Turning to Lord Lothian's speech, Lord Zetland said that Governors would be responsible for any action they took to the Parliament of this country through the Secretary of State, and he had no doubt that Governors, for that reason, would weigh the whole merits of questions before deciding to take action under their special responsibilities. But, he said, he could agree with Lord Lothian if he inferred that Governors would be solely responsible for their action.

Lord Lothian, interrupting, said that his argument was that the responsibility was a dual one.

Lord Zetland said that in that case he agreed with him. He added that it took two people to make a quarrel and that he could well understand that the responsibility for a break might be as much the responsibility of Ministers as that of Governors, inasmuch as it might result from the insistence of Ministers on their advice, which, if Governors were to discharge their duties under their special responsibilities, they could not accept. In such circumstances the responsibility for consequences would not be exclusively the responsibility of Governors, but equally that of Ministers.

With regard to Mr. Gandhi's latest statement, Lord Zetland said that he understood that Mr. Gandhi's suggestion involved that if there was a serious difference of opinion between Ministers and Governors where Governors' responsibilities were concerned, Governors should dismiss Ministers or call for their resignation. He did not think that it would really be wise or in accordance with the intention of Parliament to lay down in those circumstances that the Governor must necessarily call for the resignation of Ministers. If that had been the intention of Parliament it would have said so in the Act itself and the last paragraph of the section defining the Governor's position would have said that in so far as any special responsibility of the Governor was involved he should in the event of being unable to accept the advice of Ministers call upon them to resign. But the paragraph was not so framed. It said that if and so far as any special responsibility of the Governor was involved he should exercise individual judgment regarding the action to be taken.

Lord Zetland asked: Why did Parliament lay down the Governor's duties in those words? He added, surely because Parliament contemplated that even if the disagreement was a serious one that could not be bridged it might very well be that the Governor would either wish to retain the Ministers and assent to the rest of their programme or the Ministers while disagreeing with the Governor would wish to continue in office. Of course, the Governor could always dismiss the Ministers and equally the Ministers could resign. Surely, it would be better to leave it to the Governors or the Ministers until a case arose. Then the circumstances would be apparent and each party would decide which course it desired to pursue.

Lord Zetland said that it was much better to leave the matter open rather than come to any sort of agreement that in any case in which there was a serious disagreement between Ministers and Governors the latter should automatically have to dismiss Ministers.

In conclusion, Lord Zetland hoped that Lord Lloyd would realize that under the constitutional position it was not open to him to demand from the Ministers information to answer questions regarding the ordinary administration of provinces but wherever the Governors' special responsibilities came in he had every right to demand an answer to a question on the subject.

Lord Bankerillor referring to the emergency paragraph in section 93 relating to the breakdown of the whole provincial constitution pointed out that it contemplated a situation in which section 53 would not apply at all. It might be presumed to be in order in a grave situation for the question to be asked why the paragraph had not been put into operation.

Lord Zetland, replying, said that he did not wish to suggest that it was only when the Governor's special responsibilities defined in section 53 came into operation that information would be given to Parliament here. Information would be given in respect of any matter about which either Governors or Governor-General were responsible to Parliament. Whenever they were acting in their discretion or individual judgment they would be acting in a way in which they would be liable to be challenged in Parliament here for their action. The matter was then dropped.

## Adjournment Motion the House in Commons

### Mr. Lansbury on Indian Situation

On a motion for adjournment *Mr. George Lansbury* on the 15th. June raised the Indian question in the House of Commons and said that if as an outcome of the present distrust and deadlock Governors had to operate the law and carry on without the consent of the majority of legislators, that would be a fatal beginning of self-government and would completely discredit the latest attempt to start India on road to self-government. Nobody in the House of Commons contemplated government simply by the rule of the Governor. What then would happen if the majority could not be brought to understand that the Governors' powers would only be exercised in strict accordance with the law and within reason?

*Mr. Lansbury* said that *Mr. Gandhi* had given quite a definite lead and had done his best to clarify the position. He cited *Mr. Gandhi's* words about his anxiety that Congressmen should take office but only if Government showed their willingness to conciliate the Congress. *Mr. Lansbury* opined that the proposition about the dismissal of Ministers in the event of serious disagreement with Governors was quite responsible.

Proceeding, *Mr. Lansbury* observed that on the question of resigning or being dismissed it was very difficult to be charged with running away. He said that he was unable to see why this slight difference between Governors and the Congress should be allowed to stand in the way.

*Mr. Lansbury* then read *Mr. Gandhi's* offer, including the comparison with the treatment of the Boers in South Africa. He opined that *Mr. Gandhi* was speaking the truth when he said that the Congress did not demand any legal change but it was being talked at instead of being talked to. He thought that the Governor of Bihar had made some approach to reality in the matter in his statement on June 10.

*Mr. Lansbury* earnestly begged *Lord Stanley* to persuade his chief immediately to advise the Viceroy to call the leaders of the majority party into consultation and make an effort to bridge what seemed to be a very easily bridgeable gulf because, it seemed to him, there was no real question between them.

*Mr. Lansbury* proceeded to say that the Congress did not give way because there was a tremendous feeling of distrust among Indian politicians. It was one of those cases where a strong Government ought to make necessary approaches. He would personally like to see the Act being tried out, and he hoped that Government would help those like *Mr. Gandhi* and others who wanted it to be tried and would ensure the carrying of the rest of the Congress party with them by making a concession which was not a concession to break the law but was only meant to explain how it could best be administered without day-to-day or any interference—interference which, he thought, Parliament never contemplated.

*Lord Stanley* said that he thought that *Mr. Lansbury* was prematurely pessimistic regarding the working of the constitution. Points of agreement were many. All the members of the House were equally anxious that Congress majorities should take office with an early summoning of legislatures. To effect this, it was necessary to have recourse to most delicate discussions, and, while it was only right that those discussions should be given all help and encouragement possible, he believed that if the House of Commons pressed them too hard or insisted on premature action, they would be likely to do more harm than good. If legislatures met before Governors had an opportunity for some form of agreement with the majority party, he thought that the whole political future of provinces would be greatly prejudiced. It was better that Governors should make every effort to make arrangements with the Congress before legislatures assembled, even if it did take time.

With regard to *Mr. Lansbury's* appeal to meet the Congress half-way, *Lord Stanley* said that he was only too glad to say that they were more than ready to do that. He added, 'Perhaps we may differ concerning the best means of approach. *Mr.*



Lansbury's belief is that the best means of approach is to go straight to the heads of the representatives of the Congress. Lord Zetland, on the contrary, remains absolutely convinced that the natural and constitutional place for discussions regarding taking office must be in the provinces, between individual Congress leaders in the provinces and provincial Governors.'

In conclusion, Lord Stanley said that it was the earnest desire of every one of these Governors not to act as a watch-dog over the constitution or try to find fault with his new Ministers, but, whatever the party to which they belonged, to act towards them as a friend and collaborator. If they all tried to work the constitution in that spirit, he believed that it was likely to succeed.

### Lord Zetland on Government's Friendliness

Speaking at a meeting of the University Conservative Association at Oxford on the 11th. June Lord Zetland said that it was suggested in India that the statement he had made in the House of Lords on June 8 amounted to a rejection of the offer of peace from Mr. Gandhi. He, however, was at a loss to understand how any such meaning could be read in that statement.

The Secretary of State for India explained that he had always cherished the conception, which was the true one, that the Governor was a friend and collaborator of his ministers.

Referring to the observation that Congress spokesmen sought a proof of friendliness between British authorities and their party, Lord Zetland said that, as far as he knew, the declaration made at Faizpur that Congressmen were going to legislatures in order to combat and end the Act had never been withdrawn. He pointed out that the Congress party had been assured by Governors of most cordial co-operation and that co-operation would be at the disposal of those who were willing to accept office with a desire to obtain the best from the Act.

### H. E. The Viceroy's Broadcast

The following is the text of H. E. Viceroy's broadcast speech on the 20th. June :-

I am issuing to-morrow a message to India. To-night I wish to say a word to each one of you personally with regard to that message and to commend it to your sympathy and your consideration.

The constitutional position and the doubts and uncertainties that exist in relation to that position in many parts of India and in different political parties, are familiar to you all. Having watched with anxiety, friendliness, and open-minded attention, the course of public discussion upon these most important questions, and having observed the movements of public opinion as reflected in the utterances of public men and in the comments of the Press, I am strongly of opinion that the difficulties still remaining are due in great degree to misapprehensions and that these difficulties are therefore susceptible, given goodwill on all hands, of being resolved and finally removed by a thorough and patient analysis of their nature.

In my message I have sought to supply a comprehensive and authoritative exposition of the issues most immediately in debate, and my hope is that I may thereby have assisted you in arriving at a right conclusion upon a matter of the gravest moment to each one of you, as well as to the future of your country.

In forming your opinion on these questions, I counsel you to take into review not only the technical and theoretical points at issue, but also the broad and general relationship of the whole body of reform incorporated in the new constitution both to the underlying circumstances at this time existing in India, and to the course of political evolution in this country over the past eighteen years. In directing your attention to these considerations, I am concerned to secure that in exercising your judgment, you may give due weight to the extreme inexpediency of interrupting—even temporarily—at this critical juncture, the rhythm and momentum of continuous and progressive political reform, unless upon proved and substantial grounds of overwhelming significance.

Ten years ago when—with Agricultural Commission—I travelled the length and breadth of this great country, I was animated by the intense desire to help the rural population and to do what I might toward making the Indian countryside a better place in which to live. But the general impressions that I formed in those two years were by no means limited to the subject of our enquiry. For, in my journeyings, by observation and by conversation with men and women of many and

varied opinions, I came to a new understanding of the political problem with which we are confronted in India, and I began to comprehend something of what I may call the Indian point of view, and of how the complexion of Indian affairs, with which I had grown familiar from the angle of one living in Great Britain, is viewed by those to whom India is a beloved mother, the cradle of their race and subject of their deepest affections and of their highest hopes.

This experience had brought about, I may truthfully tell you, a profound change in my own outlook and opinions and when I found myself in the chair of the Joint Select Committee I was moved to hope that it might be vouchsafed to me to make at least a contribution, however humble, toward the assuagement of those political difficulties which have disturbed the relationship between India and my own country and which are due in the main to the development of political thought in this country and to a growing consciousness amongst Indians of the greatness of their country, and of the high destiny towards which, from her history and her place in the world, India is entitled to aspire. Patriotism; love of liberty; faith in the virtue of liberal institutions of government; these are the qualities of which every man and woman of my race is proud, and which indeed are manifested in supreme degree by those other communities overseas which have sprung from the loins of the motherland.

And so it has seemed to me that my countrymen should regard the growth in India of those same qualities and aspirations, not as a matter for anxiety or disquiet, but rather understanding sympathy, and their ready help; and if, in the workings of an inscrutable Providence, it may be given them to assist with fostering care towards the establishment, in an unified India, of those beneficent principles of representative and responsible government which most of us hold the greatest contribution that Great Britain has made towards the secular progress of mankind, then what greater triumph could be theirs; or to what higher reward could they aspire?

We have been fallible, and errors may have been committed; we are mortal and may have missed many opportunities. But if after the long Udyasoy of some two hundred years, we come to know that by the labours of those of both races who have gone before us and our own endeavours we have assisted towards the establishment in India of a system of government destined through the years to shine as a light in the Orient and to show the way peace between East and West, then indeed we may claim that those labours have not been in vain. Such were the hopes and purposes that sustained and fortified me when I accepted, at the hands of my Sovereign, the heavy and responsible charge that I now hold; such is the spirit in which I have to-day addressed to you my message; to which once again I ask you to give your close and sympathetic attention.

### H. E. The Viceroy's Statement

The following is the text of H. E. the Viceroy's Statement on the 21st. June:—

I dare say you will recall that when I spoke to you by wireless on the day I took charge of the office as Viceroy, I gave you my view that we should be wise not to expect that constitutional changes as profound as those into which we have now entered could come about altogether without difficulty. I want to-day to say a few words to you about those difficulties as they have emerged, and to try my utmost to make some contribution towards their final dissipation.

As you read this message I would ask you to bear in mind two things. The first, that, while I am truly anxious not to be more formal or technical than my task requires, it is very necessary than in dealing with this grave matter, I should use language of precision and that, even at the risk of imposing a heavy call upon your attention, I should not attempt to shorten too much or to oversimplify the various matters I propose to discuss. The second, that, even though for the reasons I have just mentioned, my words may seem to you a little formal, this does not mean that my personal approach to these problems is in the least degree cold or unsympathetic.

I recognise to the full that your hearts as well as your minds are deeply stirred by these issues, and that a position such as that with which I am dealing can never be completely compassed by mere terms of law or of constitutional theory, because that position touches so closely those underlying springs of sentiment and emotion, which, since we are creatures of flesh and blood, so profoundly move our minds and so largely shape our opinions. I have refrained hitherto from making any public statement of any sort on the constitutional issues which have been raised by the refusal of the party which commands a majority of the votes in the legislatures to

accept office in certain provinces. My decision to do so was deliberate. The Governor-General, it is true, exercises under the Act a general control of the action taken by Provincial Governors in their discretion or in their individual judgment, and he is himself correspondingly subject to the general control of the Secretary of State. But given the scheme, the intention, and the construction of the new constitution, matters such as those which have of late been the subject of discussion in which the majority party in the legislatures has declined to accept office are eminently, in the first place, matters for discussion between the leaders of that party in the province concerned and the Governor of that province. A point has, now, however, been reached at which it will, I think, be of advantage that, for the benefit of the man in the street and the ordinary elector, I should myself take up the threads of this discussion in the light of the statements which have been made in Parliament by the Secretary of State and in individual provinces by the Governors, and that I should state comprehensively, in the most formal and public manner open to me, my attitude, which is equally the attitude of the Secretary of State and of the Governor of every province in India, on the constitutional issues which have been brought to the fore in connection with this question of office acceptance.

Before I proceed to discuss the situation in its constitutional aspect, to restate formally the constitutional position as between Governors and their Ministers and to place on record once again, at the climax of this discussion, the spirit in which Governors, the Governor-General, and His Majesty's Government, approach this matter, let me say briefly how great, in my judgment, has been the value of the discussions which have taken place on this matter in the last three months. Those discussions have been of the utmost significance. Their outcome is of importance to every parliamentary party in this country without exception. The genuine misapprehensions and misunderstandings existed three months ago in certain quarters as to the relation of Governors to their Ministers, and as to the extent to which or the manner in which Governors would be likely to interfere with the day-by-day administration of a province by the Ministry in power, statements made by responsible party leaders have made abundantly clear. I am glad to think that those misapprehensions and those misunderstandings have now in so substantial a degree been removed by the discussions which have taken place in Parliament, in the Press and public platforms. Those discussions have made it possible for those who felt doubts as to the object and to the scheme of the Act, and as to the position and the attitude of Governors in the constitution to test in the utmost detail and from every angle, the weakness or strength of the various lines of argument and to advance with that object in view hypotheses of the most varying character and they have given the representatives of His Majesty in this country and His Majesty's Government at Home opportunities personally to dissipate misunderstandings, and to make clear in the most unmistakable manner their conception of the nature of the duties which fall upon the Governors of provinces, of the spirit in which those Governors are expected by Parliament and themselves propose to discharge those duties, of the relations in which Governors contemplate working with their ministers and of the extent to which the Governors stand themselves entirely outside the party, and to which they are at the disposal of any ministry which is prepared to work the constitution within the terms of the Government of India Act of 1935. The interval which has passed has been of value as giving an opportunity to His Majesty's Government, to Parliament and to individual Governors to clarify the position beyond any shadow or doubt. It has been of value, in my judgment, also in terms of the experience of the practical working of the new constitution afforded since the first of April in every province in India, whether the ministries in power in a province commanded a majority in the legislatures or were themselves supported only by a minority in those bodies.

Three months ago a great political party which commanded in six provinces a majority in the legislature felt that, even with the support of the majority in the legislature, it could not wisely accept office under the provisions of the Act unless it received certain specific assurances from Governors. Three months' experience of the operation of the constitution, short as I agree that that period is, has conclusively shown from the practical point of view, that, any legal difficulties in regard to the grant of such assurances apart, those assurances are not essential to the smooth and harmonious working of the constitution. In every province Ministers have been able to test, by practical experience, that the co-operation and the assistance of the Services are at their disposal and that they can, in their dealings in

the day-by-day administration of the province and in their relations with the Governors of their provinces, rely on those Governors to place at their disposal, in the fullest measure and with no shade or suggestion of prejudice or personal feeling, that help, sympathy, co-operation and experience which the Governors of individual provinces have promised. Those three months have shown equally and beyond question that the apprehensions which have been entertained—and I really accept the sincerity of those apprehensions, even if I see no foundation of fact for them—that Governors would seek occasions for interfering with the policy of their Ministers or for the gratuitous and uncalled for exercise of the special responsibilities imposed upon them by the Act to impede or challenge the Ministers in the day-by-day administration of the province, have no shadow of justification.

I have been intimately associated with the framing of the present constitution. I am familiar with the close concern shown by Parliament, whether in the Joint Select Committee or on the floor of both Houses, to devise a scheme which would confer real and substantial powers on popularly elected Ministers and which would enable those Ministers to feel that they could, with confidence, frame and implement with the co-operation of Governors and of the Services, a programme of legislation on broad lines for the benefit of the province, the Government of which was in their hands. The Act, and the Instrument of Instructions which must be read with the Act, have been approved by Parliament. Taken together, they represent the intention of Parliament and the instruction given by Parliament to Governors. Those documents make it clear beyond any possibility of question that, under Provincial Autonomy, in all matters falling within the ministerial field, including the position of the Minorities, the Services etc., the Governor will ordinarily be guided, in the exercise of his powers, by the advice of his ministers and that those ministers will be responsible not to Parliament but to the provincial Legislature.

The only qualifications of this rule are in respect of certain specific and clearly defined matters. The most important of these are those known as the Special Responsibilities; and of those Special Responsibilities again, the most important are the prevention of any grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of the province or any part of the province, the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of the minorities and the securing to the services and their dependants of any rights provided or preserved for them under the Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate interests. Of those Special Responsibilities, none was lightly placed by Parliament or inconsiderately on the shoulders of the Governor. Every one of them represents the response of Parliament to the demands of substantial and legitimate interests.

There is no vestige of foundation for the assertion, which I have soon advanced, that the Governor is entitled, under the Act, at his pleasure, to intervene at random in the administration of the Province. Those Special Responsibilities are, as I have said, restricted in scope to the narrowest limits possible. Even so limited as they are, a Governor will at all times be concerned to carry his Ministers with him, while, in other respects in the field of their ministerial responsibilities, it is mandatory on a Governor to be guided by the advice of his Ministers, even though, for whatever reason, he may not himself be wholly satisfied that that advice is in the circumstances necessarily and decisively the right advice. The extent to which in practice, given goodwill on both sides and a desire to operate the new Constitution for the benefit of the province as a whole, difficulty may be anticipated from the existence of these special responsibilities cannot be better exemplified than by the history of every province in India during the past three months. I think I am right in saying that no occasion has arisen on which there has been any conflict or difficulty in this area. I have made clear, I hope, the object at which Parliament is aiming in the Act. The fact that it has transferred the executive authority in the province in practice to ministers and that the extent to which a Governor acting in his discretion or in his individual judgment has vested in him certain responsibilities, is restricted to the bare minimum judged to be essential. I have indicated further that in the ministerial field there can be no interference by a Governor with ministers save in respect of matters with regard to which he is empowered to exercise his individual judgment.

I now turn to the question of what is to happen if unfortunately a situation arises in which the Governor and his ministers do not see eye to eye on a matter where he is required to exercise his individual judgment. Such an issue may arise over a matter of comparatively minor importance, or over a matter which is of major importance but on which no responsible ministry, however little it might

itself agree with the decision taken by the Governor would for a moment—or for more than a moment—contemplate resignation. I have already stated that ministers have the duty of advising the Governor over the whole range of the executive Government within the ministerial field including the area of the Special Responsibilities. For advice so given, whether on matters within or without the scope of the Special Responsibilities, Ministers are answerable to the legislature. In all such matters in which he is not specifically required to exercise his individual judgment, it is mandatory upon the Governor to accept the advice of his Ministers.

Within the limited area of his special responsibilities, a Governor is directly answerable to Parliament, whether he accepts or does not accept the advice of his Ministers. But if the Governor is unable to accept the advice of his Ministers, then the responsibility for his decision is his and his alone. In that event, Ministers bear no responsibility for the decision and are entitled—if they so desire—publicly to state that they take no responsibility for that particular decision or even that they have advised the Governor in an opposite sense. But every Governor will be concerned to have the support of his Ministry or to know that he is not lightly at variance with his Ministry when he acts without their support, or against their advice, in the discharge of a Special Responsibility. He will, as I see it (and the view I now proceed to express is the view of every Governor in India and of the Secretary of State) in such circumstances, in the first place, put the Ministry or the Minister fully in possession of his mind. He will explain to him the reasons which, in his judgment, make it essential for him to follow a particular course, or to pass a particular order. He will listen with a mind open to conviction to the arguments on the other side, which may be advanced to him. If he regards those arguments as valid, he will modify this proposal to such an extent as may be appropriate. If he regards them, on the other hand, as invalid, he will do his utmost, before taking a final decision, to convince the Minister or the Ministry of the soundness of the reasons for which he is unable to accept his or their view and if, in these circumstances, he still remains unable to influence their views in the direction he desires, he will take his decision and pass his order with the greatest personal regret that he should have been unable to secure the support of his Ministry, and, before passing it, he will have exhausted all methods of convincing his Ministry that that decision was the right one, given the obligation imposed upon him by the Act.

So much for the general basis on which, as I conceive it, a Governor will handle the situation which we have been discussing, but the Special Responsibilities, strictly defined as their ambit is, include in their compass matters and decisions the importance of which inevitably must vary greatly. I ask at once: Is the same attitude to be adopted in every case whether its importance is great or small? Is the Ministry to regard its position as affected in an equal degree by any and every decision of the Governor contrary to its advice irrespective of the magnitude or the intrinsic importance of that decision? In a case in which the Governor in the exercise of his Special Responsibilities, and after exhausting the method of approach to his Ministry which I have indicated, finds himself obliged to pass an order with which his Government did not agree, should the Government resign or shall it carry on its work, after indicating publicly or privately, or publicly and privately its attitude in the matter which has formed the subject of the order? Or shall the Governor be required to dismiss it? These are all points of practical importance. They have attracted great attention lately in all political parties, for a pronouncement on such an issue must be of direct concern to every party in every province in India. I judge, in particular, from the statements made by persons of eminence in, or in contact with, the majority party in the six provinces, that, on the answer to them, largely depends the final removal of any hesitations which may be entertained in that party as to the method in which the new constitution is to be operated, and the extent to which Provincial Ministers can rely on fair treatment and a minimum of interference by the Governor in those matters, which, under the Act, fall within their field. The answer to these questions is of importance to every political party in this country to which it falls to work the constitution and to take advantage of the powers and responsibilities which have been transferred by the Government of India Act to popularly elected ministers. It will be well, therefore, given the importance of this issue, that I should make plain beyond any question and, speaking with the fullest authority, my own position in regard to it, which is the position of the Secretary of State and of the Governors of the Provinces.

Let me say in the first place that it is essential in this matter to preserve a just sense of proportion. I welcome for this reason the helpful suggestion recently made by Mr. Gandhi that it is only when the issue between a Governor and his Ministers constitute a serious disagreement that any question of the severing of their partnership need arise. "Serious disagreement" is a phrase which it is possible to define and to interpret in various ways. But the general sense is clear enough to anyone with any political or administrative experience. The matter involved must be of such really major importance. It must, I would myself say, be of such a character that a compromise, (was ruled out (?)) by a particular action taken against their advice by a Governor in the discharge of his responsibilities under the Act, despite the fact that Ministers had no direct or indirect responsibility for that action and that a Governor had taken the utmost pains to satisfy his Ministry that he had no choice in the discharge of his responsibilities but to take the action in question. I readily agree that where, on such an issue arising and where the Governor and his Ministers have both approached the matter, as I am confident that they would, with open minds and with a full sense of responsibility—the Governor, in so far as his Special Responsibilities are concerned to Parliament, the Ministry to the Provincial Legislature—no agreement could be reached, then the Ministry must either resign or be dismissed. As between resignation and dismissal, normal constitutional practice leans very heavily indeed to the side of resignation. Resignation is more consistent with the self-respect of a ministry and is an effective public indication of the attitude of Ministers towards the action of a Governor. Resignation equally is an act taken spontaneously by a Ministry. Dismissal, more unusual by far in constitutional practice, might seem to carry with it some suggestion which we are concerned at any cost to eliminate from the new constitutional arrangements.

I ought perhaps to add that the suggestion that the Governor should in certain circumstances demand the resignation of his ministers is not the solution provided by the Act, so that it will not be possible for Governors to accept it. Both resignation and dismissal are possible, the former at the option of the ministers and the latter at the option of the Governors. But the Act does not contemplate that the Governor's option should be used to force the minister's option and thus to shift the responsibility from himself. I have deliberately dealt with the extreme case of a conflict involving resignation or dismissal, for it is the extreme case on which attention has been rivetted. But the extreme case is in my judgment most unlikely in ordinary circumstances to arise and it would be unwise of us to allow a contingency by no means probable. Given normal working and the friendly and understanding relations which we can, without undue optimism, anticipate between a Governor and his Ministers to assume a dominating importance in our eyes in the ordinary way, such differences as may arise between a Governor and his Ministers will admit, with goodwill on both sides, of being resolved in the ordinary course of administration by agreement between the two parties without any question of issues so major as resignation or dismissal coming to the fore. I have already indicated the method by which I anticipate that Governors will deal with a situation in which such a difference of opinion exists. I feel no doubt whatever myself that on that basis that deadlocks need not be anticipated in view of the anxiety of all Governors, to which I can myself testify, not merely not to provoke conflicts with their Ministers, to whatever party their Ministers may belong, but to leave nothing undone to avoid or to resolve such conflicts. I have been the more concerned to set out in some detail the position, as I see it, in that it is essential that those interests or communities or areas to which the Act extends the assurance of the special responsibilities should not, for a moment, think, or have the least ground for thinking, that any question will arise of sacrificing their interests for political reasons. So far as the individual Governors are concerned, I can reassure them on that point with the utmost confidence and the fullest authority.

So far as political parties go, experience in those provinces which are at present governed by Ministries supported by a majority in the legislature is decisively encouraging. As regards the remaining provinces the statements of responsible leaders of the majority party have emphasized how shortsighted any attack on those interests would be from the point of view of that party itself and how improbable it is. What I am concerned to make clear is that without any threat to those interests or any sacrifice of them, a Governor and his Ministers can, in my judgment, hope, within the provisions of the Act, to operate the constitution in the normal manner

which the Act envisages and to avoid save in circumstances which I find it not easy to contemplate fundamental differences of opinion such as to enlarge the relation between the Governor and his Ministry in that very limited area in which special circumstances and responsibilities are imposed upon a Governor.

Let me review what I have said. The position is as follows: The executive authority of a province runs in the name of the Governor but in the Ministerial field Governor, subject to the qualifications already mentioned, is bound to exercise that executive authority on the advice of his Ministers. There are certain strictly limited and clearly defined areas in which, while here as elsewhere, primary responsibility rests with Ministers, the Governor remains ultimately responsible to Parliament. Over the whole of the remainder of the field Ministers solely responsible and they are answerable only to the Provincial Legislature.

In the discharge of the Governor's Special Responsibilities, it is open to the Governor and, it is indeed incumbent upon him to act otherwise than on the advice of his Ministers if he considers that the action they propose will prejudice the minorities or areas or other interests affected. The decision in such cases will rest with the Governor and he will be responsible to Parliament for taking it.

But the scope of such potential interference is strictly defined and there is no foundation for any suggestion that a Governor is free, or is entitled, or would have the power to interfere with the day to day administration of a province outside the limited range of the responsibilities specially assigned to him. Before taking a decision against the advice of his Ministers even within that limited range a Governor will spare no pains to make clear to his Ministers the reasons which have worked with him in thinking, both that the decision is one which it is incumbent on him to take and that it is the right one. He will put them in possession of his mind. He will listen to the arguments they address to him. He will reach his decision with full understanding of those arguments and with a mind open to conviction. In such circumstances, given the goodwill which we can, I trust, postulate on both sides, and for which I can, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, answer so far as the Governors are concerned, conflicts need not, in a normal situation, be anticipated. On the matter of degree, a convention which would require the automatic dismissal or resignation of a Ministry, whenever there is any difference of opinion, however, unimportant, would show a lack of proportion and I need not now emphasise the objections to any such convention. For it goes without saying that cases of quite minor importance may arise within the area under discussion and it goes without saying equally that Government and the position of Ministers would be impossible, if, on each such occasion, a Governor were required, by a binding convention, to dismiss His Ministers or the Ministers felt it incumbent on them to resign. The interruption to administration and the loss of credit to Ministers would be intolerable. All the more so since Ministers would feel compelled to resign on account of a decision for which they were not in any way responsible and on which they would be at liberty to indicate publicly that they differed from the Governor, who had, in the discharge of his own responsibilities, chosen to take a particular course.

It is not by rigid conventions of this nature, but by give and take, by the elasticity which is the governing factor of any successful democratic constitution, that constitutional advance is shown, by the experience of history to proceed. Where, on the other hand, a really major issue is involved and Ministers, even though they are not responsible for the final decision taken by a Governor and can, without any constitutional impropriety, make that clear, feel that such action has raised issues of such a character and affected their position as a Parliamentary party in such a way that they can no longer, without misunderstanding in the country, associate themselves with the Governor in the work of administration, then it is open to the Ministers to resign; or, if they do not resign and the Governor feels that his partnership with them cannot, with profit to the public, continue, it is open to a Governor and, indeed incumbent on him, to dismiss them. But the object of the Governors, and I feel confident the object of the Ministers, will, at all times, be to avoid such a state of things arising.

The mere fact that the Government of India Act covers contingencies such as the dismissal of Ministers, the breakdown of the Constitution or the like is not for one moment to be taken as involving an assumption that framers of the Act, those concerned with its administration, or anyone, indeed, who is concerned for the constitutional progress and development of this great country, wishes to see those con-

tendencies turned into realities. The design of Parliament and the object of those of us who are the servants of the Crown in India and to whom it falls to work the provisions of the Act must be and is to ensure the utmost degree practicable of harmonious co-operation with the elected representatives of the people for the betterment and improvement of each individual province and of India as a whole and to avoid in every way consistent with the special responsibilities for minorities and the like which the Act imposes, any such clash of opinion as would be calculated unnecessarily to break down the machine of Government or to result in a severance of that fruitful partnership between the Governor and his Ministers which is the basis of the Act and the ideal, the achievement of which the Secretary of State, the Governor-General and the provincial Governors are all equally concerned to secure.

"Before I take leave of you, I feel that you would wish me, setting aside all technicalities, to speak to you for a moment or two as one who has had a good deal of Parliamentary experience and some share in the shaping of the new Constitution. Some of you, I know hold, and hold strongly, that the plan of Reform does not go sufficiently far in the direction of complete self-government. I do not question the sincerity with which that view is held. But I am certain that every responsible person, in deciding his position on this vital matter, does so with a genuine anxiety in the best interests of India to take a balanced view and to reach a right decision as to what may best be done in the conditions of this time to serve those interests.

"Let me at once assure you that in my best judgment and given goodwill on all sides this Constitution will work and that in experience it will be found to work well. It stands now as the law of the land. It stands too—and despite all the criticism that has been levelled against it—as the only complete and homogeneous scheme of political reform now before the country. I am convinced that the shortest road to that fuller political life which many of you so greatly desire is to accept this Constitution and to work it for all it is worth. Of their nature, politics are ever dynamic and to imagine that their expression in terms of a written Constitution can render them static would be utterly to disregard the lessons of history and indeed the dictates of commonsense. Again it is my firm conviction that this Constitution will be found to offer immense opportunities for beneficent public service and in this connection I may venture a word upon a matter very close to my heart. It is my conviction that in the full working and development of this Constitution lies the best hope for that general and lasting amelioration in the conditions of the rural population and of the humbler sections of society which all of us so ardently desire.

"The discussions and debates of the last two months have, I think, placed before you every argument and point of view that bear upon this issue. The choice—a choice fraught with so much of profound significance for the future of India—must shortly be made, I hope, with all my heart, that all, whether leaders or their followers, may find it their duty to choose the way of constructive effort. Whatsoever emerges, you may count upon me, in face even of bitter disappointment, to strive unstirringly towards the fully and final establishment in India of the principles of Parliamentary Government. But if what I should regard as a deplorable outcome should emerge from the present situation and if Parliamentary and Responsible Government should, as a consequence, be suspended in a number of provinces, it might, however much we might all of us regret it, be beyond the power of any of us rapidly to reverse the circumstances that must then supervene. In that event invaluable time will be lost, and I greatly fear, no little hurt inflicted upon the cause of progressive reform.

"But I do not believe that these sad things will come to pass, for I have faith in you and in the destiny of India. The way we tread may seem dark and sometimes difficult. The star that guides our course may seem sometime to flicker and almost to fall. Yet faith and courage are mighty forces. Let us summon them to our aid in this difficult hour and together move steadily forward the fulfilment of our hopes."

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# History of the Impasse

## SURVEY OF EVENTS

### Congress Position

At the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha, in the last week of February, Mahatma Gandhi (according to an *Associated Press* message) expressed the view that if the Congress decided to form Ministries, it should obtain an assurance from the British Government that the special powers of Governors should not be used. It also appeared to have been suggested that the Governors should be asked to give "written assurances."

### THE DELHI RESOLUTION

On March 18, the All-India Congress Committee, at its meeting at Delhi, adopted a resolution favouring office acceptance on condition that the leader of the Congress Party in the legislature was satisfied and was able to state publicly that the Governor should not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities.

This resolution was carried by 173 votes against 70. The original resolution, as put before it by the Working Committee, used the phrase "so long as he (the leader of the Congress Party) and his Cabinet act within the Constitution." This was later changed into "constitutional activities."

In the last week of March and early in the first week of April, the Governors of Orissa, Bihar, Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces had conversations with Congress leaders. The Congress refused to accept office on the ground that the assurances sought for had not been given.

### GANDHI—SOLE AUTHOR

In a statement issued at Madras on March 30, Mahatma Gandhi took responsibility for being the sole author of the office acceptance clause of the Congress resolution and originator of the idea of attaching a condition to office acceptance..... The object of that section of the Congress which believed in office acceptance was, pending the creation, by means consistent with the Congress creed of non-violence, of a situation that would transfer all power to the people, to work the offices so as to strengthen the Congress which has been shown predominantly to represent mass opinion... There was no intention whatever to lay down a condition whose acceptance would mean even the slightest abrogation of the Constitution.

### MAHATMA'S MESSAGE TO AMERICAN PRESS

In a message to the American Press from Wardhaganj on April 14, Mahatma Gandhi wrote :

"Let a judicial Tribunal of joint creation give the interpretation. It will be time for them to plead incompetence when the tribunal finds in favour of their interpretation. Until then the Congress demand for assurance must be held valid."

### THE "STATESMAN'S" SUGGESTION

In a statement sent to *The Times* on April 16, Mahatma Gandhi said that "the *Calcutta Statesman's* suggestion as to the Governors inviting the Congress to go ahead with the programme outlined in the Congress election manifesto would go a long way to satisfy me if the (Congress) manifesto be regarded as merely illustrative."

The reference is to the *Statesman's* leading article "Lord Zetland's Misunderstanding." (April 10) In it the *Statesman* wrote :

"The Congress put before the electors the definite statement that the safeguards and special powers in the present Act make it absolutely impossible for a Congress

## THE CONGRESS AND OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

majority to put through its social programme for dealing with poverty and unemployment.....If the Act is really such that there is the slightest difficulty in the Governors' telling Congress leaders that there is nothing to prevent them going ahead with the programme outlined in the election manifesto then we have to admit that we too have been mistaken about the Act."

*Mahatma Gandhi* also stated: "Lord Lothian's suggestion to refer disputes to the electorate is sound if it can be proved workable and not prohibitively expensive."

## MAHATMA ON "DISMISSAL"

In the course of an interview at Poona early in the third week of April, *Mahatma Gandhi* said:

"The assurance contemplates non-interference and not non-dismissal of the Cabinet ..... I can conceive the possibility of a Minister making a stupid blunder so as to harm the people in whose name he is acting. The Governor's duty then will be plain. He would reason with the Ministers and if the Ministers do not listen, he will dismiss the Cabinet. The assurance when there is a clear majority in the Assembly would mean dissolution and a fresh election. But such a crisis cannot occur from day to day."

## THE ALLAHABAD RESOLUTION

On April 29 the Congress Working Committee, meeting at Allahabad, passed a resolution explaining the Delhi resolution of the All-India Congress Committee. It stated that

"The resolution of the All-India Congress Committee did not contemplate any amendment of the Act for the purpose of the required assurances. The Working Committee moreover is advised by eminent jurists that such assurances can be given strictly within the Constitution..... The assurances do not contemplate an abrogation of the right of a Governor to dismiss his Ministry or dissolve the provincial Assembly when serious differences of opinion arise between him and his Ministers. But this Committee had grave objection to Ministers having to submit to interference by Governors with the alternative of themselves having to resign their office instead of Governors taking the responsibility of dismissing them."

## MAHATMA ON ZETLAND'S STATEMENT

*Mahatma Gandhi*, interviewed by the *Associated Press*, towards the end of the first week of May, said in regard to Lord Zetland's statement in the House of Lords on May 6:

"So far as the tone is concerned it is an undoubted improvement upon his last speech on the subject but I fear it is no contribution to the removal of the deadlock..... Surely it is no strain upon the Constitution Act for the Governors to give the assurance that whenever a situation is created which to them appears intolerable, they will take upon their shoulders the responsibility of dismissing the Ministers which they have the right to do instead of expecting them to resign or submit to the Governor's wishes."

On May 15 *Mahatma Gandhi* commenting on Lord Brabourne's speech at Belgaum said:

"There is evidently no advance upon the old position and if Belgaum is a paraphrase of Lord Zetland's recent speech, the situation is certainly no better and it is possibly worse."

## The Official Position

On March 7 at *Baldana Sir Hyde Gowan* said:

"The safeguards laid down in the Act cover only an extremely small fraction of the day's work.....the special powers will be used only in case of grave necessity...future Ministers will find that in very truth they will be called upon to shoulder the whole burden of responsibility for your welfare."

## THE VICEROY'S SPEECH

On March 15, speaking at a dinner given by *Sir Manechji Dadabhai* at Delhi, His Excellency *Lord Linlithgow* said:

"I have faith in the real and public spirit of those into whose hands the electorates have entrusted these opportunities. It will be both the duty and the privilege of the Governors of provinces and of the Governor-General in his proper sphere to collaborate with the several provincial Ministers in their most responsible tasks in a spirit of sympathy, helpfulness and co-operation."

#### G. P. GOVERNMENTS COMMUNIQUE

On the breakdown of conversations with Congress leaders in the closing days of March, communiquees were issued by the Provincial Governments concerned. The following extract from the one issued by the Private Secretary to the Governor of the C. P. is typical :—

"He (the Governor) explained that for legal and constitutional reasons it was not within his power to give any assurance or enter into any convention affecting the use of powers entrusted to him by Parliament..... Whatever Ministry was in power they could rely upon receiving from him as from one who stood apart from parties, all help, sympathy and co-operation. Further than that he had no power to go".

#### MR. BUTLER'S STATEMENT IN COMMONS

On April 8, replying to Mr. C. R. Attle in the House of Commons, Mr. R. A. Butler said :

"It was impossible for any Governor to give the understanding sought from him. Had he done so he would have had to divest himself of the responsibilities specifically placed upon him by Parliament through the Act and the Instrument of Instructions and also, by so doing, to have ignored the pledges given to minorities and others."

#### ZETLAND'S REPLY TO LOTHIAN

Lord Zetland, the same night, made a statement in reply to Lord Lothian :

"The demand made of the Governors was one which without amendment of the Constitution they could not possibly accept.....I would add that even if the Constitution admitted a pledge of this kind being given, the giving of it would have involved a grave breach of faith with the minorities and others in India.....Opinions might differ as to the extent and necessity for such safeguards but it could not be doubted that the minorities in India themselves attached the utmost importance to them."

#### MR. BUTLER'S SECOND STATEMENT

On April 26, Mr. R. A. Butler, replying to a question in the Commons, said that the Government were "unable to accept the suggestion of a Tribunal." He also made the following statement :

"His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing the use of special powers for purposes other than those for which Parliament intended them. It is certainly not their intention that the Governors, by a narrow or legalistic interpretation of their own responsibilities, should trench upon the wide powers which it was the purpose of Parliament to place in the hands of Ministers and which it is desired they should use in furtherance of the programmes they have advocated."

It may be mentioned here that the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad two days later.

#### LORD ZETLAND'S SECOND SPEECH

On May 6, replying to a debate in the Lords, the Marquess of Zetland repeated this statement. He also said :—

"If a quasi-legal formula could have been devised to regulate the varied and changing relationships between a Governor and his Ministry it would have been embodied in the Act.....The essence of the new Constitution is that initiative and responsibility for the whole Government of a Province, though in form vesting in the Governor, passes to the Ministry as soon as it takes office.....Even if the question of their (special powers) use arise it would be altogether wrong to assume that the Governor would immediately set himself in open opposition to his Ministry.

## BRABOURNE'S BELGAUM [SPEECH

On May 14, speaking at Belgaum, *Lord Brabourne* said:

"The special responsibilities placed on the Governor by Parliament deal with matters on which it was hoped that no conflict would arise between a Governor and his Ministers.....The taking of office means hard work and the assumption of responsibility but without these no country can govern itself and an attitude of mere negation leads nowhere and avails nothing.....My Ministers whatever their political outlook can rely not only on this understanding and sympathy but also on my doing everything in my power to avoid a situation occurring in which conflict of opinion would arise between us in the sphere of special responsibilities.

## THE VICEROY'S BROADCAST STATEMENT

Over the 21st. June, *H. E. the Viceroy*, in a broadcast statement, cleared the issues by exposing the constitutional position and defining Governor's function. In the course of the statement, His Excellency said:—

"There is no foundation for any suggestion that a Governor is free, or is entitled, or would have the power, to interfere with the day-to-day administration of a Province outside the limited range of the responsibilities especially confined to him."

Explaining the position further His Excellency maintained that in the discharge of the Governor's special responsibilities it was open to the Governor, and it was indeed incumbent upon him, to act otherwise than on the advice of his Ministers if he considered that the action they proposed would prejudice the minorities or areas or other interests affected. "These special responsibilities", declared His Excellency, "are restricted in scope to the narrowest limits possible. Even so, limited as they are, a Governor will at all times be concerned to carry his Ministers with him; while in other respects in the field of their Ministerial responsibilities, it is mandatory on a Governor to be guided by the advice of his Ministers even though for whatever reasons he may not himself be wholly satisfied that that advice is in the circumstances necessarily and decisively the right advice."

His Excellency further pointed out that within the limited area of his special responsibilities, the Governor was directly answerable to Parliament, whether he accepted or did not accept the advice of his Ministers, but if the Governor was unable to accept the advice of his Ministers, then the responsibility for his decision was his, and his alone. In that event the Ministers bore no responsibility for the decision and were entitled, if they so desired, publicly to state that they took no responsibility for that particular decision or even that they had advised the Governor in the opposite sense.

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**Proceedings of**  
**The Provincial Conferences**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**

# The Andhra Provincial Conference

16th. Session—Nandyal—20th. June 1937

Opening the Sixteenth Session of the Andhra Provincial Conference held at Nandyal on the 20th. June 1937, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar spoke on the loyalty of Madras Congressmen to the national organisation and ridiculed the idea of a split amongst them or breakaway from that body. He also paid a well-deserved tribute to the leadership of Gandhiji, which he hoped they would keep not only till India was free but also after they had attained freedom, for it was only then that they could be at peace with the world and India's destined message to the world could be delivered.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar began by remarking that the ceremonies at conferences were overloaded and they had a natural tendency to increase ceremonies, be it a marriage or 'upanyasnam'. In the same manner, even in a Conference, where it was necessary to organise the machinery for the expression of public opinion, they had expanded it into a big ceremony like a marriage. He wished the Conference every success and prayed to the Gods that were presiding over the temple to bless them in that Conference. "There are three dangers in conferences like these", he said. "One is that we make resolutions which do not express our opinion. May the Gods protect us from that danger. Another danger is that we make resolutions, which we cannot perform. May the Gods give us strength to pass resolutions and to carry them out. There is a third danger and that we quarrel among ourselves in the course of the Conference. We exaggerate small differences beyond proper proportions. One man finds it hard enough to find his own mind. It is no wonder that a large body like a Conference should go through some difficulty in order to find the common mind of the Conference. We must not exaggerate the friction and difficulties. After the decision is arrived at, we must obey it. In a Conference like this, you must use discrimination and co-operation with one another and forget the differences. Otherwise we will not be able to work together with the thousands of people struggling in the movement."

Continuing, Mr. Rajagopalachariar referred to his leadership of the party of the Congress working in the Legislatures, with the confidence of all, including Andhra, Kerala, Karnatak and Tamil Nad and said that his natural inclination was to escape from that responsibility. He was glad to give them also testimony to the fact that Andhra leaders had given him an inconceivable amount of loyalty, affection and co-operation, which he considered as the greatest achievement of God. And yet it was so easy to quarrel though difficult to co-operate. They were aware of how their enemies were hoping, were almost certain that they would quarrel among themselves very soon. He did not think that the elections had impressed their enemies so much as their united front after the elections. Their Working Committee had stuck together like the dough for bread. In fact they had much more to stick to one another than to divide from one another and that was why the British people and all other expectant people outside were greatly disappointed when they found the Indian National Congress quite whole as it was before.

Disappointed in the expectation of a quarrel among Congressmen, Mr. Rajagopalachariar continued, they were now trying as a last resort a quarrel among castes, because it was on a quarrel between the castes the interim Chief Minister had made the last appeal. The Minister quarrelled with the speaker for having selected a large number of Brahmins. He had not counted the number of Brahmins either before or after the elections because he was not responsible for the selection. The communal quarrel that the Minister wanted to set up was worse than a disease, was more fatal than a disease. "All these quarrels, all those philosophies of Brahmins and non-Brahmins ultimately must be decided by the people with a largely increased franchise, with an overwhelming majority and accepted the conditions", continued Mr. Rajagopalachariar. "I say it is impudent to speak of Brahmins and non-Brahmins after they had been elected by thousands of voters. One who has not been elected even by a pocket borough, but one who is nominated by the Government for the upper chamber, I hope you will not take this remark of mine to be a personal attack upon him. It is a pity that he has been so nominated, it is a pity that he accepted the Chief Ministry of interim post, but it would be better if he had succeeded in the elec-

tions. His remarks are comment on the electorates, and the electorate should resent his remark. It is by a fluke that we are elected in all the constituencies by huge majorities? Because the electorate wanted us they elected us. Does the interim Chief Minister want us to shut out the possibility of a free choice of electorate and force candidates of particular classes on electorates? I am glad, however, that nobody has talked in this train except the Chief Minister. After the elections and after the nature and quality of our success, even the Justice Party has not made such comment. But a drowning man doth catch at a straw. The latest statement of the Premier of Great Britain has complimented them upon their public spirit and upon their taking up the Government under very difficult circumstances. They should be content with that. They should not try to find fault with the Congress, when they know that it is the Congress that is the rightful holder of the place.

"The Premier has said something very remarkable in addition to compliments. Mr. Chamberlain has said that Sir Kurma is not responsible to anybody in England. He has asked the Parliament members not to ask questions about any thing that he does. Mr. Chamberlain says that Sir K. V. Reddi is fully responsible to the legislature of Madras. But His Excellency the Governor does not convene the Legislature. So he is responsible to a body that is not allowed to meet. It may be answered by constitutional experts on the side of the British Cabinet that he will be responsible after the Legislature of Madras is called. But I answer that until they are called they are not responsible to anybody on earth. The whole thing is a laughable absurdity. If a strange monster comes, we are either afraid of it or laugh at it. If it has much power we are afraid of it. If it has no power and if it is strange, we laugh at it. The Government of India Act is a strange monster, with the power of an Army behind it and, therefore, we are afraid of it. But the interim Ministers are strange and they are only laughable objects. So you see there are two kinds of monstrosities. One is the terrible Government of India Act and the other is the absurd interim Ministry. Even Mr. Neville Chamberlain cannot constitutionally defend the interim Ministry. It is good that he elevates them to a very high position that he wants to give them. I hope there will be real Ministers. They are interested from the point of view of Britain to greatly elevate the interim ministers. I wish he respects Gandhiji half as much as he respects Sir K. V. Reddi. Mr. Chamberlain says Sir K.V. Reddi is responsible to his legislature and his constituency. Where is his constituency? Gandhiji is responsible for the whole of India and the British Government is responsible to the whole of India. They are not in a hurry to recognise that responsibility.

"I shall not weary you with this constitutional problem any further. I want to tell you something which is more important. I tell you that if anybody, either friend or foe, expects that the Congress will split over anything, they are all bound to be disappointed. The Southern Presidency gave a very proper surprise to the Northerners in the elections to the Madras Assembly. We returned the vast percentage of majorities throughout India. What remains is they want to be assured that the Madras Presidency will not break away from the Congress. Some people hope still that Madras Congressmen are inclined to break away from the Congress. The problems of Madras are no doubt their own and different from the problems of other provinces. But the question of loyalty to the Congress is the same thing throughout India. There may be difference of opinion among people, but they know how to co-operate with one another. Madras will give the greatest surprise beyond all expectation in the matter of loyalty to the Congress. Whatever the decision of the Congress may be on the question of office, Madras Congressmen will stand united and loyal to the Congress. The Congress will consider things from all points of view, but India is one and united. The very last vestiges of hope in the British Government that they could divide provinces from provinces must and will have to be given up and I do not think that anybody, be a friend or foe, will think that arrangements will be arrived at in any separate province. If any separate autonomy is to be given by the Congress as a whole and not exercised by any separately, it is a hopeless ignorance of Congress history and politics to imagine that Congress leaders in the various provinces can be made to act differently.

"I want to tell you this last of all, that you are in the hands of the best leaders that any nation could possibly produce. There are nation which would exchange their empires for the leadership that we have in Gandhiji (applause). I tell you that that if it were possible, if we could strike a bargain, British people will be glad to have Gandhiji for their leader and give India freedom. We have a leadership which

will be blessed not only by politicians but by sages and philosophers. Akbar was not a greater Emperor than Gandhiji is a leader. Asoka was not a greater King than Gandhiji is a leader either. If anybody believes that India would split under Gandhiji, they are as foolish as to believe that the Himalayas would split. It is, therefore, perfect confidence and harmony that should work for our emancipation. The leadership of Gandhiji is there and it will remain there till we are free. After you are free, you may appoint your own leaders and you may carry on your internal politics as you like. But it is well, that we keep his leadership even after we are free. It is only then that we can be at peace with the world. It is only then that India can give her destined message to the world. With these words, I once more thank you for the privilege you have given me and I declare this Conference open.

#### The Presidential Address

In the course of his presidential address, Mr. G. Brahmeyya said:—"What we really want is an assurance of non-interference by the Governors in the matter of our activities directed towards the fulfilment of our election pledges but not in the matter of any programme calculated to wreck the Government of India Act."

He affirmed that such of them as would be considering Congressman's attitude of refusing Ministries as one of irresponsibility for the present deadlock lay on the Government and not on Congressmen. He emphasised on the constructive programme of the Congress and at the same time warned Congressmen to be alert and prepare themselves for any possible programme of civil disobedience.

#### Proceedings and Resolutions

##### LEADERSHIP OF GANDHI

The sharp differences between the Congress Leftists and the Rightists in the Andhra Province came to a head when Mr. T. Prakasam, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, moved a resolution expressing confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership regarding office-acceptance. The resolution as it stood was opposed by the Socialists, who brought in an amendment.

Wild and exciting scenes prevailed during the debate that ensued, lasting for over two hours. The Socialists frequently heckled the speakers.

Eventually the amendment was defeated and the original resolution voting confidence in Gandhiji was passed.

The resolution moved by Mr. T. Prakasam read:

(a) This Conference, taking note of the volume of discussions so far carried on regarding office acceptance, expresses the country's complete confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the All-India Congress Working Committee on the matter.

(b) If no satisfactory agreement is reached in the matter, this Conference hereby declares to Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee that this province would be read to carry out their behests.

The Socialists moved an amendment deleting clause (a) and the portion in clause (b) referring to Gandhiji's leadership. The resolution with the amendment read: "This Conference is of opinion that unless the assurance asked for by the All-India Congress Committee is given, the Congress should not accept Ministry, and hereby declares that if no satisfactory agreement is reached, this province would be ready to carry out the behests of the Congress."

While those who favoured the original resolution spoke, the Socialists frequently interrupted them and the President had to intervene more than a dozen times during the debate to restore order.

Mr. Prakasam, moving the resolution, traced the various stages of the political struggle for freedom through which India had passed ending with the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on his return from England after the Second Round Table Conference. He emphasised that at the present critical juncture, when the strength of the Congress was pitted against the strength of the British Government, it was essential to proclaim the solidarity and confidence of their countrymen under the leadership of the Mahatma and the Congress. The enemies of the Congress had been expecting a split in the ranks, especially between the Leftists and Rightists. But they had been disappointed and they were bound to be disappointed in the future also. The Congress had always stood united and the expression of such unity and loyalty to the one man who was now guiding the affairs of India and to the great



organisation they were all proud to belong, would destroy the enemy's illusion and cement the rank and file in the Congress.

Mr. C. Jagannatham moved the Socialist amendment. He said that the amendment had been brought in not as obstructive tactics but out of a genuine feeling that the latest position as developed by the statements of Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and of the British Government officials on the other, killed the spirit of the Lahore Independence resolution. The speaker traced the several events from the Non-co-operation days of 1920 up to the present day. These events, he said, did not recognize India's right of self-determination. Gandhiji wanted an interview with Lord Willingdon and vote to him saying, "I beg you on bended knees," but the British did not yield. Mr. Jagannatham was afraid that the sterile path of constitutionalism that the Rightists were anxious to adopt and the climb-down of Gandhiji from the All-India Congress Committee resolution demanding the assurance preliminary to acceptance of office was against the spirit of the Lahore Independence resolution. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari had said that the assurance clause would serve as an arrow that would shoot every vote into the Congress ballot box. The Socialists were willing to agree to bow down to the assurance resolution, but not to the position to which Gandhiji had committed the Congress by his subsequent statements on the subject.

Mr. M. Thirumala Rao said that there was, in fact, no difference between the original resolution and the amendment thereon, if the Socialists would admit that they had confidence in Gandhiji. He was sure that there was no Socialist in the Conference, who could have the courage to say the contrary. Gandhiji had completely identified himself with the masses in thought and action and whatever he did or said arose out of his anxiety for the welfare of the masses. It was unworthy to say that Gandhiji would betray them. (Cheers). Complete obedience should be rendered to him. The speaker claimed to be a Socialist (Socialist cries of 'no' and 'Don't exploit our name'). Pandit Nehru was a Socialist. He wrote his autobiography and got it printed in England. (Socialists: Order, order. Don't attack personalities).

Mr. E. Anjaneyulu (Tenali) supporting the amendment, said that there was hardly any need for so much commotion. Mr. Thirumala Rao had made some misrepresentation in interpreting the object of the Socialists, who moved the amendment. It was not correct to say that the Socialists desired that Gandhiji's leadership should be moved. Nor did the amendment seek to express no-confidence in the Mahatma. But the Socialists felt that the recent statements of Mahatma Gandhi had watered down the assurance clause. The demand to be compelled to resign in case of sharp differences of opinion between the Congress Ministers and the Governor was not the same as the assurance asked for in the resolution of the A. I. C. C. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramiah, in a press interview, had stated that the demand of the Congress had been watered down. Again, leaders like Babu Rajendra Prasad and others had put different interpretations on the issue. Lord Zetland had stated that there could not be any friendly gesture so long as the Faizpur resolution regarding Council-entry was there. That resolution could never be changed. Under such circumstances it would be better to stick to the A. I. C. C. resolution for assurance and not to submit to Gandhiji's ever compromising and changing attitude.

Mr. Konda Venkatappayya Pantulu said that, the trend of the speeches of Mr. Anjaneyulu and other young men on the platform indicated that even from their standpoint the resolution needed no amendment. They had admitted that Gandhiji was the greatest man of the world, the embodiment of all that was highest and noblest in human nature. Even if they said the contrary, the world would not believe them. But looking at the manner in which the amendment had been framed, he understood it to express, by implication, such lack of confidence in this noblest son of the land. The implication had resulted out of the deletion of reference to Gandhiji's leadership and the country's confidence in him. If the Socialists had confidence in Gandhiji's leadership why should they omit the portion referring to it? There was no need at all for any amendment. There had been no watering down of the Congress demand. He appealed to the gathering to throw out the Socialists' amendment.

Mr. V. V. Siviah, Socialist (Ountur), speaking for the amendment, said, that to-day politics centred round Mahatma Gandhi, and he had been given complete sway over the Congress. Gandhiji himself had stated that he was not a Congressman but only a mediator between the Congress and the Government. Even though

Gandhiji was not even a four-anna member, he had been allowed to attend every Congress Working Committee meeting. Those who wanted to get into ministerial posts were trading upon Gandhiji's name to serve their own purposes. (Cries of "withdraw the word trade." Speaker: "I withdraw.") He opposed the resolution.

*Mr. Duggirala Bala Ramkrishnaiah*, supporting the main resolution, said that the Socialists had become excited over an imaginary fear that the Independence resolution passed at Lahore had been let down. But there was hardly any ground to justify such a fear. Gandhiji was to-day trying a political strategy. This was in recognition of the circumstances prevailing in India and the needs of the masses. Even Lenin had many times resorted to such strategy. Stalin's Government in Russia, where Socialism first took root, was not in accordance with Marxism. Differing and changing conditions needed political tactics. The speaker appealed to the Socialists not to magnify their differences and to withdraw their amendment.

*Mr. Soundararaja Iyengar* (Chittoor) opposed the resolution and *Mr. Bopinnedu* supported it.

*Mr. Narayana Raja* said that the creed of the Congress was complete independence. Truth was only a handmaid to achieve that end. Pandit Nebru's speech at Calcutta was a fitting reply to Lord Zetland's statement that the Faizpur resolution regarding Council-entry should be withdrawn. The Assembly members, at every step, dragged in Gandhiji's name to serve their purpose. The A. I. C. C. resolution on office-acceptance was there. The Socialists' amendment was not against it. They were there to obey the Congress and not Gandhiji or Mr. Prakasam individually, who could never be above the Congress.

*Mr. Kallu Subba Rao* (Anantapur) opposed the amendment.

*Mr. Souri Sastri* said that the Socialists who opposed Gandhiji's leadership to-day, had the birth of their political ideas and positions out of the revolutionary spirit brought about by Gandhiji.

*Mr. G. Harisaravothama Rao* said that no reasons had been given for the deletion of the portion in the resolution regarding Gandhiji's leadership, and it was not justified. Gandhiji gave rise to the very Socialists, who were now seeking to cut themselves off from him.

*Mr. Madduri Annapurniah*, supporting the amendment, said that he wished to speak plainly. Gandhiji was always stooping but never conquering. He had lowered the Independence flag (Vehement cries of 'no', 'no'). "I am not going to be annulled by your cries, I maintain what I have said. Has not Gandhiji written to Mr. Polak saying that he would be satisfied with Dominion Status with right to secede? The Lahore Congress resolution on Independence was not that. We do not bow down to Gandhiji's political philosophy and conquest of the enemy by love. We obey the Congress. Gandhiji is not greater than the Congress."

*Mr. Bulusu Sambamurthi*, in a 40-minute's speech, replied to the debate, disapproving the attitude of the Socialists. He was frequently interrupted and heckled by the Socialists and the President had to rise up several times to restore order.

*Mr. Sambamurthi* said that some speakers had said that there was no difference between the original resolution and the amended one. He agreed with *Mr. Konda Venkatappayya* and maintained that there was a difference. The original resolution stated that the Conference, taking note of the volume of discussions so far carried on, expressed full confidence in Gandhiji's and the Working Committee's leadership.

*Mr. Madhusudana Rao* (Socialist), interrupting, asked: Do you obey Gandhiji or the Working Committee? Please clear our doubt.

*Mr. Sambamurthi*: I shall clear.

*President*: No questions please.

*Mr. Sambamurthi*: No, I shall and can answer them. I am not going to be cowed down like this. I shall not hesitate to meet their questions.

A voice from the audience: *Mr. Sambamurthi* does not hesitate to utter lies, either.

*Mr. G. Brahmeyya*, President, stood up, and said that the remark was unworthy of the gentleman who uttered it and was unparliamentary and should be withdrawn. He asked him to have the gentlemanliness and courage to rise up and acknowledge his mistake.

*Mr. Vekataratnam* (Socialist): If we prove it is it necessary that we should withdraw it? (Continuous cries of "Withdraw", "Withdraw").

The unknown gentleman not getting up, Mr. Brahmayya, on behalf of the Conference, expressed apology to Mr. B. Sambamurthi and desired the incident closed.

Mr. Sambamurthi, continuing, said that it was Mahatma Gandhi who introduced the assurance clause, who, in fact, was the author of the A. I. C. C. resolution on office acceptance. The Congress Working Committee allowed him full scope in this matter and the entire country had acknowledged his leadership. It was this small assurance clause that had now given birth to volume of discussion and controversy over the constitutional aspect of the problem. It was shaking the very foundations of British prestige. Therefore, it was but natural that in future the country should repose their confidence in him and the Working Committee.

Continuing, Mr. Sambamurthi said that the Constitution Act consisted of the Federal part and the Autonomy part. The Congress had vowed to oppose the introduction of the Federal part. The acceptance of Ministry was subject to the Governor's assurance. When the assurance was not forthcoming, the Congress would refuse to accept office in the six major provinces in India and the Autonomy part of the Constitution would become null. As the Federal structure depended on indirect election from the Provincial legislatures and when the six provinces refused to elect representatives to the Federal Chamber, the Federal structure would automatically crumble. Section 93 of the Act would then come into operation. When that time came, there must be a leader to lead them. That leader was Mahatma Gandhi. The Congress or the Working Committee cannot be called a "leader". It was only an organisation. The All-India Congress had resolved that the future struggle must be carried on under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In Gandhiji was embodied the national spirit of resistance. It was futile to argue at this hour that the acceptance of Ministry was guided by selfish motives. No body any longer cared to believe it. The Congress entered the Councils with the express declaration that in the legislatures their object would be "not to co-operate in any way with the Act but to combat it and seek to end it." It was only a Constituent Assembly that could determine the Constitution for India. If the Governors satisfied the Congress and it accepted Ministry, the idea of wrecking the Act would not cease to exist.

Mr. Annapurniah betrayed a woeful lack of reality, said Mr. Sambamurthi, when he said that Gandhiji was always stooping but never conquering. There were only two ways of resistance—violence and non-violence. Violence was out of the question. Non-violence had as its natural result the change of heart. Even the hardest heart was bound to be changed by love. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was to some extent, the result of such a change of heart effected by love. There could be no peace out of violence. In loving the enemy and seeking to convert him a tremendous spiritual force would be released. It was out of this force that India aimed at getting freedom, setting a new example and delivering a new message to a sick and groaning world. A subject and starving nation could not have peace till freedom was achieved. Mahatma Gandhi was the very reflection of God, and he was bound to get freedom and peace for India. It was argued, he continued, by some that the office-acceptance-wallahs dragged in Gandhiji whenever they wanted support from the people. Gandhiji was an intelligent man and knew what was best and bad. He was not a fool to yield to others. Gandhiji represented the nation and was the embodiment of the highest ideals of Dharma and Truth. It was a childish argument to say that because Gandhiji was not even a four anna member he was not a leader. It did not mean anything.

Mr. Sambamurthi appealed to the Conference to vote for the resolution with circumspection and deep thought.

The non-delegates were cleared out. The amendment was put to vote and was lost, 40 voting for and 90 against.

The President declared the original resolution carried amidst continuous applause and cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai."

The Conference adjourned to meet again the next morning.

## Second Day—Nandyal—21st June 1937

### INTERIM MINISTRY CONDEMNED

The Conference concluded its sessions to-day after passing a number of resolutions, which included condemnation of the Interim Ministry and the Chief Minister's anti-Congress propaganda. A resolution calling upon Govern-

ment servants drawing Rs. 200 and above to agree to a voluntary cut of 25 per cent in their salaries was passed, while a resolution for the abolition of District Boards and constituting them into either taluk or divisional boards was withdrawn after discussion.

Moving the resolution on Interim Ministry, which was a lengthy one, Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao explained the political events leading up to the demand for assurances by the Congress and the breakdown of the talks between the Governors and the leaders. Sir K. V. Reddi, in utter disregard of national feeling and national interest, he said, had accepted the post because, as he said, the "King's Government had to be carried on." He did not think for a while what disapprobation he was thereby inviting upon himself from his own people. While a controversy was being carried on between Lord Zetland and Mahatma Gandhi, Sir K. V. Reddi made public utterances saying that the Congress was wrong in refusing the Ministry and that he was there to save the Government and to save trouble to the Governor. Sir K. V. Reddi had also raised the communal booby as a drowning man would catch at a straw. Even when 198 members out of 215 had sent up a declaration that they had no confidence in the Interim Ministry, still Sir K. V. Reddi and his colleagues were clinging to their posts. Even if the Governor had not taken any action, they ought to have resigned voluntarily.

The resolution stated that when the majority party did not accept office because the assurance demanded by it was not forthcoming, the action of the Madras Governor in appointing Sir K. V. Reddi and other colleagues of his in the ministerial posts was illegal, improper and was in utter disregard of every canon of Responsible Government. The Conference condemned the retention of these Interim Ministers by the Governor and prolonging their life without summoning the legislatures. The Conference condemned the conduct of the Interim Ministers who were sticking to their jobs even after 198 members had expressed in writing no confidence against them and urged them to resign forthwith. The Conference also condemned the utterances of Sir K. V. Reddi in his recent tour in East and West Godavari districts, directed against the Congress and Congress leaders, and characterised those utterances as impertinent.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

#### KOTTAPATAM SUMMER SCHOOL BAN

The next resolution condemned the ban on the Kottapatam Summer School and congratulated the students of the School for the courage they exhibited and the bold stand they took up to vindicate their self-respect and civil liberties under very difficult and delicate circumstances. The Conference condemned the action of the Magistrate who sentenced the members of the School in placing them in 'C' class and urged that they should be put in special division.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The Conference passed a condolence resolution on the demise of Dr. R. Subramanyam and Mr. Kodeti Rangachari, two veteran workers of Andhradesa and also on the death of Dr. Nazir Ahmad, the Muslim Leader as also other Congress workers, about a dozen in number.

#### ROYALASEEMA & ANDHRA UNIVERSITY

Messrs. Kallura Subba Rao (Anantapur) and Parthasarathy (Cuddapah), speaking on the resolution calling on the Andhra leaders to get the Ceded Districts and Chittoor again included in the Andhra University area, said that for promoting unity among Andhras and for the progress of the Royalaseemites, such inclusion was absolutely necessary. Mr. C. R. Reddi was also keen on these districts being transferred to the Andhra University jurisdiction. Sir S. Radhakrishnan had promised that if the Royalaseemites agreed to the transfer, probably it would be quite possible to develop Anantapur into a University educational centre ultimately. There was also the possibility of a Law College being started at Anantapur. They urged the resolution might be passed unanimously.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

#### VOLUNTARY SALARY CUT

Dr. Pattabhi Sitharamayya moved the following resolution: "This Conference calls on all Government servants drawing Rs. 200 and over to agree to a voluntary cut of 25 per cent in their salaries, so as to reduce the burden of taxes on the people and to put it into action as early as possible."

Dr. Pattabhi said that the burden of top heavy administration, with enormously fat salaries of Government servants ultimately rested on the heads of the tax-payer. Even among Government officers there were those who were willing to contribute their quota to the progress of the nation and national relief.

Mr. Jagannatham and another socialist delegate opposed the resolution on the ground that it was impracticable and that they should not get resolutions passed without a corresponding means to put them into action. Even if there were Government servants patriotic enough to agree to the cut, because the resolution had been sponsored by the Congress they would be given quit notice and asked to go home if they responded to it. Besides the resolution seemed to go against the spirit of the Karachi resolution of Rs. 500 as maximum salary.

Replying to the opposition contention Dr. Pattabhi said that the present resolution had stated that when the Congress got into power the maximum salary should be Rs. 500. But till that time the idea in the present resolution might be worked up. It might not be possible for the Government servants even if they were so disposed to agree to a voluntary cut, but the resolution had behind it tremendous scope for propaganda. It was of course, a new idea and should be broadcast among the people.

Mr. G. Harisarvothama Rao suggested an amendment adding a rider to the original resolution reiterating the Karachi resolution of Rs. 500 as maximum salary. This was accepted and the resolution as amended was passed unanimously.

#### ABOLITION OF DISTRICT BOARDS

There was some opposition to the resolution moved from the Chair urging the abolition of District Boards and constituting them into either taluk boards or divisional boards.

Mr. N. Sankar Reddi said that it would lead to greater factions.

Mr. Harisarvothama Rao sent in an amendment to the effect that the Local Boards Act should be so amended as to give prominence to Panchayat Boards in the villages. He said that from his own experience as a legislator, he could say that the resolution would bring about trouble. The amendment aimed at removing such a trouble and making the village autonomous. He did not want the Congress to err in the same way as the Raja of Bobbili and wrock their ship on the rock of local board administration. The abolition of Taluk Boards was the cause of the downfall of the Raja of Bobbili and the Congress should profit by it.

The resolution was by leave withdrawn.

#### ANDHRA HINDI PRACHAR SANGH

When a resolution was moved from the Chair expressing appreciation at the starting of a separate Andhra Hindi Prachar Sangh and calling on all District Congress Committees and Congress sympathisers to help the Sangha in the spread of Hindi, there was vehement opposition from a delegate, who said that the propaganda on behalf of Hindi had already resulted in very adverse effect on Telugu literature in the same manner as English had adversely influenced the national vernaculars. There were many people who had been so delegated that they were unable to express their ideas in their own mother-tongue. While there was every need for the resuscitation of the Telugu language, propaganda on behalf of Hindi was meaningless.

Mr. G. Harisarvothama Rao, while appreciating the courage of the young man who opposed the resolution, said that there was a general feeling in the Telugu districts that the interests of the mother-tongue were being subordinated to Hindi and what the young man had said was a warning to the leaders. But he desired to point out that they had nothing to fear on that account. In this resolution, they did not want a national language, whose place could not be taken by Telugu and whose substitute English could not be. The Congress had completed Hindi as the national language. In that sense the spread of Hindi was the duty of every Congressman. That was all the resolution said. Therefore, he appealed that the resolution might be accepted unanimously. The resolution was carried, only one delegate dissenting.

The Conference congratulated the voters—women, labourers and peasants—for the splendid support they gave to the Congress during the last elections; it requested the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee to appoint a Sub-Committee to enquire into the economic conditions of the people and take early steps in this behalf; it expressed the opinion that the present Estate Land Act was injurious to the interests

of the ryots and urged suitable legislation to be brought about. The Conference desired that Khadi should be encouraged to help the starving millions; that vigorous efforts should be set forth for the removal of untouchability, for national unity and for the economic improvement of the Harijans.

On the invitation of Mr. H. Seetha Rama Reddi, M. L. A. (Bellary) the Conference agreed to have Adoni as the venue for the next year's Conference. The Conference put forth a strong appeal for the Kottapatam Defence Fund, requested the Andhra Provincial Committee to constitute an Anti-Drink Committee for propaganda, pleaded for inter-communal unity and urged members of all communities to join the Congress.

The Conference reminded the members of the legislatures to do intensive propaganda for the abolition of the Zamindars that the rates of assessment in their zamins were very high and called on them to reduce them to the level of the Ryotwari areas. The Conference asked the zamins ryots to agitate more intensely in this behalf.

The Conference reiterated the Fairpur anti-war resolution and urged that in case of out-break of war, the occasion should be utilised to strengthen the fight for freedom. The Conference express sympathy with Spain in her present turmoil.

The Conference urged the starting of libraries in every village and intensifying the library movement, starting gymnasiums in every village under the auspices of the local Congress Committees, which should hold periodical physical culture exhibitions, awarding prizes. The Conference asked the Village Committees to send up their annual reports about the progress made in this direction.

The Conference expressed anxiety for the health of Mr. K. Nageswara Rao Pantala and hoped he would have speedy recovery.

The Conference urged that adult franchise should be given to people in local board elections and that the colour box system should be instituted by the Government.

Mr. G. Harisarvathama Rao, speaking on behalf of the Reception Committee, expressed thanks to all the delegates for having come from distant districts to take part in the Conference. He thanked Mr. B. Mahanandiah for having lent the Mahanandiswara temple premises for the Congress, Mr. Kuppu Rao, Secretary, for having lent the Victoria Reading Room premises, and the authorities of the Anjum-E-Islamia and others for their co-operation.

Dr. K. Subramanya Sarma said that Nandyal, though a municipal town, did not have any facilities. The food provided might not have suited Northern Circars' tastes. He however, hoped they would all excuse the Reception Committee for the defects.

Mr. N. Sankara Reddi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, expressed gratitude for the Provincial authorities for having made it possible to hold the Conference in Nandyal. The Kurnool District was very backward economically and politically. He was sure that the speeches delivered during the Conference had a great educative value to the people of Rayalaseema and that a new impetus would be given to the Congress movement in these districts. When the call for struggle came again, he was certain that Kurnool District would respond in a worthy manner.

Mr. B. Sambamurthi said that they had hardly noticed any shortcoming at all. Their stay was very comfortable. If they had any complaint, it was that they were too kindly looked after.

Mr. G. Brahmayya, in his concluding remarks, gave expression to his impressions of the Conference. He noticed that Socialism was fast gaining ground, especially among the young men of the province. While this was a happy sign he would nevertheless ask young men to put some restraint on their speeches. There had been animated and interesting discussions. But he hoped that now that the Conference had come to certain decisions, they would all carry out those decisions in practice. He had at first feared trouble from the younger section of the delegates who had been imbued with the socialistic ideology and principles and expressed differences with the Rightists. But he must, however, thank them for their co-operation with him to bring the Conference to a successful end. He thanked the Reception Committee, the delegates and others in the Conference for having accepted his rulings. The Conference had left on him impressions which it would take long to fade away. He then declared the Conference dissolved.

# The Kerala Congress Socialist Conference

Fourth Session—Cannanore—20th. June 1937

## The Welcome Address

The fourth All Kerala Congress Socialist Conference was held at Cannanore on the 20th. June 1937, under the presidency of Mr. Yusuf Meherally.

Extending a cordial welcome to the delegates and visitors, Mr. K. P. R. Gopalan Nambiar, Congress member of the Malabar District Board and Chairman of the Reception Committee, referred to the importance of the critical period they were living in. Imperialism was menacing every aspect of their life. The result of the recent elections and the hartal on April 1st were to him declaration of the country against Imperialism. There was growing unrest amongst the masses, the peasants and workers and students were also restive. The Calcutta Jute Mill strike, the B. N. Railway strike and several other minor strikes in different parts of the country recently were all indications of the increasing resistance to Imperialism.

The Congress, it appeared, to him, was reluctant to organise a mass movement and there were even attempts to tone down its demand for complete independence. The obvious tendency of the existing political situation was "the contrast between the militancy of the masses and the reactionary mentality of the leadership." To fight against this tendency, anti-imperialistic forces in the country, he said, should be organised. The success of the anti-imperialistic struggle depended on the organisation of the working classes. In these and other tasks, the Socialist party had an important duty to perform and, therefore, to strengthen the Congress Socialist Party was to strengthen the anti-imperialistic struggle, he concluded.

## Presidential Address

Mr. Meherally then delivered his presidential address. If there was one thing, he said, that Mahatma Gandhi had taught the Indian people, it was not to hang on to the words of the British statesmen and see in their vague promises the salvation of their country. For the last two or three months it would appear that Gandhiji had been trying to make them forget the lesson which he himself had taught them.

The net result of the "overtures" had been the dissipation of the tension in the country that arose, the speaker added, on the refusal of the Governors to give an assurance asked for by the A. I. C. C. at its meeting in Delhi. An unfortunate impression also had been created that influential Congress leaders were keen on scaling down the conditions for office that they themselves laid down. These efforts at "sweet reasonableness" had stiffened the British attitude. Or what other meaning could be given to Zard Zotland's thinly veiled demand to abandon, if not formally rescind, the Faizpur Congress resolution for combating the new Government of India Act?

The existing deadlock was not just mechanical. It was actually the momentary reflection of the permanent conflict which existed between the Indian masses and British imperialism and the deadlock would only be finally resolved by the complete elimination of the Imperialistic system. It was time, therefore, that a search for such a solution was abandoned. The minimum terms on which the Congress was prepared to form Cabinets (for the express purpose of wreaking the Constitution) having been rejected, the Working Committee at its next meeting should proceed to terminate this period of drift and decide to pass on to the next phase in the struggle for the rooting out of the Constitution. That phase was one of brisk preparation for the mass struggle which must be launched in the near future.

The President next referred to the war in Spain, the race for armaments at a hectic speed and other developments abroad and referred to Mr. M. N. Roy's resolution and Congress work for contact with Muslims.

"I do not feel very happy" the speaker continued, "that the new awakening should be conducted in the name of Muslim Mass Contact Committees. It will be far preferable if such Committees are called simply Mass Contact Committees and are composed of not only Muslims but persons of different communities. We must leave no loop-holes for communalism to enter the Congress by the backdoor."

The President next dealt with the problem of training for party workers who should, he said, seriously address themselves to creating a cadre of workers equipped in Socialist theory as well as in the study of objective economic conditions of their country.

Regarding the problem of Indian States the speaker observed that in the Swaraj for which they were struggling, no difference whatever would be made between those living in the States and the rest of the country. While the Socialist viewpoint on the future of the States was well known, their present task is to organise them on a programme likely to be adequate and immediately fruitful. The following points might envisage such a programme; a single-chamber legislature elected on adult franchise, a Ministry responsible to the legislature, guarantee of democratic rights of freedom of speech, press, association and organisation, the Privy purse of the Ruling House not to exceed 5 per cent of the Revenue of the State and the Religion of the Ruling family not to affect the administration of the State.

The President, in conclusion, referred to Socialists and the Congress and its ideals and defined the attitude of the Socialists.

#### Resolutions

Moved from the chair, the Conference congratulated Mr. Jaya Prakash Narain and others undergoing imprisonment. They were considered as victims of Imperialism. Moved by Mr. P. Narayanam Nair of the "Mathrubhumi" seconded by Mr. E. C. Kuzhi Kanam Nambiar, District Board member and further supported by Mr. Moyarath Sankaran, the Conference deplored the attempts made to tone down the Congress resolution on office acceptances which clearly and unambiguously laid down wrecking the Constitution as the object thereof. Interpretations of Gandhiji and Mr. Rajagopalachari were particularly taken exception to. The same resolution appealed for intensification of the struggle and emphasised the need for mobilising public opinion against the new Constitution.

The third resolution, while welcoming the Faipur Congress resolution for establishing Primary Committees declared in favour of collective affiliation and organisational representation in the Congress of peasant and working classes. The opinion of the rank and file, it further stated, should count more with the leadership in the Congress. Moved by Mr. Manjunatha Rao and seconded by Mr. C. H. Kanara, the Conference condemned several instances of curtailment on civil liberty as reflected in the arrests of Labour leaders, detention of politicals without trial, restrictions on movements of persons, ban on certain types of literature and study classes and the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act, etc. Moved by Mr. A. Madhava Menon and seconded by Mr. K. S. Narayanan a resolution stated that the struggle for establishment of responsible government in the States was part of the wider struggle against Imperialism and asked the people of Cochin and Travancore to unite with anti-Imperialistic forces outside.

After all the resolutions were adopted and the concluding remarks of the President, the Conference terminated at about 2 p. m., with a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. P. Krishna Pillai.

## The Punjab Congress Socialist Conference

Ugly scenes marked the proceedings of the Punjab Provincial Socialist Conference, which commenced on the 6th. June and concluded on the next-day. Soon after the commencement of distribution of pamphlets, accusing the Congress Socialist group of treachery, an exchange of blows took place between Socialists and Radicals, another group of Socialists. Some Socialist leaders were arrested.

The President, Mr. Bedi of Lahore, in his address deplored the condition of the workers and peasants in India. He said that the aim of the Socialist Party was to organise anti-Imperial forces and stressed co-ordination of their activities. He suggested the formation of party's volunteers corps and study circles.

Before concluding the Conference passed six resolutions, condemning the detention of Gurmukh Singh in the And mans and urging the release of all State prisoners and internees, condemning the Madras Ministry in closing the Kottapatam School, and expressing sympathy with the peasantry in distress.



# All India Political Prisoners' Relief Conference

Second Session—Delhi—20th, March 1937

The second session of the All India Political Prisoners' Relief Conference was held at Ansarinagar, Delhi on the 20th, March 1937 under the presidency of *Sri Sarat Chandra Bose*, who in the course of his speech declared :—

"I will ask you to remember hundreds and thousands of our young countrymen who have suffered during the last three decades and sacrificed their all in the cause which is as much ours as it was theirs. I ask you to remember every day and every moment of your life that there are thousands still who are suffering silently in brave endurance in British jails and detention camps. If you have really any respect for the cause which the Congress has taken up on your behalf, you cannot but have respect for those who are the stoutest pillars in support of that cause. Remember if those who have been suffering for years perish, the cause of India's freedom will perish with them."

Referring to the demands of political prisoners, Mr. Bose observed : "You know well enough that with a view to bring these demands before the public *Sri Jogesh Chatterjee* resorted to hunger-strike and it was only on the assurance of certain leaders of the country that he was induced to break his fast. An assurance was given to him that we who are outside jails will do our very best in order to have those demands accepted by the authorities. We cannot claim that much has been done in that direction. I do not say that the demands have not been made with insistence. But we have not yet succeeded in getting the authorities to accede to those demands. I hope these demands which were voiced by *Sri Jogesh Chatterjee* from inside his prison cell will gather in force and strength from day to day and in the near future we shall have the satisfaction of seeing those demands accepted by the authorities whoever they may be. These demands are our essential demands in the fight for freedom. Constitutions may come and Constitutions may go ; freedom in a sense will be conceded to us from time to time but it is not freedom in the sense with which we are concerned to-day. We demand freedom in the essentials. I recognise many a struggle will be needed and many more thousands and tens of thousands of people will have to resort to jails whether as political prisoners or detenus or internees before freedom in essentials will be conceded to us. But our main demand must be that those who are fighting for freedom should not be left in the lurch any longer.

"It is our bounden duty to see and to do whatever lies in our power to get the authorities accede to those demands. I believe that if we are really earnest in our demands, if we are serious in putting them forward, I have no manner of doubt that these demands will daily grow in insistence and strength until the powers that be will have no alternative but to accept them. If we fail to get them acceded to, I will say we have failed in earnestness, we have failed in seriousness and we have failed in giving effect to things that we proclaimed from house tops. It will not do if we merely show lip sympathy, that will not advance our cause even one inch. Our political prisoners will then be where they are to-day. If we really desire to do service to the cause of the country, if we really mean it, I am sure the day will not be far distant when we shall have our brethren, political prisoners, detenus and internees back in our midst" (cheers).

Referring to repressive laws, Mr. Bose said that those laws were really enacted for the benefit of British Imperialists. "I do not for a moment believe that they were enacted for the purpose of maintaining law and order. In this connection I may tell you something amusing which I heard a few weeks ago. During the last election campaign one political party, I am referring to a communal party, put forward among their election programme the item of repeal of repressive laws. They were taken to task by another political party—"How is it that you have put forward this item in your election programme?" I know what answer was given. The answer that was given—no doubt privately—was this : 'Well, we have put down in our programme repeal of repressive laws. But once the election was

over it will be open to us to say that the laws such as Regulation 3 of 1918 and numerous Criminal Law Amendment Acts which have been passed during the last so many years are not repressive laws. They are laws meant for the maintenance of law and order. I know for fact that was the explanation given. But the case is different with the Congress. Repeal of repressive laws and release of political prisoners, detenus and internees have been one of our main election cries and the country responded to that call with alacrity and enthusiasm."

"Speaking on behalf of my province," said Mr. Bose, "I may tell you that during my election tour in every meeting that I had the opportunity of addressing the question of repeal of repressive laws and release of political prisoners was brought to the forefront. So far as Bengal is concerned it cannot be disputed even by British authorities that the mandate of the people is distinctly in favour of repeal of repressive laws and release of political prisoners, detenus and internees. We do not know how far we shall succeed in carrying into practice our demands. As you know, thanks to the present Constitution, thanks to its communal device, we Congressmen at the present moment in Bengal are in a position of numerical inferiority. But I am not depressed because I feel that if we have a solid and determined band of workers, no matter whether we are in numerical inferiority, we shall be able to persist in our demands in such a way that they will be accepted in the near future. We also hope that as time rolls on in spite of disabilities inflicted on us by the communal decision we of the Congress will be able shortly to command an effective majority in the legislature. And when that happens I can give you this assurance and through you to those who are in prisons that the very first thing we desire to do is to repeal all repressive laws which have been enacted for the purpose of repressing the country's desire for freedom. And the first thing we shall do to follow up that repeal will be to open the prison doors to let out political prisoners, detenus and internees than whom no one else has contributed more to the awakening of the country, than whom no one else has shown a better example of suffering and sacrifice. It is a cause which, no doubt, may be repressed for the moment but I believe it is a cause which will never perish so long as there is a single Indian who harbours in his breast the desire for freedom (cheers)."

Referring to the Congress Ministry and the test it will be put to, Mr. Bose observed: "I have in the recent past given expression to my views on the question of acceptance of office. I do not propose to give expression to those now. If there are people who really desire to accept office, to those friends I would desire to address a few remarks. The most important thing I feel to-day is this. Those people should always bear in mind this that the country is looking forward to them to replace the rule of force by a rule of justice. Eyes of the rest of India will be on them and they will be judged by this standard. Have they really attempted—I do not say that that standard will be applied to them in advance—to replace the police and Imperialist State which we find to-day by a social service State? These are big questions no doubt. But on the solution of these questions really depends the cause of India's freedom. If we who call us Congressmen and who declare day in and day out that nothing is dearer to us than the cause of India's freedom—if our representatives fail to make serious attempts to replace the rule of force by a rule of justice, to replace the State as we find in India to-day what I may describe as a police State by a real social service State, if we fail to do that then there will be an end of all our talks of India's freedom. And the first attempt in that direction, I again desire to repeat, will be releasing of all political prisoners, detenus and internees."

Mr. Bose went on: "In this connection I would desire to draw your attention to the remark of a great leader the truth of which I realise every day of my life. That remark was this: "Under a Government which imprisons any person unjustly the true place for man is also prison." We know most of us who are in the vanguard of the freedom movement are persons who have been in prison. Most of those who are leading the country have been in prison themselves. Those of them who desire to accept office will always bear in mind that they themselves were in prison not long ago and the country looks to them to put forward the demands of the people for the freedom of those political prisoners in such a fashion that those demands cannot be resisted by British Imperialism any longer.

"I will now draw your attention to some of the questions, with which we are concerned at this conference, which has been invited to voice the following demands:—

- (1) Release of all political prisoners irrespective of class and creed, detenus and internees.
- (2) Withdrawal of all orders of restraint on externees and others,
- (3) Repeal of all repressive laws,
- (4) Fulfilment of the following demands which Sj. Jogesh Chatterjee has put before the country—
  - (a) Concentration of political prisoners of all classes and creeds in one jail,
  - (b) All political prisoners of all classes and creeds be formed into one special class,
  - (c) Writing materials be allowed to all classes of political prisoners,
  - (d) Arrangements be made for their exercise as well as indoor and outdoor games and recreation.
  - (e) All political prisoners be kept in association barracks and not in cells,
  - (f) Proper arrangements be made for their medical treatment,
  - (g) Right of letters and interviews fortnightly,
  - (h) Right to supplement articles of food and clothing,
  - (i) Provision of light at night for reading and other purposes,
  - (j) Return of all political prisoners confined in the cellular jail at Port Blair to Indian jails and retaining all privileges that they are enjoying there at present."

Concluding Mr. Bose said : "Believe me when I say that there is hardly any cause which is dearer to my heart than the cause of political prisoners. That cause is indissolubly connected with the cause of India's freedom. We Indians cannot possibly forget that when the demand of our country for freedom became vocal it was then that repressive laws were enacted and applied to the people at large who voiced those demands. Repressive laws began to be enforced with all their severity about three decades ago and almost the first enforcement of those laws began in my own province of Bengal. The antiquated Regulation more than a century old was brought out and applied to certain political leaders of Bengal among them being Aswini Kumar Dutta and Krishna Kumar Mitter. At the time the British bureaucracy proclaimed to the world at large that Aswini Kumar Dutt and Krishna Kumar Mitter had been criminally connected with criminal plots. Although that was their justification for the enforcement of Regulation 3 of 1818, only a few years after the same bureaucracy had to confess that those gentlemen, those political leaders of Bengal had done nothing criminal nor were they connected with criminal plots. They were only political agitators. He knew now that the Regulation was brought in order to stifle the freedom movement in Bengal which was rapidly spreading in other parts of India."

Referring to the repressive nature of the laws enacted during the last decade or so which he characterised as lawless law, the speaker pointed out that these are sought to be justified on grounds that similar things are happening in Germany, Italy and other countries. Merely because wrongs are done and inflicted on people in some parts of the world that cannot be a justification for inflicting wrongs in other parts of the world.

#### Babu Rajendra Prasad's Speech

Initiating the proceedings of the All-India Political Prisoners' Relief Conference, Babu Rajendra Prasad said that this was the third time they met to consider the plight of those brothers and sisters who are rotting in Jail or in the Andamans for the sake of their country. Immediately after the Lucknow Congress session we demanded their release or if that was not possible, for the amelioration of their lot. Shortly after that Babu Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee went to hunger-strike which was instrumental in focussing public attention on some of the grievances acutely felt by political prisoners.

Another is that political prisoners most of whom are drawn from very respectable families and are fairly educated, are not supplied with books and newspapers. And it can well be imagined what a severe punishment is this "intellectual starvation" to persons who have to rot in virtual solitary imprisonment.

Proceeding, Babu Rajendra referred to the lot of these political prisoners who have been transported to the Andamans. He said that while the whole country was clamouring for the abolition of penal settlement, Sir James Craik, Home Member, India Govt. who paid a flying visit to Andamans described it as 'Paradise' on earth. Could there be a greater mockery than this declaration, he asked.

Continuing Rajendra Babu said that during the closing months of last year the

Bengal detenus committed suicide. People all over the country naturally became stunned by the drastic steps that these young men choose to take and demand went forth from all corners of India for an independent Committee of enquiry to ascertain the causes of such tragic incidents. But Government paid no heed to this popular demand. In Bengal many youngmen are still pining away in detention camps without any trial and without adequate provision for their families in some cases. In my own Province several youngmen are confined within the limits of their respective native villages and thus shut out from pursuing their moral avocations. The speaker did not deny that as the result of popular agitation for the betterment of the lot of political prisoners there has been some slight improvement here and there but the major problems relating to political prisoners still remain where they were. In this connection he referred to a huge public meeting held in Calcutta last year under the presidency of Dr. Rabindra Nath which protested against a state of things which could drive three youngmen to take their own lives. But Government did not seem to take notice of that unique demonstration too.

Proceeding further Rajendra Babu informed the meeting of the various steps that the All-India Political Prisoners' Relief Committee had taken so far to ameliorate the miserable condition of their unfortunate brothers and sisters who are being confined in various jails and detention camps.

Concluding Babu Rajendra said that it was a matter of gratification that one of the most distinguished among political prisoners, namely Subhas Bose, had been unconditionally released day before yesterday (cheers). We are looking forward to having him in our midst here but that is not to be as Subhas Babu is still in a very bad state of health and has not been permitted by his doctors to undertake this long journey. On the occasion of the Lucknow Conference also he was coming from Europe to attend it but as soon as he had landed in Bombay he was arrested under the orders of Government. But although we have not the satisfaction of having S. Subhas Bose here to-day, we are fortunate in having his elder brother Sarat Bose as our President for to-day's function. Sarat Babu has also a long record of suffering in the country's cause. As a matter of fact when we met for the first time in Lucknow in 1936 both the Bose brothers were State prisoners. He had no doubt that under the leadership of a political sufferer like Sarat Babu the Conference will be able to chalk out definite lines of action for securing the release of political prisoners and also for redressing their grievances.

#### Resolutions

The Conference passed the following resolutions:—

1. This Conference sends its greeting to Comrade Subhas Chandra Bose on his release and prays for his speedy recovery and restoration to normal health.

2. This Conference reiterates the demand for immediate release of all political prisoners and detenus throughout the country. While expressing satisfaction at the great interest and sympathy which all sections of people have evinced in this question during the last year, and in view of the fact that most of the candidates elected to provincial legislatures are pledged to release of political prisoners and detenus, this Conference trusts that no efforts will be spared to give effect to the popular demand at an early date.

3. This Conference has learnt with extreme concern and sympathy the great hardship and suffering which a large number of our countrymen and women are undergoing because of the exterment and internment orders and other restrictions passed by the alien bureaucracy and urges upon the newly elected members of legislatures to see that they are forthwith withdrawn.

(4) This Conference urges upon members of legislatures to repeal all repressive laws.

(5) This Conference expresses its sorrow and indignation at the suicide of Nahajiban Ghosh, Santosh Chandra Ganguly and Krishna Pantaj Goswami, detenus under mysterious and tragic circumstances and refusal of the Government of Bengal and the Government of India to hold a public inquiry as demanded by people headed by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. This Conference offers its heartfelt sympathy to the families of the deceased.

(6) This Conference reaffirms the resolution passed at the last Conference regarding treatment of political prisoners embodying the demands of Jyeshth Chandra Chatterjee and calls upon the elected members of the provincial legislatures to take necessary steps to give effect of the same.

(7) (a) Resolved that a committee should be formed in all provinces to keep

themselves in touch with the affairs of the political prisoners and in particular to collect and disseminate information about their conditions to give such relief as may be possible to them by way of supplying them with necessary amenities such as books etc. by enabling them to supplement jail supplies on special occasions such as festivals and to take such other steps as may be possible for pressing demands of this conference and securing relief from Government through legislatures and by agitation outside.

(b) Resolved further that groups of legislators should be formed in each province to make special study of the repressive laws, prison laws and rules and of the condition of the political prisoners, detenus and internees and take steps to have repressive laws repealed and prison laws and rules amended and secure amelioration in the conditions of the prisoners and their release at the earliest opportunity; and

(c) That a committee be formed with the following persons, namely, Bala Rajendra Prasad, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Mrs. Vijay Luxmi Paudit, Mr. K. F. Nariman, Mr. Sambamurthi, Dr. Khare, Mr. R. K. Khetri and Mr. Mohanlal Saxena (Convener) with powers to co-opt for carrying propaganda and co-ordinating activities of different provincial committees with a view to secure relief to political prisoners.

## The Punjab Leaders' Conference

Firm determination to stamp out communalism from the Punjab was evinced at a meeting of leaders of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities convened and presided over by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab at Lahore on the 26th. June 1937.

Those present included Sardar Uttam Singh, Sardar Kartar Singh, Mr. Manoharlal, Mr. Amar Singh, Mr. Sobhan Singh, Malik Barkat Ali, Dr. Mohd. Alam, Mian Abdul Haye, Mr. Mushtaq Gurmani, Begam Shah Nawaz, Mr. Ghulam Mohiuddin, Nawabzada Khurshid Ali Khan, Dr. Kitoblow, Raja Narandanath, Bhai Parmanand, Diwan Chamanlal, Mr. Mazhar Ali Azhar, Mr. Harchandran Singh, Mr. Tara Singh, Sardar Mangal Singh, Nawab Muzaffar Khan, Sardar Sampuran Singh, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, and Mir Maqbul Mahmud.

Messages were read from Mr. Goswami Ganesh Dutt, Sir Jogendra Singh, Mr. M. Murtaza Ahmad, Dr. Satyapal and Sir Gokul Chand Narang.

The Premier, in opening the Conference, stated, "I have invited you not as a leader of any political party, but as a citizen of the Punjab, who, with other patriotic Punjabis, cannot but feel the poignancy and disgrace of such unfortunate happenings in the Province. My similar appeal to you in the past evoked encouraging and generous response from you and other leaders in the Punjab. I am grateful to you for it and I appeal once again to you all, through you, to the people of my province, to get your shoulders together to set up a healthy atmosphere in the province so that Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and others may contribute their best to bring about that national solidarity which is our common ideal. My reason for convening this informal conference is to discuss the recent unfortunate communal incidents in the province and to seek the advice and co-operation of leaders of all important communities and parties to avert a repetition of such incidents in future.

"Gentlemen, in politics it is but natural that there may be honest difference of opinion in programme, but I think that on one point all patriotic Punjabis would, or at any rate, should be agreed, i. e., that such communal incidents stand to our national shame, that they do nobody any good and that effective joint effort should be made forthwith to avert them in future. The problem of encouraging goodwill and of combating mischief is not merely a Government problem. It is a common national problem which can only be settled by your and our joint genuine efforts. I wish to assure you that you may depend on the fullest support from the Government for any constructive and practicable proposal which may be evolved by this Conference or may come from any other quarter."

Continuing, the Premier, said, "I earnestly invite your co-operation so that we may jointly and in most emphatic terms give a lead to the province, consecrated by our own example, that petty, short-sighted and cheap notoriety aimed by communal mischief-mongers at the sacrifice of the larger and lasting interests of the province and the country may be publicly and privately condemned. In this connection, representatives of the press whom I welcome here and those outside this conference can all do real and patriotic service to the province. On behalf of the Government I am determined, with the full concurrence of my colleagues of the Cabinet, to make officials and non-officials to appreciate that any person, high or low, who stirs up communal mischief or communal offences is an enemy of the Punjab and, therefore, an enemy of the Government of the Punjab constituted by the will of the people. We will treat such persons as such. On the other hand, all those officials and non-officials who use their influence within their spheres for the encouragement of communal harmony and goodwill are true friends of the province, who are entitled to the respect and admiration of all patriotic Punjabis.

"I will be failing in my duty if I were not to express my sympathy once again and in no conventional sense but from my heart with the innocent victims during these incidents and with the members of the bereaved families. I would also declare once again my appreciation of the excellent work done by certain members of the services during these incidents. In particular, I am happy to inform you that Muslim police officers have valiantly defended their Sikh brethren at Ala against attacks of their co-religionists. In the same spirit, I must commend the great restraint showed by Muslims in Amritsar and the successful public-spirited efforts of leaders of all communities to restore order and peace."

Thereafter, general discussion of the communal situation followed in the course of which the Premier was congratulated on convening the conference, which was welcomed as a happy indication of the fact that the Government of the Punjab had now passed into the hands of Punjabis who genuinely desired communal harmony. The need of effective steps to solve this problem was also emphasised. The following resolutions were then unanimously passed:

"Resolved that this conference records its sense of strong condemnation of the unfortunate recent communal incidents in the province and while genuinely sympathising with the innocent victims and the bereaved families who have suffered in these disturbances, appeal to the people, the press and the administration of the province to avert such deplorable incidents in future and to discourage anything which is likely to disturb communal harmony and goodwill in the province.

"This conference heartily responds to the appeal of the Premier of the Punjab for united action to restore and encourage communal harmony in the province and welcomes the proposal to set up representative provincial boards and divisional and local boards where necessary to invoke their good offices to avert the possibilities of communal friction."

The conference thereafter adjourned.

#### Second Day—Lahore—27th June 1937

To-day the Committee met under the chairmanship of Sir Sandersingh Majithia, Revenue Minister. The Premier, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, was also present.

After nearly three hours' discussion the Committee passed the following resolutions:—

"Resolved that this Conference hereby constitutes itself into a Committee, with power to co-opt or appoint a sub-committee at the discretion of the Premier, in order to explore all avenues for promoting cordial and harmonious relationship between the various communities and enquire into and examine the causes for communal friction and after such enquiry and examination to make every endeavour to arrive at definite findings with regard to such matters whereon the committee can reach an agreed settlement."

During the discussions the members suggested numerous lines on which Government could help their cause. They urged that certain district officials should be held responsible for communal trouble within their area, that such officials should watch the situation and not allow it to develop to the stage of communal rioting.

The Premier is understood to have stated that the Government policy was that any official who, by neglect or deliberate Act, promoted communal bitterness would have not only a black mark against his record but would be dealt with severely. It was also urged by the members that those who were part time officials or elected

members of public bodies should also be penalised if they abetted or promoted communal differences.

Among other measures suggested for Government officials were that responsible one Hindu and one Muslim Minister should always tour together and receive representations jointly and refuse parties from communal organisations.

As regards the terms of reference of the Committee it was agreed that the Committee should have full power to try to come to a settlement on all matters, including those which were All-India, such as the Communal Award. It was agreed that the Premier should appoint a sub-committee out of the members of the Committee and entrust them with certain subjects for finding solutions. The findings of such sub-committees, which are to meet immediately, would come before the whole Committee some time this summer at Lahore and such of the findings as had the general support of the members and people would be sent to the Government for enforcement.

Dr. Gopichand, President of the Provincial Congress Committee, is reported to have offered whole-hearted support for all reasonable necessary measures taken by the Government on the recommendation of the Committee.

At the conclusion of the deliberations Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan was warmly congratulated and thanked for summoning the leaders and being instrumental in forming the Committee, about the result of whose work everyone was optimistic.

## The Punjab Ahrar Conference

### Moslems urged to join Congress

A suggestion that Muslim should join the Congress in large numbers but at the same time retain separate religious or cultural groups for the transitional period, was made by *Mir Abdul Qayyum*, pleader of Lyallpur, in the course of his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Punjab Ahrar Conference held at Multan on the 21st. May 1937, *Sheikh Hissam-ud-Din* of Amritsar, presiding.

At the outset *Mir Abdul Qayyum* discussed the position of Muslims vis-a-vis the Congress. He explained that it was wrong to say that there were no Muslims in the Congress. The presence of thousands of brave Red-Shirts on the Frontier and such learned and respectable Muslims as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Hussain Ahmad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Frontier Gandhi), said *Mr. Abdul Qayyum*, belied the charge.

Continuing, *Mir Abdul Qayyum* said Muslims all over India had expressed their strong desire for the freedom of the country and there was not a single Muslim of any substance who dared to oppose the cause of freedom. Even the loyalist Muslims were so affected by public opinion as to express themselves in favour of self-government and independence. There was not a single Muslim political organisation in India which did not contain the achievement of freedom for India as one of its objects. But it was admitted that Muslims had not shown much enthusiasm for the Congress. There might be two reasons for it. Firstly, that Muslims were not capable of sacrifice for the cause of the country, which was contradicted by the experience of the Non-co-operation and Khilafat movements. The second reason might be that they were afraid of losing their separate identity in the Congress. This was the main reason given by *Mr. Jinnah* and his followers.

Referring to *Jawaharlal-Jinnah* controversy, *Mir Abdul Qayyum* pointed out that there was fundamental difference of outlooks between the two leaders. *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* looked at the Indian struggle as a part of the world struggle against Imperialism and Capitalism while *Mr. Jinnah's* outlook was definitely parochial and limited to conditions in India. Moreover, *Mr. Jinnah*, like other out-of-date politicians was making a fetish of constitutionalism and abhorred direct action. How could he with these political principles expect to unite all Muslims under his wings? asked *Mir Abdul Qayyum*.

Speaking of the Muslim League, *Mr. Abdul Qayyum* said that the League from its very inception had been a coterie of few knights, *Khan Bahadurs* and *Nawabs*.

It never was nor is an organisation of the masses, added Mir Abdul Qayyum. During the last thirty one years of its existence it had not led a single popular movement among the Muslims nor had it educated the Muslim masses in any political or social matter. With the advent of the new Act, political power along with political importance had passed from the hands of these self-imposed leaders, who were egged on and supported by the Government to those of the leaders chosen by the people. The same was the case with public organisations. Muslim League, with its present restricted membership and undemocratic constitution, could not be expected to attract the attention of the masses. Until and unless it was purged of its defects it would soon cease to be of any influence in the country. Mir Abdul Qayyum suggested that Mr. Jinnah should bring about the desired changes in the League and then appeal to Muslims to join him.

The speaker was of the opinion that the time was not ripe for abolishing communal organisations altogether. The Congress need not fight with them. So long as these organisations supported the popular party against British Imperialism, was a good. What was necessary was to watch and restrict their centrifugal tendencies. Let there be a common platform for the objects which were common between all the communities.

Speaking of the Punjab, Mir Abdul Qayyum said that the Unionist Party was a ramshackle and if progressive elements of all communities joined together, it would not be difficult to send it to the wilderness. Punjab politics was a disgrace to Indian nationalism. Internal differences among the advanced sections must be made up and a united front created. Then alone could it be possible to do some real good to the masses irrespective of their caste and creed.

In conclusion the speaker emphasised that the Ahrar Party was the only organisation which fulfilled all requirements of the Muslims to-day.

## The South Indian Christian Conference

A Conference of the South Indian Christian Federation was held at the Memorial Hall, Madras, on the 12th. April 1937, under the presidency of Mr. B. K. Derraj.

### Welcome Address

Dewan Bahadur S. E. Rangaswathan welcomed the President and the delegates. It was very gratifying indeed to find, he said, that several of the Indian Christian Associations in the mufussil had evinced keen interest in the Conference, and had found it possible to send representatives in larger numbers than last year to take part in the deliberations. At the last Conference, it was resolved that they should have a permanent organisation known as the Indian Christian Federation of South India. Their main purpose in having such an organisation was to organise the members of their community, who were scattered in various parts of this Presidency and in adjoining Indian States, through local Associations at various centres linked to the Federation. Their second purpose was to educate the members of their community on matter of social and public importance, so that they might be able to take an intelligent interest in all that concerned the welfare of their community. It was also their object, through these organisations, to enable the members of the community to take an active part in promoting the well-being and progress of the country as a whole.

"As a minority community," Mr. Rangaswathan said, "we have in the present state of country our own special interests to safeguard and we have also our own peculiar problems which to a large extent we alone can solve. Therefore, for this purpose, it is highly essential that we should take concerted action in regard to matters affecting the whole community. But at the same time, it is no longer possible for us to be communally isolated as to a very large extent we were in the past. In view of the rapidly changing conditions in our country, it is highly essential for us to study and understand the wider problems which face our country and co-operate with our fellow-countrymen in the activities which are calculated to advance the moral, social and economic condition of our country."



"As a Christian community we are," he proceeded said, "particularly interested in the social and moral progress of the great mass of our fellow-countrymen and in their economic betterment. It seems to me most unfortunate that the leaders of the majority party elected to the new legislatures have not seen their way to accepting responsibility for carrying out the programme of constructive work for the benefit of the country, but are largely concerning themselves with what strikes me as purely constitutional issues of comparative unimportance. I venture to believe that there is scope within the new Government of India Act for initiating reforms of the highest importance to the country and for devising measures which will build up the strength of the nation in the social, moral and economic spheres."

The Chairman went on to say: "I have great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, welcoming Mr. Devaraj of Nandyal and also you all to this Conference. It was a kind of Mr. Devaraj to have agreed to preside at comparative short notice. He is a keen and active worker in various cause, both within the church and outside, and I am confident that he will conduct the deliberations with tact and judgment. In addition to the consideration of the several resolutions which will be placed before you in the course of this Conference, you will be called upon to decide on the constitution of the Federation so as to make it a stable and representative organisation voicing the views of the community on all important occasions. The work done by us during the past year, as you will find from the report, in the way of forming Associations at various suitable centres, has been distinctly encouraging. Nearly a dozen or more Associations have been formed and a few old Associations which were inactive have been revived and if their purpose to a large extent coincides with the object of the Federation, it is necessary that they should be linked up and should become an integral part of the Federation. The strength and usefulness of the Federation will depend to a large extent upon the number of federating units and on their vigorous life and activity. I hope that as a result of this Conference, the interest of the members of our community in all that affects it and the country at large will be fully awakened and that the Federation will be launched as a fully constituted organisation, on a career of useful service both to this community and others. I have great pleasure in inviting Mr. Devaraj to occupy the Chair."

Miss A. Iswariah seconded the proposition and Mr. Devaraj was installed in the chair.

The President then delivered his address.

#### The Presidential Address

Mr. Devaraj, in the course of his address, said that though their community had not been very active in the past politically, yet it was gratifying to note that at present there was a great desire in the community to take its full part in the political life of the country. There had been local Associations of Christians scattered all over the Presidency, but until last year there had been no effort made to bring together leaders of the community to organise the various sections into one political group. Therefore, those leaders who started the Indian Christian Federation for South India last year deserved the gratitude of the community. From the report of last year's conference he learnt that their brethren in the Roman Catholic Church were outside the Federation. Since unity and organisation were essential, they should strive hard to get their Roman Catholic brethren into the Federation.

Steps would have to be taken to organise under the Federation local Associations all over the province. Through them the community would have to be educated so that they would be able to take an intelligent part in the national life of the country. They should have to try and start an Association in every village or group of villages where there was a Christian congregation. The existing Church organisation could certainly help in this work. In spite of their sectarian differences, it would be possible to unite to concert measures for the political and economic advancement of the community. Incidentally, by working together they would better understand one another and, would pave the way for the union of Churches for which ceaseless efforts had been made for the past fifteen or sixteen years.

The President next exhorted the leaders of the community to deal effectively with social evils like dowry, caste, drink, gambling and corruption for the removal of those evils, was of the utmost importance to the community.

The President went on to say:—

The illiteracy of the masses is a great problem in our country needing very urgent solution. Though we can take pride in the fact that our community stands

high in point of literacy we have to note that daily additions to church membership in the mass movement areas are bound to bring down our percentage of literacy considerably. We not only have to rejoice over such increase in church membership, but also devise means of making the new converts literate at least to the extent of reading the Bible. It is pathetic to note that in spite of the efforts made by the Government and private bodies to spread literacy, our country has made little progress in this direction. In our own presidency, it is feared that as a result of the recent Government order on Elementary Education numerous village schools may have to be closed, thus depriving thousands of children of the privilege of education. According to that Government Order, it is quite possible that a considerable number of schools under Christian management will have to be shut down. In this connection it has to be pointed out that where Christian elementary schools are closed, we shall have to make sure that our children are readily admitted into schools which are under District Board management.

We must also aim at the education of adults. It may be necessary to start summer schools where not only the three R's but also subjects like Improved Methods of Agriculture, Co-operation, Literature, Sociology, Politics, Natural Science, etc., can be taught. We learn that such folk schools in Denmark are "popular and well attended. They have contributed to the economic development and national solidarity of the Danes." Here again the Government may have to take the initiative. But the Christian community can, without waiting for the Government to make the first move, start and run such schools in connection with the educational institutions under their management during the summer months. That would be a piece of splendid service that some of us can render to the community.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

Of the economic problems that confront the country at present, none is so important as the poverty of the masses and closely allied to this problem of poverty is that of unemployment, both of the uneducated as well as of the educated.

In a great number of villages for at least six months the villagers are without work. With the introduction of modern machinery hundreds of thousands of people have gradually been thrown out of employment. The number of the unemployed is daily on the increase. To add to this, our schools and colleges are every year turning out young men anxious to get decent jobs but reluctant to engage in manual labour. These increase the number of the unemployed in the country. We are glad to learn that the Local Government are collecting statistics of the educated unemployed with a view to finding work for them. The reluctance for manual work in educated young men, we have to admit, is not altogether their fault. Our system of education is mostly literary, and tends to wean pupils from physical labour. There is no wonder then, if after their school and college career the students are unfit for and disinclined to take to manual work. So the present system of education has to be revised in such a way that dignity of labour can be taught in our schools and students are so trained that they can be readily absorbed into society to fill places in different avocations. Let us hope that the new Government will recognise the present educational system with the above ends in view.

Some suggest the revival of cottage industries and the inception of technical and industrial enterprises as a means of finding work for the unemployed and of offering relief to the poor. Though these may help they cannot banish poverty from our land. Society is so constituted and recognises such institutions that the rich are growing richer while the poor are becoming poorer. Until measures are adopted to stop this process and reduce the great inequalities in the distribution of wealth, in my humble opinion poverty cannot be removed. The State of course will have to do this. It may also have to take over such huge industrial concerns like irrigation Projects, Railways and Electrical Schemes and manage them. Relief has to be offered to the ryot who is at present unable to earn a living on his land. Young men in our own community will have to cultivate a spirit of initiative and enterprise to carry on business concerns all over the Province. When men of character and ability come forward to start business on sound lines our community will have to come to their aid by giving loans through co-operative banks or other sources to help them to run such concerns successfully.

#### THE RECENT ELECTIONS

The elections to the local legislature have come and gone. The electorate has

returned to power one party in such a large majority; the strength of the other parties has dwindled to such an extent that they cannot offer effective opposition to the party in power. But it is a matter for deep regret that the majority party could not accept office and work the Constitution. Let us hope that the situation will be reconsidered and that the Congress will accept office and work the constitution to get the best out of it for the electorate which has returned them to power.

What should be the attitude of our community to the Reforms ushered in this month? No one will doubt that we, as a community, stand for law and order in the country. At the same time, we have to make it quite clear that we are as anxious as most patriotic of our countrymen that this great land of India should march forward towards freedom and full self-government at an early date. Much as we would like to join the Congress to achieve this end, we find the door of that body shut against us by its present policy of "Wrecking the Reforms". So, we are compelled to remain outside that body. Yet, because we love our country, we are bound to extend our hearty co-operation to them in all the nation-building schemes that they may put forward in fields like Agriculture, Industries, health and sanitation and education. In the present situation, this seems to me to be not only the best but also the right policy.

We have to instruct our representatives on the legislature to take steps to have us merged into the General Electorate. This is highly important. But if this is not possible they would try to have Communal Award modified in such a manner that Joint Electorate will be established with reservation of seats for our community. So long as this is not done, it will not only act as a barrier to some of our Hindu brethren joining our fold, but will also tend to keep us weak and isolated.

We hear nowadays much said about rural reconstruction and village uplift. There is no doubt that our villages need to be lifted up from the low level at which they are in their economic, educational and sanitary conditions. But who is to do this work? Who is to inspire self-confidence into the villages, to guide him to help himself and to make him use such resources as he can command for the betterment of his village by co-operation with his neighbour? Here I wish to offer a suggestion to the Federation. Under its auspices this Federation may organise a Society called the Society of Christian Servants of South India whose object it will be to gather together suitable Christian young men and train them in the different phases of rural service and through them to carry on the work of rural uplift among all classes of people. They will be social workers giving witness to their faith by their lives. Our faith and the present state of the country demand the whole-hearted offer of such services to our fellowmen by our community. Let us by such selfless service make ourselves indispensable to our country.

We are living in stirring times. The nations of Europe are busy arming themselves for a world war the like of which perhaps was never known in the past. The world is thirsting for peace which seems to be going farther off than ever. In our own country we need peace. The sharp divisions between the Hindus, the Mussalmans and the Sikhs have to be healed. It behoves our community to bring about peace and unity among different communities of our country so that all of us may live in this land as members of one family. Let us seize this opportunity to make ourselves peace-makers and humble servants of the nation. Then shall men know that we are treading in the footsteps of One who came to minister and not to be ministered unto. One who has commanded us to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

### Proceedings and Resolutions

#### DEMOCRATIC STATE AS THE GOAL

After the President had concluded his address, resolutions were taken up for discussion.

Mr. M. John (Guntur) moved the following resolution:

"(a) As the goal of all sections of Indians is a genuine democratic State with political power in the hands of the people, this Conference believes that work within the Legislatures and outside them should be directed towards the education of our people in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship and the securing of adult suffrage.

"(b) In order that the Indian Christian community might share in this national task, the Conference directs the Working Committee to arrange that the subjects of

the rights and duties of citizenship be dealt with in all periodical gatherings, conferences and assemblies of Indian Christians."

Mr. *John* said that the resolution embodied the political creed of the Conference and of the Indian Christian community. Last year, the Conference stated that Dominion Status was its goal. But the British Government had fought shy of the term. But the government could not get out of the preamble to the Reforms of 1919 and the declaration made by the then Secretary of State for India. Those two pronouncements left the question what should be the goal for India in no doubt. True democracy required as an essential condition the introduction of adult franchise. Adult franchise was bound to be granted ultimately; whether the object was to be attained at once or by stages was a question which the Conference should consider. Extension of the franchise had been envisaged, and the speaker hoped that speedy steps would be taken to reach the end in view. The speaker also stressed the necessity of educating the people on the duties and responsibilities of citizenship through the medium of the Press.

Mr. *George S. Isaac* (Vellore), seconding the resolution said that the ideas 'India for Indians' and 'Indians are the best judges of what they want' had come to stay. These were the ideas behind the resolution. He said that it was unfortunate that the Congress Party which had been returned in such large numbers, had not accepted office, and hoped that some means would be found to arrive at a compromise.

Mr. *E. Abraham* (Tanjore) said that besides trying to extend the franchise, they should also take steps to see that the names of all persons eligible to vote were included in the electoral roll and that all of them exercised their franchise.

#### SUGGESTION FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Mr. *V. Chakkarai Chetti* moved the following amendment to the resolution: "In order to give effect to the idea of establishing genuine democracy, a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise, should be convoked as early as possible to frame a constitution agreeable to the wishes of the people of India."

He said that the present constitution was an outrage. It had been forced upon the people by a foreign Government. In order, therefore, to establish genuine democracy in the provinces to satisfy the aspirations of the people, a Constituent Assembly should be convened based on adult suffrage for the purpose of drafting a constitution in accordance with the wishes of the people. Some were saying that a Constituent Assembly was an idle dream. In the field of politics, dreams and ideals came to pass very soon. What was an ideal to-day would be an accomplished fact some time hence if they genuinely worked to achieve the ideal. The Indian people were not going to accept the new constitution, which was intended, to a large extent, to promote foreign interests. They would accept only a constitution framed by the people in their own interests.

The President stated that the amendment was not in order, and therefore he was ruling it out. If necessary a substantive and separate resolution could be moved on the subject under discussion.

Mr. *Chakkarai Chetti* contended that his proposition was before the Working Committee of the Conference, and he did not know how the present resolution came to be substituted in its place.

The *Secretary* (Mr. A. K. Sarma), said that at the final meeting of the Committee, the resolution was approved in the form placed before the Conference. He did not know whether Mr. *Chakkarai Chetti* was present then.

Mr. *Chetti Chakkarai* stated that since it was the Working Committee that drafted all resolutions, he would not be able to move his amendment as a substantive resolution.

The President said that the amendment could be referred to the delegates' committee and their opinion placed before the Conference later on.

The first resolution was then put and declared carried.

*Dr. R. Pichai* of Coimbatore then moved the following resolution:—

"The Conference deeply deploras the deadlock which has arisen in connection with the inauguration of the new Constitution, and appeals both to the Government and the majority party to explore all avenues towards arriving at a compromise with a view to the speedy establishment of a permanent Ministry."

He said that if the new Constitution were to benefit the people, the majority party should accept office. However defective the new Constitution might be, still

it could be worked for the benefit of the people. The present Ministry was of no use for that purpose. It was not a properly constituted Ministry, nor was it a stable one. Unless there was a stable Ministry, nothing could be done for promoting the welfare of the people under the Act.

Mr. B. Samidass (Vellore), in seconding the resolution, said that it was a pity that an interim Ministry had been formed. This had created great discontent in the country, and this discontent had been intensified by Lord Zetland's statement. The only solution in the speaker's view, now open, was to adopt the suggestion made by Mahatma Gandhi to have a Tribunal to consider the legal and constitutional aspect of the matter.

Mr. V. Chakkarai Chettiar moved an amendment for adding to the resolution the following words:—

"This Conference strongly condemns the formation of the Interim Ministry and feels that under the present circumstances the Ministers should have refused to take up office."

Mr. Chakkarai Chettiar said that the formation of the Interim Ministry was improper. The historic background of the Congress demand should be taken into consideration. They could not expect the Congress to declare that it would work the Constitution. A compromise was possible, but only if British politicians acted in a truly statesmanlike way. The interim Ministry was an absolute farce and should be condemned. They had betrayed the interests of the country.

Mr. M. Santosham seconded the amendment. He said that the nation was solidly against the formation of the interim Ministry.

The Conference adjourned for lunch at this stage.

When the Conference resumed its session after luncheon interval, discussion on the amendment of Mr. Chakkarai Chettiar was continued.

Dr. Devasikamani requested the president to give a ruling whether the amendment was in order or not. He felt the amendment was not in order.

The President pointed out that when the amendment was given notice of, he felt that it was not in order. Yet he allowed it to be moved. In his opinion, it would be enough if they discussed the amendment in all its aspects and it be finally withdrawn. He suggested this course because opinion in the country was divided on the Interim Ministry.

A delegate pointed out that it was too late to rule out the amendment, since it had been duly proposed and seconded. The House should decide on the amendment one way or the other.

This view was supported by two other delegates.

Dr. Devasikamani pressed the president to give a ruling on the point of order he had raised.

The President said that he would allow the amendment to be discussed.

At this stage, the mover of the resolution stood up and stated that he accepted the amendment.

Mr. Thangamuthi said that they who had assembled there to deplore the deadlock which had arisen with regard to the inauguration of the Constitution had, he was sorry to state, themselves got involved in a deadlock over the resolution. He appealed to the President to deal with the amendment first.

After some further discussion, the House agreed to discuss the amendment.

Mr. Andrews opposed the amendment, stating that it was not a wise policy to condemn the Interim Ministry which had been formed at a critical stage to carry on the administration of the provinces.

Mr. M. John, opposing the amendment, said that the main object of the Conference was to organise the community—and not allow individuals to express their views on political affairs. He personally believed that the community as a whole would not desire to identify itself with any one political party. That was the reason why persons standing for election in many Christian constituencies stood as independents.

Mr. Abraham (Tanjore) said that the community stood for peace and as the resolution clearly indicated their regret at the fact that there was an impasse, they need not pass any other resolution.

Dr. Dawson said that the Interim Ministry was legally constituted. It was open to the Governor when the majority party refused to take up office, to call any person to carry on the administration. It might be that the interim ministers themselves would carry out the wishes of the electorate having understood the policy of the Congress and the people's mind. It would be wrong to condemn them prematurely.

Mr. J. A. Subramaniam said that the constitution of the Interim Ministry was illegal, and as long as the present Ministry continued in office, Congressmen would find it difficult to come forward with any compromise proposal. The interim ministers are undertaking to carry on the King's Government had betrayed the interests of the country.

Mr. George S. Isaac said that the resolution placed before the House was a non-committal one, and they should keep an open mind on the matter. He appealed to the mover of the amendment to withdraw it as the resolution itself was clear on the point.

Mr. Richard Devanikamasi said that the opinion on the subject was sharply divided. He opposed the amendment.

Dr. Devanikamasi said that if a complete breakdown of the constitution were to be averted, a Ministry should have to be formed. Under the present circumstances, there was no other go for the Governor but to form an interim Ministry. They ought not to condemn the Governor's action light heartedly.

At this stage a motion for closure of the debate was moved, and carried.

The amendment was put and declared lost 20 voting for and 27 against.

Mr. A. K. Sarma moved the following amendment:—"It is further suggested that an attempt towards a compromise may be begun by the Governor and the leader of the Majority party examining the legislative programme of the majority party."

Mr. Sarma, in moving the amendment, said that this was the only way to end the present impasse. There was ample scope for exploring all avenues towards arriving at a compromise. He was making a constructive suggestion to end the deadlock.

Mr. V. Chakkari opposed the amendment. He said that the deadlock could be ended only by agreeing to the proposal of Gandhiji to appoint a Tribunal.

Dr. Devanikamasi opposed the amendment stating that the suggestion was not a practical one. The deadlock could not be ended by such methods. Time was a great healer, and he was of the view that some time must elapse before attempts at a compromise would prove successful. Time must be allowed—

"In the meanwhile" Mr. Chakkari observed "the patient may die". (Laughter.)

"The patient would not die", the mover retorted.

At this stage, Mr. Sarma withdrew his amendment with the consent of the House. The original resolution was then put and carried.

#### COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION CONDENSED

Mr. Oliver of Salem moved next the following resolution:

"The Conference notes that opinion in the Indian Christian community is rapidly growing against the system of separate electorates for the Community. This Conference therefore reiterates the following resolution passed by the first Conference in April 1936:—

"This Conference is of the opinion that communal representation is not desirable in the best interests either of Indian Christians or of the country at large, and calls upon the leaders of the Community to take steps to get the Communal Award modified in the direction of Joint Electorates with reservation of seats as a step towards the complete abolition of the system of Communal Representation itself.

"It feels that a twofold injustice is involved in the provision of communal representation for Indian Christians in the Government of India Act, inasmuch as it has in addition to depriving the Community of chances of general co-operation, reduced its strength and influence by giving it an inadequate representation and by the present scheme of the delimitation of Indian Christian constituencies."

This was a proposition, he said, which was discussed at the last conference. The Award must be modified in the interests of the progress of their community. Feeling was growing among the members of their community that separate electoral should be done away with.

Mr. Athanasius seconded the proposition.

Dr. Devanikamasi said that the members of the Roman Catholic Church were opposed to the system of joint electorate with reservation of seats if proper weightage was given to their community, as had been given to Muslims, many of the difficulties would be overcome.

The resolution was then passed.

#### TOTAL PROHIBITION AS GOAL

The Conference next adopted a resolution urging the Government to adopt Total

Prohibition as the goal of its excise policy and to frame a programme to realise goal in twenty years. It also urged the Indian Christian legislators to work for his end. The Conference then adjourned to meet again the next day.

### Second Day—Madras—13th. April 1937

#### ERADICATION OF SOCIAL EVILS

When the Conference resumed its session to-day, Rev. P. *Asirvadam*, Madura, moved the following resolution: "The Conference deploras the existence of various social evils in the Indian Christian Community, and calls upon all Christians to make determined and concerted efforts towards eradicating them."

He dwelt at length on the caste distinctions prevailing in the community, and pointed out that the same should be eradicated. The dowry system should also be abolished. On account of this evil, many families were being ruined. Drink and gambling should also be checked. He appealed to his co-religionists to devise ways and means to put an end to those evils.

Mr. A. T. *Andrews* seconded the resolution.

Mr. C. S. *John* moved an amendment to the effect that the churches and the Government also be requested to concert measures to eradicate these evils.

Rev. S. *Ponnurangam* seconded the amendment.

Mr. V. *Chakkarai Chetti* pointed out that the amendment was vague and unless it was more specific Government help would not be available.

Mr. J. S. *Vedamanickam* opposed the resolution and the amendment. He said that the evils referred to were not confined to the Indian Christian community alone.

Mr. *Abraham* (Tanjore) said that the dowry system could be abolished if the youths of the community took up a bold stand not to accept dowries.

Mr. O. F. E. *Zacharias* opposed the resolution. No useful purpose would be served, he said, by merely passing it.

The amendment and the resolution were both lost.

#### BUSINESS CAREER FOR YOUTH

Mr. R. *Devasihamma* moved the following resolution: [This Conference is of opinion that the diversion of the youth of the community into business careers is of extreme urgency and importance in order to secure a stable economic foundation for the community. The Conference is of opinion that the diversion of the youth of the community into business careers is of extreme urgency and importance in order to secure a stable economic foundation for the community. The Conference notes that several Indian Christian businessmen have successfully explored new fields. In order to study their experiments and formulate helpful advice to the youths of the day, the Conference directs the Indian Christian Federation to convene a conference of Indian Christian businessmen at an early date and take such further action as may be deemed feasible before the next conference.]

He said many youths were finding it difficult to get employment in Government service, nor was there much scope for entering into the learned professions. The professions were becoming overcrowded. The only way to find out work for the vast majority of educated youths, was to divert them into business careers.

Mr. *Samidoss* seconded the resolution.

Mr. *Vedamanickam* opposed the resolution. He stated that unless there was adequate opening for young men, there was no use in passing such a resolution. This was a political conference and he did not see any reason for bringing on such a resolution before the House.

Mr. *Zacharias* supported the resolution. He said that the craze among youths for Government service had ruined the country. There was enough scope for industrial and agricultural enterprise in the country.

Mr. *Isaac* said that a committee of businessmen might be constituted to formulate proposals and submit the same at the next conference.

The resolution was passed.

#### TEN YEAR PLAN FOR RURAL UPLIFT

Mr. J. S. *Panniah*, Mannargudi, moved the following resolution:—

"While the Conference acknowledges the good work already done both by the Government and agencies, like the Christian Church, the Y. M. O. A. also non-Christian agencies, towards the improvement of rural conditions, it urges the Government to make the subject of rural uplift one of its main concerns and devise a ten year plan for an effective improvement of agricultural life".

Mr. M. J. Samuel, Kurnool, seconded the resolution. He said that the District Economic Councils started by the Government had not achieved any substantial success in relieving rural indebtedness. A planned system of rural uplift was necessary if effective improvement of agricultural life was to be brought about.

Mr. A. K. Sarma, with the permission of the House, moved that the following also be added to the resolution.

"Resolved that inasmuch as a change of faith does not liberate converts from economic disabilities, any scheme of economic relief drawn up by the Government, must be purely on an economic basis without reference to religion."

The mover accepted this addition to the resolution.

Mr. Sarma said that there should be a change in the system of land tenure, if rural uplift was to be effective. A tax on agricultural income should be levied. Unless this was done, no economic relief was possible.

Mr. V. Chakkarai Chetti said that no economic relief was feasible, unless real socialism was introduced in the country.

A delegate moved an amendment to the effect that a conference of Indian Christians interested in rural uplift be convened by the Federation to study ways and means for giving relief to the rural population and the same be placed before the next Conference.

The mover accepted this suggestion and the resolution as amended was then passed.

#### ADULT EDUCATION

The Conference next passed a resolution urging the Government to prepare a scheme of adult education and to make it obligatory on local boards to work the scheme in their respective areas, the cost being met partly by a grant from general revenues and partly by a special cess levied for the purpose.

#### CHRISTIANS AND COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION

Dr. Devasikhamani moved: "This Conference demands that as long as the communal rule in respect of the services lasts, Indian Christians should be placed in a category by themselves and not be bracketed with Anglo-Indians, Europeans and those of non-Asiatic domicile."

He said that according to the present rule only one appointment was reserved out of every twelve posts vacant and even in respect of the one place they were clubbed with Anglo-Indians.

Mr. E. David seconded the resolution which was then put to vote and carried.

#### WORK BEFORE CHRISTIAN LEGISLATORS

The Conference drew, in the next resolution, the attention of the Indian Christian legislators to the resolution passed and urged them to take action in respect of them. It also reminded the representatives that they should keep in touch with village Christians, study their conditions and endeavour to remove and study their disabilities. The Conference expected Christian legislators to educate the community regarding the work of the legislatures by all means available. It hoped that crucial matters affecting the welfare of the community would be referred to the organisations concerned for their opinion before views were expressed and action taken in the name of the community.

Dewan Bahadur S. E. Ranganathan moved and Mr. O. F. E. Zacharias seconded the following resolution, which was adopted unanimously:—

"This Conference calls upon the members of the community to form associations at suitable centres and to have them linked up with the Federation."

#### MAJORITY COMMUNITY AND THE MINORITIES

Mr. A. N. Sudarsanam moved the following resolution:

"Inasmuch as the authorities have expressed the fear that the grant of previous assurances by a Governor to a popular Ministry in respect of his discretionary powers might be construed as a breach of faith with the minorities, this Conference desires to state that in its opinion Indian Christians do expect just treatment as much from a popular Ministry as from the head of the Government. In this connection, it also reminds the leaders of the majority community to see to it that in all their activities they inspire confidence in the minorities."

Mr. Sudarsanam said that the resolution had been admitted for discussion by the Working Committee. He said that it was not intended to be one more or less of



passing a vote of confidence in the National Congress, which was the majority party at present. They were in that resolution dealing with the majority party of whatever complexion it might be. The next object of the resolution was to give in a way a reply to Lord Zetland's assumption that the giving of an assurance would involve a breach of faith with the minorities. It was a big assumption to make that the majority party would be hostile to the minorities in the country. Assuming that the majority was unfair to the minorities and the latter appealed to the Governor, what guarantee was there that the Governor would act against the wishes of the majority to protect the interests of the minorities? At present, the Indian National Congress was in a majority, and in his opinion, it was not likely that the Congress would neglect the interests of the minorities. The Congressmen's keynote was contentment in the country. Christians would be stultifying themselves if they were not friendly with the majority party. Lord Zetland had made an unwarranted assumption in using the name of Indian Christians, who were in a minority to fight his battle with the Congress. The Indian Christian community as a whole did not need any special protection.

Mr. V. Chakkari Chetti, in seconding the motion, said that the Congress would never antagonise any minority community. Its past history showed that, if only the Indian Christians were ready to contribute their share of service, the Congress would welcome them.

At this stage, Mr. S. E. Ranganathan suggested that the community leaders should be given an opportunity to study the question and that the two resolutions be circularised.

Mr. George Isaac moved an amendment to the effect that the resolution be circularised to elicit opinion and that it be brought at the next meeting of the conference after due consideration.

Mr. Sudarsanam said that sometime hence the question would become irrelevant. Mr. Zacharias said that they should be on friendly terms with the majority party, whatever it be. It would be easier and better to negotiate with a majority party than with the Government a third party.

The amendment of Mr. George Isaac was put to vote and declared lost.

The original resolution was then passed by a large majority.

#### GANDHI'S SUGGESTION FOR A TRIBUNAL

Mr. Samiass moved: "In continuation of the resolution passed yesterday, this Conference strongly recommends to the Government and the Congress that the suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi for the appointment of a Tribunal for the settlement of the present deadlock be accepted as one of the avenues to be explored towards reaching a settlement."

The resolution was adopted by a large majority.

## The Harijan Sevak Sangh Report

### Fourth Annual Report—October 1935—September 1936

The fourth annual report of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, which recounts the activities of the Sangh in the period between Oct. 1935 and September 1936, points out that "the year has been remarkable and eventful in many respects. The report briefly traces the growth of Harijan uplift in the country and proceeds:

Propaganda was carried on in every province against untouchability in order to bring about a radical change in the minds of the caste Hindus. Harijan conferences, big and small, numbering, in all, about 17, were organised in different provinces to ventilate the specific grievances of Harijans and to educate public opinion on the burning topics of the day. Religious education among Harijans formed an important item in the activities of all the branches of the Sangh. At all our hostels and Ashrams there were regular prayers. During the Kerala Temple-Entry campaign, more than 1,000 bhajan parties were organised throughout Kerala. In the State of Mysore, 40 cheap Harijan Bhujan mandirs were built and regular bhajans were organised by the workers of the Sangh. In Mysore, Punjab, Madras and other places,

our workers have introduced vedic rites at the marriage ceremonies, at times the worker himself officiating as priest. Surveys were conducted by our workers in many Harijan centres with a view to ascertain their civic and social needs. The U.P. East Harijan Board conducted a survey into the economic condition of Harijans in Sirsi town with a view to start a co-operative society among them.

The Sangh maintained a few industrial and vocational institutes in different parts of India. Last year 31 students from different parts of India were sent for training in tanning, of whom 8 were given scholarships by the Central Board. A tannery under the direction of Mahatma Gandhi was maintained at Warina with the financial support of the Sangh. The question of starting small tanneries in the provinces with the help of the trained students was attracting the attention of several provinces like Andhra, Karnataka, Mysore, Tamil Nad, Punjab and Bihar.

The Sangh was able to continue its help to students studying in the High School classes during the year under report as in the past. Besides help in the shape of additional scholarships, money to pay the school fees, to purchase books, to pay boarding and lodging expenses and examination fees, was given by the Centre and the various provincial boards. Thus in all 1,051 students were helped during the year to the extent of Rs. 30,000.

#### EDUCATION

The policy of recruiting Harijan children to common schools received greater attention during the year under report and the attempt of the workers of the Sangh in this direction were attended with encouraging success, specially in the urban areas. But the same could not be said of rural areas, though attempts were made in this sphere also. Apart from the opposition of caste Hindus in the matter, workers had to reckon with the unwillingness of the Harijans in many cases to send their children to common schools attended by the caste Hindu children. In the Natter-Harijan area in the Ramnad district, though the Natters were prepared to allow Harijan children to attend the common schools, the Harijans who depended on the Natters for their livelihood, refused to send their children to the school for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Natters and thus losing their means of livelihood. Another difficulty was the existence of untouchability among the Harijans. The Gandhi Ashram at Mandvi in Cutch was being conducted mostly for the benefit of Chamars children. When the workers admitted Bhangi children into the school of the Ashram, the Chamars got enraged and withdrew all their children from the school and the Ashram, both of which were closed temporarily.

Every effort was made by the workers of the Sangh to improve the economic condition of Harijans. Harijans were for the first time employed in the cashewnut factories of Malwan in Katangi District. In a village in Anantapur District, in Andhra, Harijans were induced by Harijan Sevaks to take to the professions of barbers and washermen and the caste Hindus were persuaded to take advantage of their services with encouraging results. Another welcome feature of this year's activities was the beginning that our workers made to bring Harijan boys under the beneficent influence of scouting.

#### FINANCE

The total expenditure of the Sangh both of the Centre and of all its branches was Rs. 4,56,177 including 26,533 on Headquarters buildings, with the exception of those few committees that have not sent in their account in time. A large part of it came from the Gandhi Purse Fund. A sum of Rs. 2,52,443 was collected as donations by the Central Board and the branches during the year. A deficit of Rs. 36,000 of the Central Board was met from the Purse Fund quota of the Central Board. At the close of the year, the balance at the Headquarters to the credit of the provinces and the centre stood at Rs. 1,67,421-3-5.

In this connection Mr. C. Rajagopalachari wrote :—

The Harijan Sevak Sangh has issued its report of work and statement of accounts for the year ending 30th September, 1936. The total amount spent during the year in all the provinces comes to nearly Rs. 4 lakhs and in the presidency of Madras to nearly Rs. 1,00,000 as shown below :—

	India Rs.	Madras Presy. Rs.
For schools	1,43,150	27,683
— hostels	78,930	32,409
Books, stationery & clothes for school children	15,977	3,787

	India	Madras Presy.
	Rs.	Rs.
Scholarships	30,000	7,348
Wells	7,003	1,928
Loans	21,451	6,044
Medical aid, soap, cloth, etc.	5,770	1,750
Total including all other items	3,63,250	1,07,856

The work is done through 27 provincial boards and 222 district committees, 166 taluka and other committees, all working under the able guidance and supervision of the energetic General Secretary, Shri A. V. Thakkar.

## The Sonya Maruthi Temple Satyagraha

After 10 days' peaceful campaign in course of which about 1,037 men belonging to all parties Congressites, Democrats, Sanatanists and Liberals defied the order under Section 144 Cr. P. Code promulgated by the District Magistrate and were arrested as the consequence thereof, the Sonya Maruthi Temple Satyagraha at Poona was called off on the 13th. May 1937 by Mr. L. B. Bhopatkar under whose leadership it had been launched.

In this connection it would be interesting to go through the history of Sonya Maruthi dispute, which had been summed up by the "Maharatta" as following :—

It is undisputed and well-known that the Sonya Maruthi Temple is at least 60 to 75 years old and the annual Hanuman Jayanti festival of two weeks' duration is being celebrated annually all these years with 'Bhajans' and 'Kirtans' in the customary way of several other Hanuman temples in Poona.

The temple is situated in the locality of gold and silver merchants and the 'Panchas' or trustees of the temple are appointed by election from these merchants. The money for expenses of the festival is annually collected by public subscription. It is, therefore, in that sense a public temple and the festival has been a public festival.

As the gold and silver merchants form a comparatively rich community the best 'Kirtankars' and Bhajan parties were invited for the festival, making it thereby the most popular among these festivals.

It was in the year 1930 that the Sonya Maruthi temple came in the line of the newly planned road called the Laxmi Road. The trustees of the temple immediately applied to the Municipality for preservation of the temple. The Laxmi Road Committee of the Municipality informed the trustees on 8th July, 1930 as follows :—

"It has been decided to preserve the Maruthi where it is situated and the applicants are informed accordingly."

When other adjoining buildings and walls etc. were pulled down for the Laxmi Road, the old temple was preserved. The merchants in the locality decided in 1933 to rebuild the temple. Municipal permission to build the temple on 5 ft. into 5 ft. space at the corner of the road was granted on 8th March, 1933.

All these Municipal resolutions were passed without the least opposition or complaint from Muslim members of the Municipal body. They took no objection. The plinth of the new temple was built up to the height of four feet. At this stage on 22nd July 1933, the District Magistrate abruptly ordered the trustees to stop further work. This was due to the application made by a few Muslims, in that month, alleging that the temple would obstruct the traffic and also that it would lead to communal trouble as a mosque was situated nearby !

There was some correspondence between the Municipality and the District Magistrate. Instead of the old dimensions, the trustees were ultimately in the year 1934, allowed to reconstruct the temple on a space of 4 ft. by 4 ft. with a condition that its height should not be more than 8 ft. All these limitations to the dimensions were placed only on the ground of convenience of traffic on the road and there was no question about the customary music.

How did that question come in ? The Tamboli Masjid is even now not situated on the Laxmi Road itself. It is in an adjoining lane. There is a distance of about

150 feet from the temple to the back wall of the Mosque. The front is still further off. There was a plot of land owned by the Municipality which the trustees of the Mosque wanted as a gift from the Municipality. Its value was estimated to about 13 thousand Rupees. But the Commissioner C. D. recommended to sell the plot for the concession price of Rs. 2323. While communicating this to the Municipality in his letter of 15th April, 1933, the Commissioner C. D. expressly states that the plot is to be sold with the following condition quoted in the letter :—

“That no obstruction should be caused to the public bhajan, worship, kirtan and music of all kinds of the adjoining Maruti Temple.”

The Commissioner is an officer higher than the District Magistrate. And here in this letter of 15th April 1933, the Commissioner knew that (1) that Sooya Maruti Temple was a public temple (2) that public ‘Bhajan’ and ‘Kirtans’ with all kinds of music took place near the temple. The Government in their recent communiqué on the Sooya Maruti dispute, pretend as it were, that they do not know anything about the customary rights of the parties and that they are yet to be determined. This is contrary to the admissions of their own responsible officers.

In April 1933, the Commissioner of Central Division had absolutely no doubt about the customary ‘Bhajan’ ‘Kirtan’ and all kinds of music at the Sooya Maruti Temple. He would not have imposed that express condition on the sale of the plot unless he had fully inquired about the customary rights of the Hindus at the Sooya Maruti Temple.

The Muslims, it is learnt, have deposited the amount with the Municipality and without waiting for the sale deed have taken possession of the plot and erected a compound. And the Managing Committee of the Municipality have resolved to file a suit for possession !

The Muslims wanted the plot without the condition ! So the ownership of the plot has remained in dispute between the Municipality and Muslims. It has been subsequently resolved by the Municipal body not to sell the plot to the Muslims. Regular sale of the plot has not yet taken place. The Muslims knew of the condition imposed by the Commissioner in April 1933, and in July of the same year, i.e., about three months after that, they applied to the District Magistrate that the Sooya Maruti Temple should not be rebuilt because it would obstruct traffic and lead to communal trouble ! Restrictions on the dimensions of the temple was the result. Yet in 1934 and 1935, there was no hindrance to the annual festivals and they were performed in the usual way with all the necessary music.

After the permission to rebuild the temple was granted the second time in 1934 with restrictions and the temple was being rebuilt according to the restrictions. Mr. Khan complained on behalf of the local Anjuman Islami to the District Magistrate in 1936, that the building of the temple should be disallowed because music at it would be against the religious feelings of Muslims. It must be mentioned that the Anjuman has no connection with the Tamboli mosque and the trustees of the Tamboli mosque have never made any complaint. During the time when the temple was being completed, the idol was placed in the shop-window nearby and the annual festivals were held before the idol with the usual ‘Bhajans’ and ‘Kirtans’. There is no question about the rights of the Hindus. The only question would be how far the observance of those rights would come in the way of the usual traffic on the Laxmi Road. But the District Magistrate and the Government have taken a new and absurd position from last year, quite contrary to their own record and the unquestionable commitments of their officers. They seem to put Hindus on their defence as if they are in the wrong and are the aggressors in this dispute.

Last year the District Magistrate banned music completely for all the 15 days of the festival. Hindus submitted and made representations to the District Magistrate. During the festival days the present District Magistrate Mr. Trotman took charge. Representations were made to him by Hindus and the District Magistrate consulted some Muslim leaders. After full deliberation he allowed soft music only on the final day of the festival for a limited period in the morning. The Hindus were observing the festival with the permitted soft music during the limited time. All of a sudden Muslim crowd gathered round and began to attack the Hindus. The Muslims thus were admittedly the aggressors last year, when the riot broke out. Even when the riot spread to other localities, the Muslims were the aggressors. The Hindus only retaliated.

This year when the trustees of the temple applied for permission to celebrate the festival for two days before the commencement of it, the Personal Assistant to the District Magistrate was seriously making inquiries about the number of musical instruments used, the times and durations of 'Bhajan' and 'Kirtans', the dimensions of the Pandal usually erected for the purpose, the approximate number of people that gather etc. etc. Where was the necessity of inquiring into all these details, when the District Magistrate had to ban drastically any kind of music on any day? Either the District Magistrate must have changed his mind at the eleventh hour or he wanted to keep the Hindus in the dark about his real intentions and surprise them with the order issued in the afternoon on the day previous to the opening day of the festival. The festival starts very early in the morning. The 'Kirtan' commences an hour or so before the birthtime of Hanuman which is exactly at the moment of sunrise. It was thought perhaps that the Hindus would be inactive simply by the abrupt surprise of the Order.

A few people broke the order in the morning by ringing the tiny bell. Yet for three days the extent of Satyagraha was comparatively small. When Mr. Bhopatkar came back from Bombay after interviewing the Home Member and when he declared the disappointing result of the interview, all sections of the community joined the Satyagraha in large numbers. Then the District Magistrate and the D. S. P. went to Bombay, had consultations with the higher authorities and returned without the slightest sign of modification in the order. The disappointments of the people increased still further. The unprovoked and premeditated lathi charge by the Police on 7th inst. on a perfectly peaceful procession added insult to injury, and added to impulse of the Satyagraha which ultimately assumed unexpectedly large proportions.

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# The Andhra Provincial Women's Conference

## Welcome Address

The Andhra Provincial Women's Conference was held at Nandyal on the 20th. and 21st. June under the presidency of *Srimati Kolla Kamakavalli Jayaramma*.

*Srimathi Appa Seshamma*, Chairwoman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, said that they had assembled in the Conference in a town whose "puranic" fame and historic importance might serve to remind them of the glory which Rayalaseema had once attained. This part of the country, ruled by Buddhist Kings, gave shelter to Buddhist Bikkhus and helped in the propagation of Buddhism. More recently, during the time of Sri Krishna Devaraya, Nandyal attained pre-eminence and was also the home of such great poets as Pingala Sarama. But with the advent of British rule in India, Rayalaseema, like the rest of the country fell on evil days. *Srimathi Seshama* assured them in the great *gama* for the regeneration of the Motherland, now going on, Rayalaseema would not lag behind. She would bring to the altar of freedom her own offerings of sacrifice.

Continuing, *Srimathi Seshamma* observed that there were 36 crores of people in India, of whom nearly 18 crores were women. It had been said that woman was man's "Ardhangi" (better half). It was, therefore, inconceivable how man, if he neglected his "Ardhangi", could be successful in solving the economic, social and political problems that faced him. There must always be joint effort on a basis of equality. This fact was more than amply illustrated in the last Satyagraha struggle, when women went to jails, faced lathi blows and suffered every privation and thus established their equal position with men. Even in the political sphere, she had now the right of vote. As literacy among women was far less than that among men, it was the most urgent duty of the State to afford greater facilities for the education of the girls. Public opinion and effort must be mobilised to bring adequate pressure in the Government.

In the social sphere eminent reformers, notably the late Mr. K. Veerasalingam Pantulu, Messrs. Valuru Suryanarayana Rao and Harbilas Sarda had already given a lead. But controversy still raged about divorce and birth-control. These were not small matters because they were intimately bound up with the problems of national health and well-being and the very future of the race. *Srimathi Seshama* asked them to take note of the conditions in Western countries, where divorce and birth-control were already in vogue, consider ancient Hindu thought, culture and ideals and after calm and dispassionate deliberations arrive at right conclusions. Regarding women's right of inheritance, the speaker desired that suitable legislation should immediately be framed and brought into force placing woman on a par with man.

## Opening Address

*Miss Ammannas Raja*, M. L. A., then opened the Conference.

In opening the Conference, *Miss G. Ammannas Raja* said that Indian women played a great part in the social and national life in the old days and they should play a greater part in days to come. Fortunately the Congress had brought them out of their homes and made them realise that the kitchen was not the only limit of their activities. Women took active part in the Satyagraha movement, organised huge processions for political propaganda, prepared salt, received lathi blows and even courted imprisonment. They showed tremendous enthusiasm in the recent elections and but for their willing help and co-operation, perhaps, it would not have been so easy for the Congress Candidates to come out successful with such a large majority in the recent election campaign.

The speaker urged that education of women in the country was very unsatisfactory. Lack of education among the women-folk was due to the general poverty in the country and want of educational facilities. The problem of female education could not be satisfactorily solved unless compulsory elementary education among girls was enforced in all the towns and villages. Women should at least complete the elementary school course and should be able to read newspapers and have an up-to-date knowledge of what was happening all over the world. They ought to know how to bring up their children with the spirit infused into them to seek the

deliverance of the country from political bondage. It was only educated, cultured and enlightened mothers that could bring up healthy and noble sons and daughters of India.

Continuing, Miss Ammanna Raja said that social reform should go hand in hand with the spread of education. It was a pity that the Sarda Act was very weakly worded and practically most of the marriages performed in violation of the Act were going unpunished. It was necessary that the Act should be so amended as to make all offences under the Act cognisable and the Government should be made to take the initiative in filing complaints in the case of every violation of the Act. Further, imprisonment should be provided in the Act, instead of its being an alternative to one of fine. The Hindu Law should be also amended to provide equal property rights to women as to men. It was also necessary that elementary knowledge of the ways of health and how to bring up children should be taught to girls and women. The teaching of domestic economy should not be ignored. Women should work out their own uplift. They must see that their children grow up to be worthy men and women. Much lies in the men and women. Much lies in the mothers and the women to develop the sense of patriotism in the children. They should boycott all foreign articles and wear only khaddar and buy only Swadeshi articles.

She regretted that some modern women thought that it was below their dignity to look after their homes. It was for the women to look after their homes and children. Children neglected by the mother and left completely under the control of servants would fail to have the noble homely influence on them. Motherly instincts ought to teach women that they should use their own influence on their children so that they may grow up to be the right sort of citizens. Women's taking part in public life should not mean neglecting their homes.

In conclusion she appealed to all women to become members of the Congress in larger numbers and help its struggle for independence.

#### Presidential Address

Sreemathi *Kanakavalli Tyaramma*, in the course of her presidential address, said that the last Satyagraha struggle had brought a tremendous awakening among the women of this country and released much energy and enthusiasm. During conferences such as these it were well to recall the names of such patriotic women as Jhansi Laxmbai and Durgabai, who had brought lustre and glory to womanhood.

The President then gave a brief history of the national struggle for freedom under the aegis of the Congress. She referred to the new Constitution Act and said that the Provincial Autonomy promised in it was a farce. The Federal part of it came in for severe comment. The wrecking of such a Constitution to save India from the dangers attendant upon its introduction was a necessary corollary to the Congress ideal of independence.

Referring to the question of office-acceptance, Mrs. Tyaramma said that considering it from the standpoint of intensifying national struggle, it would be well if office was not accepted. The strength to forge the country's will depended on constructive work outside the Legislature.

To-day there existed, she said, much social injustice. Women too, had been the object of considerable neglect. If there was injustice in the family how could there not be injustice in the country? The subjection of the country, she said, could directly be attributed to the subjection of women.

The President suggested a fifteen-year programme for education of women and called on leaders to agitate and do propaganda in this behalf. An educated woman was a greater help to man than an uneducated one. Even the best of men needed courage and encouragement in their hours of distress; that courage and encouragement would come only if women were educated.

Shrimati *Duvvuri Subbamma*, addressing the gathering on the importance of the women's part in the family life said that the Hindu genius did not admit of imitation of Western habits and mode of living. The woman was the queen of the house and she must rule it well and thoroughly by creating an atmosphere of peace and happiness and radiating love. She noticed, she said, a certain tendency to deify ancient ideals. This did not augur well for India. Women have enormous leisure at home and if they could but devote an hour a day at the spinning wheel, they could easily supply the family with the requirements in clothes.

### Resolutions

After some discussion the Conference passed several resolutions.

The Conference, while expressing confidence in Mahatma Gandhi, cordially invited him to assume leadership once again so as to lead India to his goal of Purna Swaraj. It emphatically condemned the action of the Governor in appointing the Interim Ministry which did not command the confidence of the electorate and called upon the Governor to convene the Legislative Assembly forthwith.

The Conference was of opinion that if the British Government was true to its intension of conceding Responsible Government to India it should unhesitatingly give the assurance demanded by the Congress.

The Conference congratulated His Highness the Maharaja and Her Highness Parvathi Sethu Bai on the bold step they had taken in throwing open State temples to the Harijans. It expressed the view that the duty of eradicating the social evil of untouchability devolved upon women in particular and that it was essential that vigorous propaganda should be carried on.

The Conference resolved that with a view to promoting the economic welfare of the country and with a view to relieving the stress of unemployment it was highly essential to propagate the use of Khaddar. The Conference called upon such of those women who came under the literacy test and whose names have been omitted in the Assembly electoral rolls to get their names registered immediately. It urged that more women candidates for elections should be set up with a view to affording them opportunities for greater participation in the political life of the country.

The Conference resolved that women should work for the promotion of communal unity and for establishment of closer and larger contact with the Muslim masses. It called upon women to enrol themselves as members of the Congress.

The Conference extended its sympathy for those women and children who were suffering terribly as a result of the civil war in Spain. It appealed to Indian women to render whatever help they thought fit either by way of clothes or provisions.

## The South Arcot Women's Conference

### Opening Address

The South Arcot Women's Conference was held at Villupuram in the local Ganapathi Vilas Theatre on the 31st January 1937 under the presidency of Mrs. A. Rukmani Lakshminipathi. Three hundred women from all parts of the district attended.

Mrs. R. Visalakshi Sastri, opening the Conference, compared the condition of the womenfolk of India some two thousand years ago with that of present-day women and said that the women of ancient India were all advanced socially and intellectually and literally ruled the country from their hearth and home. The present backward condition of womenfolk was due to lack of education. They had been agitating for the improvement of female education in the land for the last thirty years, but no good result had been achieved. Present-day English education, though good in some respects, would not solve the problem of women's uplift so as to make them reach the level of men in all things in life. The women of India, said Mrs. Sastri, should move with the times and compete with men in all walks of life. Conference of women such as this one were useful for removing the inherent shyness of women and make them come to the front especially in towns where women had no facilities to meet together with the same freedom with which they did in villages.

### Welcome Address

Srimathi Jagadambal, Chairwoman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, referred to the help which the organisers of the Conference had received at the hands of Mr. Chidambaram Aiyar and from the local Ladies' Club. The whole world, she said, was engaged in a serious struggle for obtaining equal rights for one and all and everywhere they were hearing about socialism and kindred principles



being put into practice particularly in countries where inequality was great. The position of India's women to-day was very deplorable. But Indian women had not lagged behind men in the struggle for freedom. Their President Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmiipathi was a living example of what the women of India were capable of achieving in every field of life if sufficient opportunity was given to them.

*Srimathi Jagadambal* then referred to the three bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly by Messrs. Deshmukh, Babu Bhagavan Das and Viswanath Doss for the amelioration of their condition and appealed to the delegates to support these bills. She condemned child-marriage, the dowry system, the Devadasi system, which were humiliating to womenfolk. They should all agitate with one voice for the betterment of their condition.

#### Presidential Address

*Mrs. Lakshmiipathi*, in the course of her presidential address, referred to the importance of women taking part not only in the struggle for social uplift but also in the political struggle. She referred to the activities of the Congress for the last 50 years and more and said that the Congress was the one representative institution in the country which would be able to win Swaraj for them. She made an eloquent appeal to the ladies present to join the Congress and help it in its struggle for national freedom.

Proceeding, *Mrs. Lakshmiipathi* observed that the women of India had an equally great part to play in this struggle, because their fortunes were bound up with those of the men in the land. She condemned the Government for their utter neglect of female education and said that while the Government wanted to spend half their income towards the maintenance of a huge Army, they had bestowed little attention on the hopeless condition of the village folk, their grinding poverty, their unhealthy and insanitary surroundings and their illiteracy. She appealed to the ladies who had assembled there to ponder over all these matters deeply and do the utmost in their power to better the lot of the masses. She appealed to them to support the bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly for improving the social position of the women in the land, and for enabling them to get rights in ancestral properties.

Turning to the coming elections, *Srimathi Lakshmiipathi* said that a large number of women had been enfranchised and it was their duty to help the Congress candidates in the elections. By supporting the Congress they would be strengthening the Congress in its fight for the freedom of their country.

#### Resolutions

A number of resolutions were then passed at the Conference. The Conference resolved to support the Bill introduced by Dr. Deshmukh in the Assembly, condemned the recommendations of the Select Committee for the deletion of two clauses relating to daughters' right to property and widows' claim for full rights over the properties of their dead husbands, and appealed to the Members of the Assembly to pass the Bill as introduced by Dr. Deshmukh.

The Conference condemned the ill-treatment meted out to young widows and supported the Bill of Babu Bhagavan Das and that of Mr. Viswanatha Das.

The Conference congratulated the Maharaja of Travancore and his mother on throwing open the State temples to the Harijans and prayed for their long life. The Conference demanded the right to vote for women in respect of Hindu religious institutions and appealed to the Government and to the members of the Assembly to prevent the dedication of Devadasis to temple service by means of Legislation.

The Conference requested the women of India to take to khaddar and patronise Swadeshi articles in their household. It was resolved to appeal to the Congress members of the Assembly to introduce a Bill for throwing open temples in British India to Harijans on the lines of the Travancore Proclamation.

The Conference passed some other resolutions condemning child-marriage, requesting the Government to establish middle school for women in all taluk centres for teaching them needle-work, handicraft, midwifery, etc., and to make education compulsory for female children upto the fifth standard in every village and town. The Conference demanded the extension of franchise for women in the new Constitution and a larger representation on the Councils and Assemblies for women.

*Srimathi Rukmani Ammal* proposed a hearty vote of thanks, after which the Conference was dissolved.

**Proceedings of**  
**Industrial Conferences**  
**and**  
**Chambers of Commerce**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**

# The Federated Chambers of Commerce

Tenth Session—New Delhi—7th. April 1937

The tenth annual session of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry commenced at New Delhi on the 7th. April 1937 with a fairly large attendance under the presidency of Mr. D. P. Khaitan. Besides delegates there were several Indian and European members of the Central Legislature. Among the distinguished visitors were Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. Ramdas Pantulu, Mr. L. C. Buss, Mr. Ramsay Scott, Mr. Gauga Singh, Rao Bahadur K. Govindachari and Mr. Chapman Mortimer.

Mr. Khaitan, in the course of his address, after giving a brief account of the history of the Federation, said that during the first year of its existence 24 commercial bodies were affiliated to it, while to-day they had on its roll 57 provincial chambers, trade associations and industrial organisations, entitling the Federation to voice with confidence the views of the entire Indian commercial community. It has been instrumental in waking the Government of India to the realities of a number of economic problems which affected adversely Indian interests. It has been instrumental in shaking the commercial community from its apparent luke-warmness and lethargy and creating in them greater consciousness of the responsibilities which vested interests in the country have towards its well-being. Had it not been for a central organisation like the Federation with its mission, during the last ten years, of harmonising provincial interests in the greater interests of India, of cementing feelings of nationalism and unity amongst its member bodies representing varied interests all over the country, the position of the Indian commercial community would have been difficult with disintegrating forces at play. Mr. Khaitan concluded: "Everyone of you, I am sure, will recall with pride the absence of any occasion on which it was not possible for the Federation to represent the Indian commercial community with one voice and I must give all member bodies of the Federation their due share of credit for adjusting their differences of opinion and views—if they at all existed on any question—for strengthening the hands of the Federation from time to time on all matters of importance affecting the economic well-being of India."

Mr. Khaitan reviewed at the outset the important events of the past year and observed: "Economic conditions all over the world are changing and in many respects the eventual outcome is uncertain. India is finding it difficult to maintain her position in the world markets and its foreign trade is being adversely affected by economic nationalism on the one hand and Empire policies on the other. The increase of exports that we have recently witnessed is not based on any stable or permanent basis, but is generally and authoritatively regarded to be a temporary phenomenon arising out of the military preparations in Europe. In the sphere of trade, bilateral trade agreements between different countries are being entered into and this has, in some measure, weakened India's position in markets abroad, since while other countries have been prompt to enter into reciprocal or clearing arrangements our Government have followed a policy of drift in this respect. It is essential that the Government of India continually and fully advised by their Trade Commissioners abroad should remain actively in contact with the trend of economic activities and commercial regulations in other countries and should take suitable measures to meet the difficulties and restrictions in India's principal markets, apart from being in search of fresh markets."

Proceeding, Mr. Khaitan said: "It is disappointing to note that although an agreement was arrived at between the United Kingdom, United States of America and France in regard to the stabilisation of their currencies, our Government have persistently declined to review our currency position or revise the currency policy. The Reserve Bank of India Act in its preamble definitely laid down that in such circumstances our currency policy would be reviewed. A persistent demand was made therefore but in vain, though the situation in the country strongly calls for the same. I fail to see how, unless that is done, (in addition to adequate retrenchment in expenditure) the Provinces will be able to carry on nation-building activities and to bring about a real economic uplift among the people at large.

"I cannot help observing that we in India suffer from the malady of conceptions which are not only old and unsuitable to the conditions of this country but which

have been rejected even in the countries where they originated. We are dominated by economic doctrines which hardly find acceptance in any part of the world. Economic self-sufficiency as a national objective is denounced as a suicidal policy but it is the policy which is being followed all over the world to-day. Great Britain itself built up its textile shipping and other industries after rigid protection, but the virtues of free trade have always been preached in India for the benefit of consumers of imported piece-goods. We are being asked to believe that India is principally an agricultural country and has no other future save that of a producer of raw materials which she could export in order to balance her trade and her budget. Such conceptions are based on a misapprehension of the fundamentals of economic progress and have been abandoned in other countries. Even the British Dominions like South Africa, Australia and New Zealand resisted similar attempts of British administrators. Industrial development is a *sine qua non* of agricultural development for without industrial development it is impossible to raise the standard of living or to increase the purchasing power of the people. I wish to impress upon those responsible for the economic well-being of the country that industrialisation of India is absolutely essential in order to lessen the pressure of population on land, to provide alternative sources of employment in order to absorb the surplus population and to diversify economic pursuits.

"In India, we have three kinds of industries—large scale, small and cottage. There is ample scope for the successful operation and development of all these types in view of the fact that the large section of middle-class population could usefully be occupied in small scale industries. As regards cottage industries, I should point out that all those at present living on land are not really needed for agricultural activities. They are shown in the Census Reports as living mainly on land simply because they are members of the agriculturist families and have no other adequate occupation. The Agricultural Commission recognised that the labour problem to-day is the same from the agricultural point of view as it was when the Famine Commission reported in 1880, namely to lessen the pressure of population on land. In Bengal 60 per cent of the population would be sufficient for carrying on agricultural activities, but the Census Report of 1931 shows 80 per cent as living on land. In fact, the Census Report for 1881 shows only 50 per cent of the population as living on land. I have made enquiries and have been authoritatively advised that it is necessary to find out other occupations for the 30 per cent of the population who are really not needed for the cultivation of land. Similar conditions prevail in the other Provinces also, although the figures may vary. The most suitable method of providing subsidiary occupations would be to engage the people in cottage industries. In Bengal, the agricultural classes were actually engaged in cottage industries but they were driven out by the import of cheap machine-made goods.

"If the Central Government, in consultation with the newly created autonomous provinces, evolve a comprehensive plan of co-ordination in respect of these three kinds of industries, I am sure constructive and beneficial work could be carried on in whose wake would follow the improvement in education, sanitation and other nation-building activities which directly affect the well-being of the mass of people, urban and rural. I would therefore urge that the Government of India should modify their present lukewarm attitude towards industrialisation and should initiate a bold policy of industrialisation for the benefit of the country. Such a policy, I may add, should be actively supported by all other bodies such as the Provincial Departments of Industries, the Railways, Local Self-Government institutions and the Port Trusts.

"Industrialisation demands adequate protection and the Provinces which have hitherto least industrialised themselves need protection the most. It is necessary that in addition to protective tariffs there should be cheap transport facilities, cheap money conditions and an ample supply of funds. We find that even the prevalence of cheap money conditions in the market does not ensure a plentiful supply of funds for industrial finance. The currency policy of the Government of India is determined by conceptions about the rate of Exchange, which I can only characterise as anti-national. The Government of India, I regret to say, have no definite or positive industrial policy. It oscillates from time to time with the particular predilections and views of the successive Finance Members of the Government of India; moreover, a number of extraneous considerations affect the over-cautious and antiquated policy of discriminating protection. Even in the present backward state of the country's finances, money would be available to a certain extent if only there is enough confidence in the Government's policy for industrialisation. I would refer you

to the well-known fact that on the Government accepting the proposals for protecting the sugar industry for a period of 15 years, plentiful finance was made available for that industry, and within a period of five years the country became self-sufficient in regard to the supply of white sugar. Rs. 15 crores are annually saved to the country out of which more than Rs. 8 crores go directly to the agriculturist. If a plentiful supply of funds be made available to indigenous industries under a well-defined policy of protection, trade is bound to improve and any repercussions of such an improvement on the money market by way of increase in interest charges can be checked by the co-ordinating efforts of the Reserve Bank and the Scheduled Banks. High interest rates inevitably lead to slump and if the revival of trade following in the wake of the growth of the indigenous industries is to be maintained, every precaution will have to be taken to see that high interest rates do not prevail as a consequence of improvement in trade.

"Even the present halting policy of protection adopted by Government during the last 12 years has no small achievement to its credit. If we examine the figures of production of some of the protected major industries, we find that in the case of Matches the production of 10.5 million gross boxes in 1926-27 increased to 24.2 million gross boxes in 1935-36. In the case of paper, the production in 1925-26 of 28,000 tons increased to 48,000 tons in 1935-36. In the case of cotton textiles, 1,954 million yds. in 1925-26 increased to 3,571 million yds. in 1935-36. Handloom production also increased, from 1,160 million in 1925-26 to 1,660 million yds. in 1935-36. In the case of sugar, from a paltry production of 321,000 tons in 1926-27, it shot up to 1,166,000 tons in 1935-36. The production of gur has increased from about 3 and half million tons in 1926-27 to about 6 and three-fourth million tons in 1936-37. Production of steel in 1925-26 of 320,000 tons was more than doubled in 1935-36. These industries which developed during the last ten years—although they have had restricted scope for expansion under the present policy of discriminating protection—have been contributing annually, on a conservative basis, about Rs. 100 crores to the national wealth of India. As against this gain, it is often contended that as a result of the policy of protection, the revenues of the Government of India are affected by the diminution or disappearance of receipts under Customs duties. I feel that there can be no comparison between the loss of Customs Revenue to the Central Exchequer and the immense gain to the country in every direction. I fail to understand how any responsible Government, with the genuine intention of initiating protectionist policy and a whole-hearted desire for the industrial recovery of this country, can with any justification blame the protected industries for the natural consequences arising out of an effective protective tariff. The Central Exchequer is compensated through other channels. The industry creates employment for middle-classes and a greater demand for raw materials while a large-scale protected industry stimulates the establishment of subsidiary and ancillary industries. Large scale industries have created a number of subsidiary industries, such as the manufacture of chemicals, starch, strawboards, roller, skins, leather belting, tin plates, wire products, etc., and these, in turn, have been able to absorb a considerable portion of the unemployed and have provided means for the diversification of vocations.

"But apart from protective tariff, I would like to draw attention to the question of revision of revenue tariff which is engaging the attention of the Government. As a result of some of the revenue duties having the effect of a protective tariff, a number of small-scale industries have grown up in a number of provinces, such as the manufacture of toilet requisites, soap, rubber shoes, pharmaceutical and spirituous preparations, etc. These have also been instrumental in relieving unemployment among the middle-classes. But with the growing competition from foreign countries, they are carrying on a precarious existence, and have no future for a healthy growth unless Government come to their succour. I am afraid under the present canons laid down by Government for grant of protection to an industry, these small industries in which considerable capital is sunk—have little chances of survival. The condition of these industries need careful and sympathetic watching and I hope the revenue tariff would not be so altered as to expose them suddenly to the full blast of world competition.

"Cottage industries also tend to thrive along with large-scale industries. The apprehension that the hand-loom industry would suffer owing to the growth of the Cotton Textile Industry, has, for instance, been falsified by the simultaneous gradual growth of the Handloom industry. With the growth of sugar industry, again, the manufacture of gur has also increased. The prosperity of the Indian

agriculturist is very intimately connected with the growth of cottage industries for the obvious reason that a large number of them can find employment therein. Every effort should therefore be made to revive cottage industries in the villages. The system in operation in Japan can be introduced with greater advantage in our villages and the services of the village merchant should be requisitioned for this purpose. He is not likely to make a beginning himself unless the State comes in with a definite well-laid plan wherein the village merchant has a specific function to perform. He should be enabled to supply the raw material to the villagers and take back from them the finished products. The villager would be saved the intricacies of financing the supply of raw materials and of marketing the finished products. He would be given at his own door work for which he would be paid and his time would thus be utilised to his best advantage. Finance will have to be made available to Provincial Governments for this purpose, and even if currency has to be expanded with a view to securing this object, it will not have any appreciable effect on the rate of exchange. I hold that even if a temporary depreciation may result from such expansion, the Government should take the necessary risk with a view to improving the economic condition of the agriculturist, and to avert a greater danger to society by prolongation of the acute distress prevailing in the rural areas.

"The agriculturist can also be helped by encouraging him to grow directly consumable articles such as vegetables, fruit, dairy products, etc. The agriculturist should further be given greater facilities for quick transport and the marketing of his produce at neighbouring towns. If the Provincial Governments undertake capital works by schemes of irrigation and electricity, by constructing new roads and repairing the existing means of communication, it will not only help a quicker and cheaper transport of these directly consumable articles, but it may also relieve the immediate unemployment in the Districts. Ready money will thus be available to smaller towns and villages. No plan of economic uplift can yield sufficiently good results unless it reaches the villages directly and even a slight improvement in the income of the agriculturist is bound to reflect in greater turn over in the trade and industry of the country. I would, therefore, emphasise the necessity of the Central Government of India to probe completely into the malady and to initiate in consultation with the Provincial Governments a systematic and detailed plan of capital works that would alleviate the misery in the remotest corners of the country.

"Apart from these measures designed for the betterment of condition in the country, we cannot lose sight of the fact that India has to depend on its export trade not only to pay for the goods it buys but also for the remittances to the United Kingdom on account of Home charges and invisible imports. Such remittance amount to about Rs. 80 crores per year. There can be no doubt that it is to the interest of the United Kingdom, the creditor country herself, to find for India a favourable balance of trade in goods to the extent of about Rs. 80 crores per year so that the United Kingdom may be in a position to draw her 'dividends'. We have the regrettable phenomenon during the last four years of the country being drained of its metallic resources to make its payments to the United Kingdom. Although the Government of the country has been indifferent to this outflow of yellow metal from India, India cannot continue to send out this metal in perpetuity. The position which India used to occupy in former times as regards her export trade does not continue any longer. She has been losing ground, in the foreign markets all these years though, during the last year, she has recovered some ground as a result of the abnormal conditions prevailing abroad. It is, therefore, essential that her position as regards her export trade improves. The negotiations for the Trade Agreements with the United Kingdom and Japan afford good opportunities for the Government of India to review the whole export trade of India and to consider the possibilities of India entering into trade agreements with her best customers. It is a matter of surprise that the politicians and industrialists of Great Britain do not realise the fundamental implications of Indo-British relationship but instead seek to sell more and more goods to India, without caring to ensure to this country a favourable balance of trade which is absolutely essential and vital in the interests of Great Britain itself.

"With the increasing financial responsibilities falling upon every autonomous province, the problem for the various Provincial Ministries to secure finances for the administration of Nation-building departments will not be an easy one. After the introduction of the Federal Government and when some of the revenues are trans-

ferred to Provincial Governments, it will be a bigger problem for the Federal Government to meet its ever increasing demands on its Exchequer. Money will have to be found by all these administrations—Provincial and Federal—and the present economic condition of the people is such that there is very little prospect of raising revenues by taxing the public any further. Unless, therefore, means are devised to create and increase wealth in the country itself, unless the agriculturist is put in possession of greater resources, unless the middle-classes are offered fresh avenues for the absorption of unemployed, nor one cannot foresee any bright economic future for this country in years to come. I only wish that the Government will appreciate the economic realities of the situation and prevent any accentuation of discontent through wise statesmanship and far-sighted policy."

## Proceedings & Resolutions

### QUESTION OF INDO-BRITISH TRADE TALKS

After the presidential address Mr. Sidhwa (Karachi), referring to the negotiations for an Indo-British trade treaty, asked whether there was genuine desire on the part of the Government of India or the Government of the United Kingdom to come to a settlement really in the interests of India or whether having three members of the Federation as Advisers was only a tactical policy that the British Government adopted for allowing this inordinate delay in the matter of negotiations and ultimately shelving this question and allowing the status quo to remain.

Sir Parshotamdas Thakurdas, one of the advisers, said, "I must confess that we are unable to give any reply to any question at this stage. I am very sorry for this but I am sure that the meeting would appreciate the delicacy of the question. I would not be able to reply to any question at this stage. I can only say this much, that if we had felt in any way otherwise, my friends may take it we would not remain on the committee wasting our time."

As regards trade with Afghanistan Mr. Sidhwa asked whether the Federation would again urge the Government to publish the report.

The Chairman said that the Government of India refused to publish the report of the Indian trade delegation as it was said, it was a confidential document. The incoming Committee would, however, consider whether they could further pursue the matter or not.

Mr. Pandit asked whether the House should be given an opportunity to discuss the momentous issue of constitutional crisis in the provinces.

The President said that the Executive Committee had already issued a statement and they did not propose to bring forward any resolution on the subject.

### INCOME-TAX ENQUIRY REPORT

Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai moved a resolution on the Income-tax Enquiry Committee's report that "the Federation is of opinion that whereas the appointment of the Committee was intended to examine in a broad-minded manner both the incidence of tax and the efficiency of its administration with a view to ascertaining and adjusting the incidence of tax on basis of equity and to giving the much-needed and overdue relief to the public by overhaul of the administrative machinery, the Committee's report is conceived with the narrow outlook of obtaining as much revenue as possible without any regard to the welfare of trade and industry and the customs prevailing in the country from time immemorial. The Federation urges that the Government of India, before taking any steps to incorporate these recommendations into law, should overhaul in the first instance the administrative machinery of the Income-tax Department with a view to giving adequate relief to the assesses and should see that in the amending Act, no greater burdens are imposed on the taxpayers who have long suffered from the lack of the redeeming features that obtain in other countries, according to their conditions and circumstances. The Federation strongly protest against the haste with which the income-tax Amending Bill was passed into law last February in the absence of important groups in the Legislative Assembly, without waiting for a full consideration of the Income-tax Committee's report as a whole."

After discussing in detail the various aspects of the question, Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai said that the limit of income-tax had already been reached and the Committee in the guise of making a survey of equitable distribution of tax, had recommended substantial increase over the existing rates. He emphasised that raising the

quantum of income-tax was not the main concern of the Committee. If the Government wished, they had the power to raise or lower the tax, when and if necessary.

Mr. Padampat Singhania said that they had been crying for years for reforming the income-tax administration machinery. Some suggestions had been made by the Committee and the speaker suggested to the Government to concentrate on the question of the separation of the judicial functions of the appellate authority and the administrative functions of Assistant Commissioners. He warned the Government that the public were fed up with commissions and committees and said that they would refuse to submit to any grinding addition to taxation on the score of principles or under the cover of administrative reform.

Mr. Chunilal B. Mehta opposed the proposal made by the Committee to merge the incomes of husband and wife as also to tax non-earning institutions, such as the Stock Exchange and the Federation itself.

Sardar Sodhbans maintained that there was no justification in exempting pensions earned in British India from Indian income-tax.

Mr. S. C. Roy said that the whole report had been conceived in the well-known policy of left-handed concessions and right-handed operations.

Mr. Ramdas Pantulu urged that the Federation should give a proper lead in the matter of aggregation of incomes for the purposes of tax.

The resolution was adopted.

#### INDIANS IN ZANZIBAR

Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas moved the next resolution expressing the Federation's grave concern "at the plight to which Indians in Zanzibar had been and are being reduced by the decrees of 1934 which have the effect of (a) creating Government monopoly of the clove trade which had been for nearly a century the principal business of Indians in Zanzibar against the express stipulation in the treaty of friendship between the British Government and the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1886 and then in 1893, (b) depriving Indians of their long enjoyed right of acquiring land in Zanzibar and (c) restricting even their right to recover debts due to them by repeated extension of the moratorium declared about three years ago. The Federation while acknowledging the support accorded by the Government of India, urges on the Government to take speedy and effective steps, including as a last resort exclusion of clove imports into India, which is their principal market, with a view to bringing home to the British Government the gross injustice done to Indians in Zanzibar by the said legislation, which spells utter ruin to them and the serious consequences of the policy of squeezing out Indians from Zanzibar where they have settled before it became a British protectorate."

At the outset, Sir P. Thakurdas welcomed Mr. Puri, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce of East Africa, who had come out to India after 26 years. Sir Purushottamdas said that during the last three years, various methods were being employed by the Colonial Office for bringing pressure on the puppet Sultan of Zanzibar for squeezing out Indians carrying on the clove trade. Incidentally he referred with indignation to the 'sulum' of the Italian Government in expelling the Mohamet Ali Stores from Ethiopia. It was a pity that though the Government of India and the public of this country had no difference of opinion in regard to this matter, they had mainly to depend on His Majesty's Government for guidance and orders. If this had happened to a businessman belonging to an independent country, the matter might have been looked upon as very nearly verging on war. But Indians were not independent masters at home and they had to be content with protests and reasoning.

Sir Purushottamdas declared that it was no good expecting the loyalty of India to the Empire when Indians abroad were subjected to such indignities and injustice. Indians had settled in Zanzibar more than a century ago and it was not wrong to say that they (Indians) took Englishmen to settle there. Such being the case, was it fair to expel them? He hoped that the Government of India would go sufficiently forward to demand bare justice consistent with self-respect.

Concluding, Sir Purushottamdas suggested that the Government of India, in the meantime, should have enquiries made whether it was feasible to grow cloves in India; otherwise they would be failing in their duty to the public.

Mr. Mohamedali Akalvi referred to the contribution made by Indians to the industrial development of Zanzibar and regretted the steps prejudicial to the interests of



Indians in Zanzibar which were now being taken. He thought that these had been imported into Zanzibar from South and East Africa.

The resolution was unanimously carried.

#### INDO-BRITISH TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. C. L. Mehta moved a comprehensive resolution urging that the Government of India, negotiating terms for a fresh trade agreement between the United Kingdom and India, should keep in view that (a) a fresh trade agreement will not be acceptable to the country unless it offers substantially better terms to India for the development of its export trade, (b) the terms of the fresh trade agreement should leave enough scope for the Government of India to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement with other countries, (c) the terms of the treaty will secure definite markets in the United Kingdom for important materials and products of India, (d) the preferences that will be offered to the United Kingdom industries under the fresh trade agreement will, in no way, affect the interests of indigenous industries at any time during the period of the trade treaty and further no undertakings should form part of the agreement which militate against the very principle of the policy of industrial development adopted by India and which restricts India's liberty to shape her fiscal policy or detracts from the protection now enjoyed by industries in India and (e) India should have separate trade treaty arrangements with the Colonies of the British Empire and such arrangements should not form part of the fresh trade treaty with the United Kingdom.

The resolution expressed the opinion that in such terms as may be arranged between India and the United Kingdom the question of offering further preference to the United Kingdom textile industry should be ruled out on the ground that India has, as a result of the recent Tariff Board enquiry, granted too high preference and that she cannot afford to grant any further preference against the interests of the indigenous industry. The resolution suggested that the terms of the fresh trade agreement should tend to secure a greater share for this country in the United Kingdom's requirements of materials and products, due regard being had to the burdens of home charges and profits from such activities of Great Britain as shipping, insurance and banking. The resolution trusted that the non-official Advisory Committee will tender advice to the Government of India on the lines indicated above.

Mr. Mehta said that when the Indo-British Trade Agreement and the Ottawa Trade Agreement were rejected by the Assembly, dire calamities to India's foreign trade were foreshadowed by some. Nothing, however, happened. On the contrary the British Government showed keenness for a new agreement for the reason that Britain needed the Indian market far more than India needed the British market.

Mr. G. L. Mehta, in moving the resolution on Indo-British Trade Agreement, made the following speech :-

One of the main reasons for the unsatisfactory character of the Ottawa Agreement was the refusal of the Government to consult representative Indian commercial opinion. While it is satisfactory to note that the Government have not repeated this mistake and have invited three ex-Presidents of the Federation of Indian Chambers to serve on the panel of Advisors, it is somewhat unfortunate that these representatives are not regarded as full-fledged delegates as at Ottawa but as Advisors to the Government in regard to these negotiations. Let me point out that there is a vital difference between the negotiations regarding the renewal of the Indo-Japanese Trade Convention and the confabulations regarding the Indo-British Trade Agreement. Let us be perfectly frank. The Government of India cannot be trusted by the Indian public and the Indian commercial community to be impartial in any trade negotiations with Great Britain. I regret also that the venue of further negotiations should have been London and not Delhi or Simla, where the Indian delegates could remain in close and constant touch with Indian public and commercial opinion on the various issues during the negotiations and not be closetted thousands of miles away in an anti-chamber of Whitehall.

Coming to the question of the trade agreement, I must point out that under the present conditions, any trade agreement between England and India is *per se* bound to be of an unequal character because of the political relationship which would weigh the scales heavily in favour of England. Every trade preference given to Great Britain will, in fact, harden and stereotype into a trade privilege and its permanence

in the Indian fiscal policy will be ensured by relative guarantee or reservation in the Constitution. A trade agreement with Great Britain would tend to create new British vested interests and consolidate some old ones in India with our consent and agreement and we would not be able to protect our national interests so effectively against them. If such vested interests are created by allowing their trade to be built up in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, they would necessarily ask for safeguards for the protection of their interests established under such shelter. For instance, the Ottawa Trade Agreement itself as followed by the Indo-British Trade Agreement of the 9th January, 1935, which sought to stabilise such trading advantages and thereby effectively restricted the fiscal autonomy of India. It is fundamentally objectionable to restrict the constitutional rights and economic powers of the Indian Legislature and the India Government in this manner but the root of the evil has been the conferment of certain trading privileges through a trade agreement. Similarly, reciprocity is no longer a matter of mutual goodwill but has become an integral part of the safeguards in the new Constitution as will be evident by reference to Sections 113 to 118 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

I submit that this Federation from the commencement of the Indo-British trade negotiations in August last has come precisely to the same conclusion on purely economic grounds, namely that the fundamentals of Indian economy demand that in a trade agreement based on reciprocity or *quid pro quo* between England and India the "invisible" items of exports and imports should be fully taken into account and should have a bargaining status. India has to make annual remittances of nearly Rs. 78 crores to the United Kingdom and these "invisible" items really determine the balance of payments and the flow of trade. A trade agreement between a creditor and debtor country cannot, therefore, be strictly based on a principle of *quid pro quo* as ordinarily understood. Great Britain cannot have it both ways. She must either forego at least a part of this "drain" by an impartial examination of the external obligations of India or be prepared to take sufficient quantities of goods from India, because the export of gold cannot and will not continue indefinitely. It is essential, therefore, to consider the whole question of India's foreign trade not in a piecemeal manner as is often done in order to provide some immediate and temporary benefits to British industries which might be in the doldrums but in a comprehensive manner in order to co-ordinate India's internal economic development with its export trade and external obligations.

The need of development of India's export trade with various countries, especially in raw materials which are surplus to India's requirements, must be borne in mind in any trade pact with the United Kingdom. The Ottawa Agreement being based on the objective of organising the British Empire as a distinct economic unit endeavoured to keep the raw materials of the Empire within the Empire. I see no reason why India should be involved in this political entanglement which at best is artificial and at worst might be against the real interests of the country. The very nature of India's export trade makes it imperative that any trade agreement with England should not be such as to jeopardise India's trade with the various non-Empire countries which have been in several respects its best customers or to weaken India's bargaining power *vis-a-vis* other countries, while leaving England free, as hitherto, to conclude bilateral agreements irrespective of their effects on India.

It must be emphasised in this connection that none of the articles on which the United Kingdom gives preference is likely to effect the development of any industry within the United Kingdom itself as pointed out in Clause (d) of the Resolution while in our case, the preferences conceded would effect industries which could be built up here and in some of which the United Kingdom is our keener competitor. In other words, no preferences should be conceded which would tend to affect adversely the growing industrialisation of India and the diversification of its economic pursuits. India's fiscal policy has already been seriously restricted through the operation of the Indo-British Trade Agreement and we must insist that none of the Clauses of that Agreement should be included in the new trade pact. India's right to vary tariff arrangements in accordance with the economic requirements of the country has been seriously impaired by this agreement. India is practically bound by such an agreement to certain definite undertakings regarding her tariff policy as, for instance, not to revise it during the currency of the Agreement. The fair selling price again was made the sole criterion of protection irrespective of the fact that the Tariff Board might not regard that as a vital or even an important fact. While there have been no reciprocal obligations on the part of Britain under Article 5 of the Agreement, Article 4 confers a right on the United Kingdom to ask for en-

quiry into conditions of protected industries with a view to revision of duties in its favour. Moreover, a competing industry against which protection is asked for has been given the right to appear before Tariff Board investigation of the cotton textile industry. In other words, if the trade preferences are to be genuine and workable, they should not in any way affect India's fiscal autonomy.

I come, lastly, to the intensive agitation carried on during the last few months by Lancashire interests with a view to putting pressure on the Secretary of State and the Government of India to ensure privileges for the British textile industry. Hitherto the favourite Lancashire slogan was of "the interests of Indian consumers being in danger" owing to the development of Indian textile industry behind a tariff wall; now it appears the hearts of the Lancashire manufacturers bleed for Indian agriculturists and they are extremely keen to buy our cotton. The increase in the purchase of Indian cotton by the United Kingdom during the last three years has been mainly due to the price partly being in favour of Indian cotton as compared to American or Egyptian cotton. But even this limited *quid pro quo* can hardly bear examination. The purchase of Indian cotton by the United Kingdom came to Rs. 2 crores in 1934, to Rs. 2 and half crores in 1935 and Rs. 3 and half crores in 1936 as against the import of Lancashire piece-goods into India of Rs. 8 and three-fourth crores in 1933-34, Rs. 11 crores in 1934-35 and Rs. 9 crores in 1935-36. On the other hand, Japan whose case is always cited as an illustration of *quid pro quo* by Lancashire agriculturists, increased its imports of Indian cotton from Rs. 11 crores in 1935 to over Rs. 16 crores in 1936 and exported piece-goods during these two years to the value of Rs. 3 and three-fourth crores and Rs. 6 crores respectively. I believe it is held by experts that the United Kingdom can take more of raw cotton than it has been doing hitherto and as against 5 lakhs bales that it takes now, which constitutes, I believe, about 20 per cent of the total cotton imports of the United Kingdom, it can easily take 9 lakhs bales. But Lancashire is definitely against any preferential duty being imposed on imports of raw cotton and wants to have a free hand regarding her purchase relying as she does more on political pressure on the one hand and platitudes of goodwill and reciprocity on the other than on any definite commitment and undertaking. It is necessary for Indian commercial and public opinion to warn the Government against yielding to this incessant clamour of Lancashire and to see that no further preference to the United Kingdom textile industry is given in this country.

**Pandit Santanam**, after tracing the history of the Ottawa and the Mody-Lees Pacts, declared that the resolution before the House was a mandate to the three representatives of the Federation who would be shortly proceeding to England in connection with the Indo-British Trade negotiations. The main object was that their hands must be strengthened to the extent that whatever the pressure or circumstances while in England they should not be allowed to go beyond the four corners of the mandate contained in the resolutions. He wanted the Federation to make it explicitly clear to these three representatives that at least they must not be party to any agreement like the Ottawa Pact of 1932. He concluded, "If we are strong in giving them this mandate in no uncertain terms, I think they would feel themselves strengthened and try to secure the best terms for India."

**Dewan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabapatki Mudaliar** stressed that any agreement made should secure definite markets in the United Kingdom for Indian raw produce like oilseeds, vegetable oils, coffee, cotton, leather, etc. All these years fiscal autonomy had not been strictly followed by the Government in practice. For them this question of fiscal autonomy was no mere sentiment. It was the foundation of India's industrial development. Any encroachment would result in crippling India's industrial expansion.

The speaker then dealt with individual items like sugar, steel and other commodities and said that in textiles British exports to India enjoyed preference already and any further preference should be ruled out. He quoted the opinion of the Tariff Board in support of his contention. Referring to the unreasonable demand of reciprocity by Lancashire textile interests, Mr. Mudaliar said that the United Kingdom textiles enjoyed manifold and greater benefits than what her raw material imports would warrant and the Ottawa Agreement was not based on strict principles of reciprocity.

**Mr. Manjandas** and **Mr. Pagraj Gupta** further supported the resolution. The latter said that any agreement to be negotiated should secure a much larger outlet

for Indian goods than that for British goods. The most incurable optimist would admit that India's gold exports would cease some day. The only alternative would be borrowing, which was not in the interest of either India or England. The resolution was adopted.

#### DISCRIMINATION IN INDIAN STATES

Mr. *M. C. Ghia* moved a resolution that "the Federation is gravely concerned over the discriminating higher duties which are levied by some Indian States on import of Indian products in their territorial limits, than on imports of non-Indian products and urges Indian State Administration to abolish such discriminating duties which are detrimental to Indian industries."

After Mr. *Dhanukar* had supported it, the resolution was passed.

#### PROTEST AGAINST WEDGWOOD COMMITTEE

Mr. *Jamshed N. Mehta* moved the next resolution recording the Federation's protest against the personnel of the Wedgwood Committee which did not include a single Indian and opining that its terms of reference, in the opinion of the Federation, were very narrow and tendentious in character. The Federation reiterated the urgent necessity for a radical reorganisation of the railway system with a view to ensuring economic and efficient transport for public. The resolution further strongly disapproved of the recent action of the Secretary of State in not exercising the option of purchase of the Bengal North-Western Railway and the M. S. M. Railway, despite the decision of the Indian legislature and against the spirit of the accepted policy of State-management adopted by the Government of India since 1923.

Mr. *G. L. Mehta* and Mr. *R. M. Gandhi* supported the resolution, which was passed.

#### IMPORT DUTIES ON RAW MATERIALS

The Federation adopted a resolution moved from the Chair "that the prevailing high rates of import duties on the numerous raw materials used in manufacturing processes within the country impose a definite handicap on particular indigenous industries and urges that (a) industries using imported raw materials on which ordinary revenue duty is levied should be given a drawback of import duties or (b) industries using as their raw materials product of protected industries should be entitled to some consideration for extra outlay." Mr. *D. N. Saha* strongly supported the resolution.

#### EXPORTS TO NORTHERN EUROPE

Sir *Rahimtoola Chinyoy*, in a vigorous speech, moved a resolution that "the Federation views with concern the deterioration of the position of Indian exports in Northern European markets, particularly in Germany, brought about by the policy of regulation of their foreign trade by such countries on the basis of the barter and compensation system and strongly urges the Government of India to remain actively in contact and keep in constant touch with the trend of economic activities and commercial regulations abroad through its Trade Commissioners, stationed in the various countries and explore the possibilities of entering into bilateral trade agreements and clearing arrangements with such countries as necessary in order to maintain and develop India's export trade."

Mr. *Jamshed N. Mehta* and Mr. *Shivaraman Mehta* supported the resolution which was passed.

On the motion of Mr. *A. L. Ojha* the House adopted a resolution expressing regret at the denial of representation to the coal industry on the Coal-Mining Committee and in view of this fact, urging the Government to consult the opinion of the coal industry before legislation on it was passed.

#### CENTRAL SEEDS COMMITTEE

The Federation also passed Mr. *R. M. Gandhi's* resolution drawing the attention of the Government of India to the necessity for appointing a Central Seeds Committee on the lines of the Cotton and Jute Committees with adequate representation on it of all the interests concerned.

#### REDUCTION OF STAMP DUTY ON HUNDIS

Several resolutions were put from the chair and passed. The first of them expressed the opinion that the present rate of stamp duty on negotiable bills of

exchange was very high and restricted their free use, which was very essential not only for the proper building up of the money market but also for facilitating marketing and agricultural finance and recommending that the stamp duty on all inland bills of less than one year's usance should be reduced to two annas per Rs. 1,000.

#### OTHER RESOLUTIONS

The second resolution opined that the prevalence of varying weights and measures in the various markets for agricultural produce in the country was creating confusion and hampering trade and urged the Government to introduce and legalise uniform standards throughout the country.

The third resolution stated that the opportunities for periodic informal discussions provided at some places by the railway administrations between the commercial *peers* and their chief commercial members had proved useful and requested the Railway Board to ask the Indian railway administrations to provide similar opportunities for informal discussion in all important business centres served by their respective systems.

The fourth resolution invited the attention of the Government of India to the defective provisions of the Indian Merchandise Marks Act and urged them to bring about suitable legislation to end the Act.

The fifth resolution urged upon the Government of India the necessity for immediate appointment of an Agent to the Government of India in Burma, with a Trade Commissioner under him, both of whom should be Indians, for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of Indians in Burma.

#### INDIAN SHIPPING

The sixth resolution urged upon the Government the immediate necessity for redeeming their continuous assurance of providing an adequate share for Indian national shipping the overseas trade. As Indian shipping interests were vitally interested in the problems relating to the Middle and Far East, they were entitled to due representation on the Imperial Shipping Committee and, therefore, steps should be taken to modify the constitution of that Committee, with a view to securing adequate representation to Indian shipping. The resolution further urged the necessity of (a) reserving the coastal traffic of the country to companies incorporated in India with India Capital and control; (b) entering into agreements with countries within and without the British Empire for securing such facilities to Indian-owned steamers as steamers of those countries employed in Indian waters and (c) placing all Government traffic with Indian-owned and controlled shipping companies. The Federation then adjourned till the next day.

### Second Day—New Delhi—8th. April 1937

#### PLEA FOR WINE POLICY OF PROTECTION

Mr. A. L. Ojha moved the following resolution when the Federation resumed its sitting to-day:—“The Federation views with satisfaction the progress of the various industries in India during the recent years which had been made even under the halting policy of the protection adopted by the Government.

“The Federation is further of opinion that in order to relieve unemployment, to improve the standard of living of the people and to bring out proper equilibrium between agriculture and industry, it is essential to have further development of industries both on large and small scale within the country.

“The Federation, therefore, strongly recommends to the Government of India to re-examine and widen their policy of protection with a view to the adoption of a more vigorous and comprehensive national policy of economic development.”

Mr. Morarji and Mr. Mohla supported the resolution which was unanimously adopted.

#### SUGAR INDUSTRY

Mr. Thappar moved a resolution placing on record the Federation's gratification at the progress made by the sugar industry in this country, fully justifying all principles of protection and viewing with great concern the attitude of the Government of India towards it, specially the recent increase in excise duty, on the eve

of a regular enquiry by the Tariff Board. Such increase was harmful to the interest of the manufacturer, the consumer and the agriculturist. The Federation further urged the Government of India to take steps so that sugar may be imported from India into the United Kingdom free of duty or at least on the payment of the same rate of duty as certified colonial sugar. The Federation also urged the Government of India to take all necessary steps for the proper utilization of molasses, specially for the manufacture of power alcohol. Lastly the Federation protested against the action of several railways in increasing railway freight on sugar.

In moving the resolution, Mr. Karam Chand Thapar said that the recent increase in the Excise Duty on the eve of the appointment of a Tariff Board Enquiry was both regrettable and unjustified. The Government would have been well advised if they had not forestalled the recommendations of the Tariff Board; but now that the Sugar industry had been singled out for an iniquitous and heavy burden, it would be but reasonable for the industry to expect Governmental help in other directions.

One such direction lay in the export of sugar to the United Kingdom. The Government could assist considerably in the matter by affording the industry various facilities, e. g., by offering a drawback of excise duty on the export of sugar, by obtaining specially reduced railway and steamship freights and by securing a suitably low preferential duty such as was levied on "certified colonial sugar" in the United Kingdom market. If Indian sugar could be admitted in the United Kingdom market on the basis of "certified colonial sugar" it would be of help to India, inasmuch as it would enable her to find a suitable outlet for her surplus production, and also to the United Kingdom, inasmuch as that country would be made independent of Non-Empire sources for the supply of its requirements of Sugar. The Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, which had been largely responsible for the grant of protection to the industry, should also bring pressure upon the Government of India to take suitable action in this respect in the interests both of the Indian agriculturist and of the Indian manufacturer.

Equally urgent was the necessity for taking suitable steps for the utilisation of molasses, the production of which was increasing by leaps and bounds and which far from being an asset to the industry, was becoming a source of expenditure. Even its throwing away was a problem and nuisance. The production of molasses was now estimated at over 350,000 tons and the export of molasses was negligible. There was a limit to its consumption for purposes like land fertilising, road surfacing manufacturing of dry ice, etc. It would be of considerable help if the Government of India enabled and assisted the industry in utilising it for manufacturing power alcohol for use as motor fuel, as was being done in various sugar-producing countries of the world. This would ensure to the industries a return of at least eight annas per md. for the molasses, would prevent the frittering away of this important by-product of the industry and would enable them to reduce the cost of production of Sugar to that extent. The Government's revenue would not either suffer, as the industry would be able to pay a duty on power alcohol, equal to that on petrol.

It was regrettable that the railways should have effected an increase in the railway freight on sugar at a time when the industry was seeking outside markets for the disposal of the increasing production. It was necessary that the Railway Board should reconsider this matter and revert to the rates of freight that were in existence up to March, 1937. The industry's production now amounted to about 10 lakhs of tons of sugar, which was roughly equal to its present estimated consumption. The existing factories were capable of producing of over 12 lakhs of tons of sugar with their present capacity, if they crushed cane for the full length of the season. The paramount necessity of the industry at the moment, therefore, was not any further expansion, but the intimation of schemes for research work, particularly agricultural, which would lead to the extension of the present cane crushing season from about four months to eight months in the year and would bring down the cost of production of cane to a level which would conform to that in other efficient sugar producing countries of the world.

Concluding, Mr. Thapar said that about the most fruitful direction in which the Government of India could assist the industry at the present stage was by undertaking an expenditure of about Rs. 20 lakhs per year on research work. Such expenditure would not be fruitless for it would enable the industry to occupy an important place among the efficient sugar producing countries of the world, and it could be easily met out of the proceeds of the excise duty. He hoped that with their united endeavours they would be able to persuade the Government of the

future to take an attitude of sympathy, appreciation and greater responsibility towards the sugar industry with which the interests of millions of cultivators were closely linked.

Pandit *Santanam* and Mr. *Saha* strongly supported the resolution which was adopted.

#### INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

*Lala Shriram* moved a resolution urging the Government of India to set up forthwith, in consultation with the industries concerned, statutory committees on the lines of the Indian Central Cotton Committee for systematic development of the important industries of the country by taking up research work and by collecting the necessary statistics for those particular industries. The Federation would be willing to support the levy of a small cess, if necessary, to be levied in consultation with the industries concerned and to be entirely utilised for the furtherance of the development of those industries.

*Lala Shriram* said that since the present century, particularly industries in other countries had perfected the application of principles and mechanism of scientific management. India's lethargy in industrial progress relatively to other countries was due to the absence of a policy of economic research, broadly conceived and actively prosecuted. Scientific knowledge in the Government Agricultural Departments was very meagre and as regards the manufacturing industries, the present scale of research was totally inadequate to raise these industries to the standard in other countries. He emphasised the need for the establishment of statutory research committees.

Mr. *Kasturibhai Lalbhai* said that in asking the Government to encourage researches they were asking them to help them not merely for the betterment of a particular industry but for the betterment of the country as a whole. It was important that at least half-a-dozen selected industries should be decided upon and research committees should be constituted on the lines suggested in the resolution.

Mr. *Chamanlal* opined that in these days of economic competition, protected industries should always keep abreast with the latest scientific and chemical researches. The resolution was unanimously adopted.

#### RAILWAY FREIGHTS

The last resolution on the agenda was moved by Mr. *Bhattacharya*, strongly protesting against the proposed enhancement of railway freights and urging on the Railway Board to adopt the following measures in the vital interest of the soap and cosmetic industries in India : (a) minimum weight of consignments by goods train should be lowered to seven seers ; (b) small quantities of advertising matter, such as calendars, enamelled signs etc. included with other materials in some packages, should be charged as forming part of the saleable materials.

Mr. *Bhattacharya* said that the industry concerned appealed to railways to reduce freight charges on special manufactures but they were turned down. He referred in particular, to the menacing competition on soap and cosmetics by the establishment in India of two powerful foreign factories, capable of manufacturing these articles on a mass scale. It was the duty of the Government to reduce freight rates which would immediately be reflected in the cost of production.

After Mr. *B. N. Maitra* had supported it, the resolution was adopted. The session then concluded.

# The Bombay Indian Merchants' Chamber

29th. Session—Bombay—26th. January 1937

Presiding over the 29th annual general meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, held at Bombay on the 26th. January 1937 Sir *Rahimtoolah Chinoy*, retiring President, reviewed the work done by the Chamber during his regime of office and dealt at length with matters of importance to the Indian Mercantile community.

At the outset, the President referred to the conquest by Italy of the ancient kingdom of Abyssinia, the civil war in Spain, the abdication of King Edward and the inauguration of the new constitution in India in April next. Dealing with trade prospects, he observed that while it cannot be said that we are out of the slough of despondency and depression, trade and industries have begun to show some signs of revival and healthy activity. As for agriculture, the era of low prices has been going away.

Sir *R. Chinoy* next referred to the devaluation of the Franc in order to prevent a financial and industrial debacle and regretted that the India Government still remained wedded to their peculiar currency doctrines and refused to budge from the position they had taken up all along. He maintained enquiry should be made into the necessities of the situation. He hoped the Government would not continue to hold the present ratio under the illusion that any change in it might affect their prestige.

As regards the Indo-Japanese trade negotiations, an air of mystery surrounded these parleys and the public was left wondering why there had been delay and what the ultimate outcome would be. The Legislative Assembly had scrapped the Ottawa Pact and with a view to concluding a new trade treaty between India and Britain, negotiations were opened and non-official advisers appointed, but even here there was delay and it was not likely that they would see the early conclusion of a new agreement. He emphasised the need for the Government to conclude these agreements only in the interests of this country.

Sir *Rahimtoolah*, regretting the recent anti-Indian feeling in Ceylon, said that this emphasised the need for a trade agreement with Ceylon. He welcomed the Government's decision to appoint Trade Commissioners in Japan and Africa and said that this should prevent Indian interests in those countries being jeopardised. He dealt at length with the Zanzibar question and said that the Binder report had unfortunately failed to appreciate the Indian view-point. He asserted that Indians were part of the territory and, therefore, Mr. Binder should have considered the repercussions of all recent executive and legislative actions on their interests. He urged the Government of India to step forward and take more vigorous action to safeguard Indian interests.

In conclusion, the outgoing President dealt with smuggling and the diversion of trade and relying on newspaper reports, congratulated the Government of India, whom the Chamber had severely criticised in the past on this question, on the steps they had taken to check smuggling and steps which would lead to increase in the customs revenues of the Government of India.

*Raja Bahadur Govindlal Shivalal Motilal*, the incoming President, said, "Situated as we are, it is useless to say we can dissociate business from politics. Politics has its different colours but generally, politics of this Chamber, as I believe of all Indian Chambers of Commerce and even of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, is politics of a Nationalistic colour. While the Chamber cannot by the very nature of things be affiliated to any political organisation as such it would also not be appropriate or desirable that guidance of its affairs should be in the hands of one whose outlook on questions of the day may not be the general outlook of the Chamber as we have seen and known for several years. This Chamber has maintained its distinctive individuality during all these years and I don't want this to suffer in any way. But the Chamber has to shape its policy in consonance with national demands and 'urgings'."



Dealing with industrialisation on a large and varied scale, Mr. Shivalal said: "The progress which we have made in this direction, despite handicaps in the shape of a Foreign Government with its halting reactionary industrial policy, is not small and India has come to be recognised even by the League of Nations and the International Labour Conference as one of the leading industrial countries. Notwithstanding this, the pace of industrialisation is slow, the protection given to our industries is half-hearted and the interests of national industries are generally given the go-by when they come into conflict with the interests of British industries. With provinces having to bear a greater burden regarding the development of industries after April 1, they should make it their chief business to look into the question which has been greatly neglected. Upon the right solution of this question will depend the eradication of poverty and unemployment, two of our biggest problems at the present day. The development of Khaddar and all rural industries should prove a key to our much discussed problem.

"The rural part of the problem has been more or less neglected and even the Government apparently had to wait till Mahatma Gandhi stressed the importance of rural industries. The programme which has been chalked out for rural industries does not in any way conflict with the programme of industrialisation adopted by the country. Both are parts of the same problem and supplementary to each other and not contradictory. The problem of rural finance has been an acute one and the instrumentality of co-operative credit has been used to cope with it."

Referring to the trade negotiations now proceeding, Mr. Motilal emphasised that the underlying principle of these negotiations should be that these should be carried on as between equals and there should be no show of force, influence or pressure. "While I recognise ultimately it is the official representatives of the Government who should sign the agreement, we cannot forget in this country that the Government is not amenable to popular control. It is all the greater reason, therefore, why the Government should always have the co-operation and assistance of non-official advisers. The Government should also consider the advisability of starting trade negotiations with countries other than Great Britain and Japan. The steps taken by some Continental countries against India put her at great disadvantage and it may be worth considering what steps to take to meet this situation both in the interests of our self-respect and in the interests of our trade."

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## The Orissa Chamber of Commerce

The need for planned economy for the regeneration of Orissa and the establishment of an economic Advisory Council was urged in the course of the presidential address read by *Seth Sundar Das* at the annual meeting of the Orissa Chamber of Commerce held at Cuttack on the 13th. February 1937.

The meeting was held in the Satyanarayan Hall, Naya Sarak, with *Seth Sundar Das* in the chair, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Raghu Karson, President of the Chamber. The Chairman read the following presidential address, in the course of which he said :-

Since April 1st, the Province has been administered by His Excellency the Governor under the Orissa Order in Council—the system of administration going back to pre-Morley Minto days. There was an Orissa Advisory Council, to which unfortunately no representative of the Commercial community was nominated—a vital omission no doubt in the conception of administrative structure of the Province. Neither was the Chamber of Commerce nor any representative of commercial opinion asked to advise and assist in the economic reconstruction of the New Province. There has been no economic planning nor any deliberation on it. The administration has been faltering through the transition period from autocracy to partial democracy somehow.

It is most deplorable that the Government of Orissa lost sight of the golden moments of national enthusiasm just after the inauguration of the New Province and could not harness national resources—men, money and mind for economic regeneration of the Oriya people. In the life of nations, such rare chances come

once in a century and the failure to grasp it rests entirely with the Government of Orissa. Even some of the salient features of administration— notable concessions of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms— were obliterated. Economic planning or development of industries were tabooed subjects. No Board of Industries were allowed to function for Orissa nor any attempt was made to have an economic stock-taking of the resources of the Province. The Government of Orissa functioned as an impecunious landlord living on charities of the Central Government and making no effort to add to the resources of the people or the Government.

On the other hand, the minds of people were kept disturbed on the vital issue of the location of Capital. This controversy had its repercussions on peaceful trade and commerce; and instead of revival of trade and commerce, there was a set-back. Fortunately for us in Orissa the question of location of capital is no more an insoluble problem. It is recognised on all hands that Cuttack has won, though the final verdict of the nation will be given at the first meeting of the elected Orissa Legislative Assembly.

Sir Otto Niemeier's financial award left Orissa a permanently crippled province, although it improved slightly its financial position. It just liberated Orissa as visualised in the Orissa-Order-in-Council by the cancellation of all the pre-reform debts, and thereby relieving Orissa of the payment of Rs. 9 and a half lakhs as interest charges on certain Irrigation projects. We are, of course, fortunate that Orissa had no debt on the Provincial Loan Fund Account, but it must be borne in mind that Orissa needs development in all nation-building directions, wherein her neighbouring partners starved her in the past and, therefore, Orissa must have to borrow money in the near future for development programme, wherein she is at least half a century behind.

Proceeding the President quoted extensively from his presidential address in the previous year and from the statement issued on behalf of the Chamber on the Niemeier award, to show that the recommendations of Sir Otto Niemeier were inadequate for the needs of Orissa and went on to remark :—

I take this opportunity to wish good-speed to the 56 elected representatives in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. I am particularly gratified to find that besides the representative of the Commerce constituency, the Orissa Chamber can claim three more members amongst the elected M. L. As., and I offer my personal congratulations as well as that of the Chamber to Messrs, Rangalal Modi, Nitya Nanda Kanungo, Girija Bhusan Dutt and Bishitrananda Das on their election.

The first problem that the popular ministry will have to face is the inelasticity of the revenue of Orissa and the consequent starvation of nation-building departments. The limited expectancy of Orissa in the share of income-tax five years after will lie in the lap of God, particularly when the Railways plead insecurity in their resources. It is true that Sir Ralph Wolgwood Committee is enquiring into the working of the Indian Railways and it is difficult to anticipate its findings. Orissa administration will have to readjust its structure and scale of productive and non-productive expenditure, if the popular Government will plan constructive nation building proposals. All the same, I do hope, the popular ministry will undertake economic planning after exhaustive survey of the resources of the Orissa Government. The task is difficult, indeed, but the spirit of service will enable our elected legislators to override all obstacles. Suffice it for me to say that in any constructive economic planning, our legislators will have the heartiest co-operation of the mercantile fraternity in Orissa.

Chambers of Commerce—Indian or European—in every province, elected their representatives to respective legislatures on the altered franchise except our Orissa Province. The Indian Legislative Assembly Committee on the Delimitation Committee Report felt the injustice done to the Orissa Chamber of Commerce and in line with the recommendations of the Bihar and Orissa Government, recommended that the Orissa Chamber of Commerce should be the recognised constituency for the seat allotted to Commerce and industry in Orissa. I take this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the fairness of the Bihar and Orissa Government and the Assembly Delimitation Committee. But the Order in Council stuck to the Hammond recommendations, as a result of which the Orissa Commerce constituency had 275 votes all over the Province, the Calcutta Muslim Chamber of Commerce and the Bihar Chamber of Commerce had each an electorate of less than fifty. The contestants for the Commerce seat had to undergo heavy expenditure in canvassing and securing the votes. I do hope this anomaly will be

removed at the next election and Commerce constituency would be confined to an organised association like the Orissa Chamber of Commerce.

I have laid stress for planned economy for Orissa for our national regeneration. The popular ministry, I do hope, will boldly attempt solution of those economic problems on which contentment and happiness of the 51 lakhs of people of Orissa depend. There must be improved communications for transit of rural produce, so that the villager gets an economic price for his crops. Improved cultivation, production of richer crops, village sanitation and development of rural industries can only develop if there be economic planning for it. The commercial community are equally interested in the economic welfare of the rural life and will render any service for diagnosis of the underlying defects and their eradication. What is needed is immediate establishment of an economic Advisory Council, a Board of Industries, a Waterway Board, a Flood Preventive Committee, and similar Committees to examine scientifically the problems that lie before us.

I do hope the popular Ministry will insist on the early establishment of an Orissa Province Advisory Council of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. The mercantile community in Orissa and the large travelling public suffer equally from the lack of attention from the Railway; rates and freights are being enhanced to the detriment of movement of goods traffic in Orissa and Orissa needs her own local Railway Advisory Committee.

Before concluding my speech, I wish to make a few observations on the general trade position of India and the consequent deterioration in Government receipts. While Customs tariff has been kept at a high level, the impacts of the Ottawa Agreement has deteriorated the purchasing power of the people as Indian goods cannot have a sale in non-British countries. India is losing her continental market. The right solution lies in bilateral agreements with all sovereign nations and any preference shown to Britain deteriorates India's export trade and consequently low price in India results. I do hope, India's representatives at the London Conference will stand up for their country's welfare and it is hoped that the Government of India now realises the truth of economic depression in India. Orissa, a purely agrarian country, can show signs of recovery if price level rises, and let me conclude my speech in hoping that the year 1937 will result in bilateral agreements with all countries so that India recovers her lost market.

## The Malabar Chamber of Commerce

Presiding over the 15th annual session of the Malabar Chamber of Commerce held at Calicut on the 20th March 1937, Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, Editor, *Saradashiksham*, had some observations to make on journalism, politics and the trade conditions of the country at present and pointed out how some of the problems could be solved. He said:—

"Until Mahatma Gandhi entered the field of politics, and persuaded people that politics was a whole time job, the role of the professional politician was to a large extent thrust on the journalist; it fell to his lot, not merely to reflect and react to public opinion, but also to create and consolidate public opinion. That position is fast changing to-day. Politics apart, the journalist, as a nation builder, has now and again to venture further afield, and direct, and divert attention to neglected avenues of public service. It is this feeling that has led me hitherto to devoted increasing attention to the economic needs of the country. Without political power the full and final solution for the problems facing us to-day may not be possible. Not a day passes without a good few of the unemployed young men approaching me for help; and I am helpless; not merely helpless, but hurt to feel myself so helpless. A score of years back a misanthropic movement was started in this province to urge communal claims in Government service; the exercise of limited patronage could not keep pace with a demand, rising in geometrical ratio; and it was not long before the Raja of Panagal discovered that with every appointment in his gift, he made one doubtful friend and many declared enemies. And Government service is only one of several agencies of employment and, in my view, the least important;

the time has surely arrived to call a halt and take firm hold of fundamentals and re-order our economic life.

"How shall we set about it? Let us review the facts of the situation; first stands agriculture as the mainstay of the Province. Frankly, on the basis of yield to-day, it cannot rank as an industry. The average earning per head of rural population has been estimated in an official publication, at half anna per day. On that he must live and find means to liquidate a debt estimated at Rs. 250 per head of rural population. The relevant facts have only to be stated in juxtaposition to realise the magnitude of the task. No wonder, the able-bodied and the alert-minded migrate from the villages, to find a precarious living in urban areas; Agriculture must again resume the proportions of an industry. How is that to be ensured? First, the debt due from the land should be reduced to manageable proportions. Secondly, the incidence of land revenue should conform to accepted principles of taxation; thirdly the fruits of the ryots' endeavour should be safeguarded to him by adequate provision of cheap credit, easy transport and equitable facilities. Any attempt at debt conciliation without agency to discharge the conciliated debt cannot avail. Government will not lend ear to any drastic revision of the land revenue system, without an alternative source of revenue discovered for them. Without satisfying the first two conditions, the third is not worth attempting. When the Reserve Bank of India was founded, it was widely believed that something real will be attempted to revive and restore rural credit.

Two years have passed and a small brochure has been published, stating the factors of the situation, without proceeding to offer any practical solution to them. The Special Officer deputed to the task has discovered that the ryot must be made credit-worthy, before he can be offered credit facilities, and that to make credit-worthy is beyond the competence of the Reserve Bank! Speaking with some inside knowledge of its mechanism, I may frankly confess, it will take years of uphill work before that institution can fulfil the hopes we cherish of it. The elections held under the new register have brought to power a party imbued with the spirit of service and it remains to be seen how far, under the new Constitution, it can assert itself to ensure the greatest good of the greatest number, which is the central purpose of a civilised administration. But agriculture alone is not sufficient. I believe the depression we are passing through and the distress we are witnessing daily, may yet turn a blessing in disguise if we will only profit by it. Agriculture by its demonstrable failure to pay, has choked the fountains of credit. Money has ceased to flow back into land and keep land values at uneconomic levels; and the creditor is afraid to sell up his judgment debtor, lest he should be saddled with the land and mulcted for recurrent dues. If only the Government will show some imagination, now is the time for them to step in and redeem the ryot.

On the present level of values, with debt scaled down to economic proportions, agriculture may be revived as industry. The money, released from land, will seek fresh outlets, and help to found new and promising industries. Even as it is, the discerning few would have noticed that the savings from services have already entered the investment market. The release of funds, from the plantations of Malaya and the wet lands of Burma, have also found their way into the investment market. During the last year or two, Madras has contributed much to new company floatations; not merely of this Province but of all-India. I value and welcome this move but I would beseech all, possessed of knowledge and experience, to see that this new current is wisely directed and cautiously exploited.

There are a thousand directions, in which this may be attempted, and every successful effort will provide new openings to our young men.

"And now let me turn to a review of factors and forces of more direct concern to trade, industry and commerce. There was a revival of the ratio controversy following the devaluation of the major continental currencies, but the Government was not to be moved out of its intransigence. Informed Indian opinion has all along favoured a slower ratio and the argument advanced in support should now be familiar to all; but the Government has ever shown more concern to balance its budget without taking thought of the budget of the people in whose interest and for whose benefit, it is presumed to function. The public wanted a duty on the export of gold; the demand has been met by an import duty on silver; Comment is needless. The Sugar Protection Act is coming up shortly for review before the Tariff Board; but I am afraid the enquiry has already been prejudiced by the levy of a further excise in this year's budget. What was indeed to stabilise the industry was a little rationalisation, to rectify the mal-adjustment of distribution, and some scheme, to

that end, was expected of the Tariff Board. But it now looks as though the process of rationalisation must first start with the Government Departments. One department of Government spends money to stimulate cane cultivation; another seeks to neutralise enterprise by an uneconomic levy on the fruits of that endeavour. The Steel Protection Act was intended to encourage the growth of fresh units of production; but when vested interests, contrary to undertakings, proceeded to engage in a cut-throat competition, the Government was not easily to be moved to ensure fair-selling price on which the whole scheme of protection was based. Luckily for the new entrants in the field, world conditions intervened to save them.

The Indian Legislature has called on the Government to terminate the Ottawa agreement, but Government have so far evaded their obligations, by starting prolonged negotiations for a new pact, keeping the old pact alive—meanwhile. Negotiations are going on between India and Japan on the one hand and India and Great Britain on the other for a textile agreement, but the process of reconciling conflicting interests has been protracted and nothing definite so far has materialised. Railway finances are now reported to be on the mend but it is difficult to measure progress as the budget presented is deliberately misleading. Charges, which should legitimately be debited to military expenditure are included here, to swell the recurring deficit. Periodic raids on the Depreciation Fund have now been followed up with a demand to write off outstanding claims; the policy of Stores Purchase continues to be unsatisfactory, and the control of the Railway Board on Company managed railways seems to be entirely nominal.

"I do not want to go on adding to the catalogue of woes, but I have said enough to show, there is really no change of heart in the administration, in matters, that matter. That can only come when we are strong enough to claim our own. There is only one thing more I shall refer to here. A modest measure of Company Law reform has been passed and the new amending Act has come into force on the 15th January this year. Reform of the Insurance law has next been taken up and an amending bill is now before the Indian Legislature for consideration. The objective of both measures has been to protect the interests of the share-holder and policy-holder and to the extent they serve this end, they are welcome. I have great faith in Joint-stock enterprise as, in a poor country especially, capital for all needed purposes can only come that way; and Chambers like this have a responsibility to see to the wise direction of capital to deserving enterprises."

## The S. I. Chamber of Commerce

The annual meeting of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce was held on the 31st March 1937 at the premises of the Chamber, North Beach Road, Madras, with the hon. Mr. M. C. M. Chidambaram Chettiar, Vice-President of the Chamber, in the chair, in the absence of Nawab G. Abdul Hakim, President.

Mr. Yusuff Saif, Hon. Secretary, presented the annual report and the audited statement of accounts of the Chamber for 1936-37.

In moving their adoption, the Chairman spoke as follows:—

In the unavoidable absence of Nawab Abdul Hakim Sahib, I have the honour to preside over the 27th annual session of the Chamber and to move the adoption of the annual report and audited statements of accounts for the year 1936. The Nawab Sahib, having completed two years as President, is due to retire now by virtue of the convention which the general body laid down in August 1935. I am also very glad that my friend and colleague Dewan Bahadar Govindoss Chatoorbhoojadoss is due to succeed him by unopposed election. I need hardly say that it is a very healthy sign of the proper outlook which we bring to bear upon the questions coming up before us. In a commercial constituency such as ours, it is high-time that we began to look upon elections merely as opportunities for service and for taking up new responsibilities towards fellow-members of the mercantile community and none of profit or honour, and when we have done that we shall have removed

from our community a prolific source of controversy. You might have noticed that as a most distinguishing feature of the sister institutions run by the European mercantile community as also of several well-conducted Indian commercial bodies, and let us hope that at no distant in our institution also at every election the fittest man will come in unopposed.

When we met here twelve months ago, we were far from being cheerful nor had we any sense of the brighter outlook that the new year was going to bring. Prices of the bulk of our export commodities except those of hides and skins were ruling low; the trade barriers remained as stupendous as ever; added to that, the channels of trade with Italy, one of our principal customer countries in the West, had dried up under the shadow of economic sanctions; and the Ethiopian situation ever threatened to envelop us in a world conflagration. To-day we are under a similar threat of war arising from the developments in Spain, but let us hope that the forces of orderly and established government will ultimately prevail without much prolonged conflict. It is true that what buoyancy is visible in the market to-day is in a large measure attributable to the political clouds in the Continent of Europe. It is also to be noted that prices of metals and rubber have been shooting up too abruptly, leaving prices of agricultural produce and most other manufactured goods far too behind.

What one is led to conclude is that there is a great deal of unreality and uncertainty in the situation, and businessmen would be well-advised in moving cautiously. We have been riding in recent months on the crest of what looks like an industrial boom accompanied by an unprecedented number of flotations. The era of protection has afforded the necessary environment and the plentitude of idle funds in the market has supplied the necessary mobility to industrial ventures. But there is always the danger of over-doing and of a complete absence of any sense of proportion. Where the gullible public so become the victims of crafty company promoters, it is of course the duty of the Government to step in and save the unsuspecting investor. You all know that a long step in this direction was taken last year by the passing of the new Indian Companies Act many of whose provisions are conceived in general public interest. I am afraid Government intervention of a more drastic kind is fast becoming due in the case of many of our protected industries. And one of the worst features of the latter day industrial development of India is the maldistribution of industries over the different provinces. Madras, for example, is still on the low side, depending as it does, on other provinces for its requirements of cement, or of sugar, or of cotton piecegoods, or of paper or of matches; there is no doubt that in the natural course of things, local industries must spring up and when that contingency arises, the rest of India will have to look beyond the shores of India and cultivate foreign markets.

That brings me to a burning question of the present day, namely, the position of Indians in foreign countries which have been our surest foreign markets for many of our home products. Our countrymen's position in those places has become a problem of perpetual anxiety in this country, notwithstanding the fact that almost all of them are within the British Empire, notwithstanding the fact that in every such case our people must take credit for a large share in the economic and material progress of those countries through centuries past. Nothing less than a supervening fear of retaliation would seem to bring those countries to a sense of their obligations to our people. It is, however, open to Government to try in the meanwhile the more peaceful method of appointing men of the status of High Commissioners to watch Indian interests in those developing into such a situation in Burma, Malaya, Dutch East Indies and in Ceylon, and I am quite sure that it will be in the best economic interests of India if Government would try this method before their hands are forced to adopt a more militant attitude towards the countries where our people are subjected to humiliation and deprived of elementary human rights. I am afraid that in countries like South and East Africa, and the other Dominions the time has come for the honour and interests of our people being vindicated by a firmer attitude on the part of the Government. It is most essential that our immemorial connection with those markets must continue to be strengthened and improved, the more so as the foreign countries believe in self-sufficiency and in shutting out imports.

I must add that in the case of Burma which has so long remained as part of our own country and in which accordingly our people settled and invested without any suspicion of a political separation, the Government of India are expected to keep a

very close watch with a view to preventing any harm being done to Indian interests. It is most disconcerting to note that almost the very first use of the new-found freedom which Burma made was to enhance the Indo-Burma Postal and Telegraph rates, and it is more disappointing still to see the Government of India reduced to total helplessness in the matter.

As there appears to be no prospect of this tendency of foreign countries abating at present, our attention will have to turn more and more to the development of the internal market and I have not the least doubt that the moment our railways and inland navigation authorities begin to realise this necessity the better and speedier would be our recovery and our resistance to the barriers in international trade. I have not the least doubt that the Transport Authorities of this country hold the key to India reaching her full economic stature. The burden of freight, the conditions of packing, the risk note forms, the number of gauges and transshipments, the large number of controlling authorities, all these are the besetting evils of our transport system, and let us hope that the institution of the Federal Railway Authority with its attendant freedom from the vote of the Legislature will not operate as a bar to those problems being tackled in a business-like way from the stand-point of the nation and the general interests of the country. Let us also hope that the Wedgwood Committee will put the Railways in a position to serve the needs of the people within the limits of their capacity to pay.

The need for adjusting the burden on the taxpayer to his capacity to bear it is the problem of problems in this country. The haphazard way in which incometax and supertax have been growing, the revenue and protective customs tariff has been now curtailed and now extended according to the exigencies of the Budget, the way in which burdensome excise duties have been springing up to meet an emergency after another, the way in which Central and Provincial Governments, the Municipalities and Local Boards have been vying with each other to plumb the depths of each other source of revenue open to them, have all tended to demoralise the system of taxation, dislocate its incidence and destroy its adaptability. Year after year hopes of reduction in taxation have been held out, but at the same time expenditure is allowed to swell and outdistance revenues.

The heaviness of taxation apart, the unscientific basis of it is a subject to which the Government cannot too soon turn their attention with a view to adjusting the tax burden more equitably with regard to different classes of the population. Let us hope that the new Provincial Ministries when they happen to be established constitutionally under the new Act will turn their earliest attention to this prolific source of discontent in the country and to this stupendous obstacle to the growth of any sense of economic self-reliance among the people of this country.

There are of course many problems that the mercantile community has been compelled to leave over to be tackled under more favourable circumstances. The increased opportunities that the new Reforms have brought to our people to tackle them will of course be used to the fullest extent, for which purpose the Chamber's representatives on the various public bodies have an important role to play. Nothing less than their ceaseless vigil and activity is required to ventilate their grievances of merchants and draw the immediate attention of the Government to them. And it is the duty of members of the Chamber and members of the public to post our representatives with the correct position on various questions and help them to handle them. It is a matter for deep regret that our hopes anchored on the new Constitution have received a rude shock by the way in which the first Ministries are proposed to be formed and by the grave uncertainty into which our domestic affairs have been thrown at a time when international atmosphere is surcharged with mutual ill-feeling and suspicion. I need hardly say that the present is a time when Government ought to take the representatives of the people into their fullest confidence and help them to carry out their programme. The mercantile community, more than any others, is interested in harmonious relationship between the legislature and the Executive as trade and industries cannot prosper in an atmosphere of hostility between them.

# The Bihar Chamber Of Commerce

Delivering his presidential address at the annual meeting of the Bihar Chamber of Commerce held at Patna on the 17th. April 1937 Rai Sahib Shri Narayan Arora at the outset made a reference to the departure of Sir James David Sifton and recalled the deep and abiding interest that he took in the commercial welfare of the province. Welcoming the new Governor Sir Maurice Hallett to the province the President said that no Governor had ever come to Bihar with greater knowledge of the people than their problems and their aspirations.

Touching on the question of the deadlock created in the country by the refusal of the Congress to form ministries, Rai Sahib Sri Narayan Arora hoped that a spirit of mutual good-will and trust would prevail between the Government and the Congress. He appealed to the new Ministers to extend a helping hand to bring about the amelioration of the condition of trade and industry in the province.

After criticising the budget proposals for 1937-38 of the Government of India Rai Sahib Arora drew attention to the export of gold from India and said that in India the Government was anxious to encourage imports to be paid by exports of gold. In the face of this heavy exodus of gold the possession of silver, which was not an ordinary commodity but a precious metal, should have been prized and its imports encouraged.

Pointing out how the export trade of India had diminished in recent years he said that the terms of a fresh trade agreement with Great Britain should be on the basis of "quid pro quo" not in respect of any particular commodity against another but in respect of the whole trade between the U. K. and India.

Referring to the Railway in India he said that the transport system of a country should be related to the wider economic policy of the country. On the policy of the Government with regard to the purchase of the B. N. W. Railway he suggested that it was best to continue cheapness with efficiency, which could be realised by the Indianisation of its ownership. Speaking on the sugar industry he said that the Government instead of finding fresh market for Indian sugar was trying to discourage its production by levying additional duties on home production.

## Resolutions

The Bihar Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution regarding the new Indian Insurance Bill and stated that protection should be given to safeguard the interests of indigenous companies against the onslaughts of foreign competition and desired that the clauses on the Bill should be amended accordingly.

The Chamber further resolved recommending to the Government the advisability of helping in the formation of an industrial credit syndicate on lines similar to that started in Beugal in order to help the growth of industries.

With a view to partial solution of the unemployment problem the Chamber desired that the Government should start and finance small factories in the province with trained students from the College Industries Institute.

The Chamber disapproved of the "hasty action of the Government in reducing the prices of sugarcane to an abnormally low level" and expressed the opinion that "this step will affect the future cultivators as also the industry adversely."

The Chamber recommended the Government to declare the minimum rate for the purchase of sugarcane by vacuum pan factories during the session in 1936-37 not lower than four annas and six pies, which step in the opinion of the Chamber would arouse confidence among the cultivators and give a steadier time to the price of sugar.



# The Andhra Chamber of Commerce

The Annual general body meeting of the Andhra Chamber of Commerce was held at Madras on the 4th. May 1937 with the hon. Mr. Narayandas Girdhardas, President in the Chair.

In moving the adoption of the report and statements of accounts for 1936, the Chairman said that if they looked back on the work they had done during the past years, they would have every reason to be proud of their achievements. By continuing the work as well in the future, they would justify the creation of the Chamber and also disprove the charge levelled that the Chamber was started for the purpose of securing representation in the legislature. Their opinions were sought on many important questions. The Chamber's financial position had improved. The proposal that the Chamber should own a building of its own could not be pushed through during the year under review; but the Chairman assured them that it had not been abandoned and serious efforts would be made in that direction.

Proceeding, he said: "The present political deadlock, the foremost topic of the day, is a source of anxiety no less to us, businessmen, than to politicians. It is not necessary for our purpose to go into the origin of the deadlock or debate upon the merits of the controversy. What we want is an early solution, and for this purpose it is necessary that the Government should take steps immediately to end the dispute. They should not let things drift as they are drifting now, out of considerations of prestige. A false sense of prestige has been responsible in the past for many serious mistakes, and it should not be allowed to prevail in the present instance. I hope that the present impasse will terminate soon, and India will have peace to work out her destiny as best as she could."

Referring to matters affecting trade, commerce and industry, Mr. Narayandas Girdhardas said, that the fiscal policy of the Government of India had not undergone any change. On the other hand, if one read the Budget speech of the Finance Member, one could not but come to the conclusion that the fiscal policy depended upon the whims and fancies of each Finance Member, and that no definite policy which would advance the interests of the nation, was pursued. Indian interests were sacrificed to the interests of others. Any amount of Constitution-making or publication of voluminous reports would not avail and would not advance the interests of India even to the smallest extent. What they wanted was, complete fiscal autonomy. Though that was promised on several occasions yet in actual practice the autonomy had been whittled down. The policy of discriminating protection which was followed for some time and which produced some temporary beneficial results in the case of certain industries, had been practically nullified on some pretext or other. The recent increase in the excise duty on sugar was a glaring instance in point. All the same, it had been acknowledged that protection was the only way to foster the industries of a country and to increase the general prosperity of the masses, and that protection would, to a great extent, facilitate industrial development and thereby reduce unemployment. The expenditure incurred in maintaining a Tariff Board would be an absolute waste unless and until the Tariff Board was given full powers and was constituted with complete national outlook and managed by Indians themselves.

One could not expect much from the negotiations and discussions that were going on for the conclusion of an Indo-British Trade Pact, in the place of the Ottawa Agreement. It was almost a foregone conclusion that India's interests would be sacrificed and that the final agreement would more or less be on the same lines as the Ottawa Pact with, if any, very negligible modifications. One could agree to accord preferential treatment only if the principle of reciprocity was accepted and acted up to. But the policy of preferential treatment should not be forced on India to the detriment of her industries and commerce, which were in an undeveloped condition. The principle of reciprocity could not be followed between India and Britain in all fairness, because the economic position of both these countries was not on the same level. Even the Indo-Japanese Trade Pact recently concluded would not in any way help Indian industries though a portion of India's raw materials would be purchased by Japan under the agreement. If they carefully analysed the position, it would be clear that many foreign countries were dependent upon, and must necessarily purchase raw materials from India whether or not there was a pact. The threat of boycotting Indian products could not hold good for long.

He should now refer to a piece of legislation which concerns them very much—the Companies Act. It was true that there was necessity for amendment of the

Act, but it remained to be seen whether the Act as amended would prove a blessing. Safeguards were no doubt necessary against certain abuses, but under the pretext of safeguards, the initiative for fostering industries, trade and commerce should not be discouraged. Much would depend on the spirit in which the Act would be administered.

An Insurance Bill was also on the anvil. Reform in Insurance Law in the right direction was desirable to protect Indian Insurance. The one feature of the Bill which was most objectionable to his mind was the abolition of the Managing Agency system for the insurance companies. Insurance had not developed to such an extent in India, that one could introduce legislation discouraging the Managing Agency system, which provided the necessary initiative and impetus for starting enterprises.

Dealing with the questions of Railways, the Chairman said: "Now coming to the Railways, you are aware of the criticisms levelled against the Wedgood Enquiry Committee. Of course, the arguments advanced by the Government of India for the non-inclusion of Indians in the Committee are most unconvincing. Even if it were an expert committee, there would have been no harm in including in it non-official businessmen and an Indian expert. Indians have filled many responsible positions with credit, and if they are given opportunity, I am sure they will prove better than the foreigners imported into India. Indians have the natural advantage of knowing Indian conditions better. One cannot but feel that the creation of Railway Statutory Board has been designed to take away the Railway administration from the purview of public criticism and to keep it as a close preserve for dumping foreign articles to the detriment of the interests of the country. Railways should not be regarded purely from a commercial point of view and as mere profiteering concerns; they are indeed the arteries through which national wealth should circulate. Railways play a prominent part in the development of industries, trade and commerce both internal and foreign. Adequate transport facilities and cheap railway freights are essential for the growth of industry and progress of trade. The railway freights in India are abnormally high, so much so that it becomes quite impossible for Indians to develop the foreign export trade of the country. The abnormal rate also hinders the internal trade movements.

"There is another matter affecting the business community and it is the Income-Tax Experts' Report. It was recently announced in newspapers that legislation will be introduced in the next Delhi Session of the Legislative Assembly. As this affects the business community, I hope and trust that due weight would be given to the views and opinions of various Indian Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Indian Chambers. There are some objectionable features in the recommendations of the Income-tax community. I do not like to discuss all those points but I would like to say this: Income-tax is an obnoxious levy, and it should not be imposed in a manner that would make one feel that it was a penalty imposed for being comparatively successful in business. In any case, I hope the short-sighted policy of 'killing the goose that lays golden eggs' will be avoided by those who will be called upon to frame legislation on the basis of the recommendations of the Experts' Committee."

The next question touched by the Chairman was that of ratio and currency. "The Government" he said "had shown utter disregard of public opinion and had not had the courtesy even to discuss the question with responsible leaders and their attitude had been one of complete defiance of public opinion. They could not accept the *ipse dixit* of Finance Members, who came to India with preconceived ideas and usually with an anti-Indian outlook. Why should not the Government appoint a Committee consisting of non-official Indians and experts to review this question?" He was not prepared to attach any value to the opinions expressed by a foreigner who has preconceived ideas based upon the factors prevailing in other countries. What was right for Britain might not be so for India. The whole Ratio and Currency question would have to be viewed from a purely Indian national standpoint. The Vicaroy, on the advice of the Finance Member, declined to receive a deputation of the Madras Currency League which wanted to wait upon His Excellency to discuss the Currency question. The tone of the Finance Member's speeches during the Budget session of the Legislative Assembly on this and other matters betrayed a completely unsympathetic attitude towards Indian interests and nothing could be expected during the regime of an unsympathetic Finance Member who wanted to pursue his own pet theories.

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# The Indian Insurance Conference

Fourth Session—Calcutta—7th. March 1937

## The Welcome Address

The fourth session of the Indian Insurance Conference commenced at the National Insurance Building, Calcutta on the 7th. March 1937 under the presidency of Mr. *Walehand Hirachand*. There was a large attendance of delegates and visitors from different parts of India.

Welcoming the delegates to the Indian Insurance Conference Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarcar*, Chairman of the Reception Committee said :—

It is my pleasant duty to extend to you a hearty welcome and I do so with all my heart. I find particular pleasure in welcoming you to this historic metropolis, not only because it has nursed me and many of us into our manhoods and formed the centre of our activities, but because it can trace its association with the very dawn of Indian insurance.

As far back as 1818 an insurance company named Oriental Life Assurance Co., was started in Calcutta mainly by Europeans. Eventually this company failed in 1834 and was transformed into the New Oriental. Let me add here that this company has no connection whatever with our premier Indian Company of Bombay. It was through the efforts of Babu Muttylal Seal that the Company was prevailed upon to accept Indian lives. Since then insurance enterprise made very great progress in Bengal and leading people of the province such as Dwarkanath Tagore, Ramtana Lahiri and Rustomji Cowasji took an active part in the development of insurance business in the country. It was also left to a great reformer and an eminent son of Bengal, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, to direct the nation's attention to the need of protection of widows and orphans; and as early as 1823 he issued an appeal through the columns of the 'Calcutta Journal' requesting the wealthy Hindus of Calcutta to start an institution for the maintenance of the poor widows. This urge for Indian Insurance found expression in the gradually increasing number of companies started in various parts of India. But it was not till the Swadeshi Movement that the full tide of our national surge was released and Calcutta, which can rightly claim that she has always occupied a conspicuous place in all phases of our national enterprise, came again prominently into the picture.

But the only purpose of holding these annual conferences or conventions, as they are called in the West, is not merely to pay homage to the ennobling institution of insurance. Conventions are essential to the well-being of organized groups. Tired brains need relaxation. Fatigued physiques need recuperating. Isolated view-points need expansion. It is good that once each year we should renew acquaintances within our group and make new ones. True enough, a convention like this may take on the noisy aspect of a mutual admiration society. But these conventioners also expose themselves and their personal and professional problems to the corrective and constructive methods of their contemporaries or competitors. Many heads are better than one and accumulated experience is the basis upon which our business depends to a large extent. The chief advantage of a conference like this from the strictly academic point of view, is the contact which we establish with the successful thinkers and administrators in our profession. Whether you come alone or as a part of a local group, there is always the opportunity for this invaluable "shoulder-rubbing" method of mental improvement.

The record of insurance business in India during the last decade or so is a proud record and we would be justified in having a rapid review of this record here. The first few years of Indian insurance were necessarily years of trial and travail, of a great ideal soaking slowly into a nation's life of mistakes made and expiated, of crusted traditions, of tragic fatalism melting slowly under the pressure of the urge to conserve a nation's strength. From improvident spendthrifts the people were slowly being taught the value of thrift and foresight and although there is still a long way to go. It may be reasonably claimed that the people have at least recognised the necessity of such a corrective in their lives. From being confined to a

handful of men with progressive ideas, insurance has now caught the imagination of the people at large and development along scientific lines has given it a firm and rocklike foundation.

In 1925 only about 60 Insurance Companies were working in India, but during the next ten years the number of companies increased by 150. In 1925 Indian companies showed a total life fund of Rs. 12 and half crores and a total premium income of Rs. 2 and one-fourth crores, while ten years later we find the total life fund increased to something over Rs. 31 and three-fourth crores and the total annual premium income to a little over Rs. 6 and half crores, that is an increase to about thrice the previous figure in both the cases. The total business in force in 1925 of Indian Companies was Rs. 47 crores, this in 1934 had leapt to Rs. 132 crores. In the total new business obtained by the Indian Companies, also we find a very big increase from Rs. 8 and one-sixth crores in 1925 to Rs. 39 crores in 1934.

I should like to draw your attention in this connection to the tendency for costs to increase. This calls for careful attention in every instance for, as you all know, the mounting up of the expense-ratio is generally a sign of retrogression for insurance companies. It is in most cases due to the exigencies of a growing competition which may at once be a fillip to and a drag on the expansion of insurance business. There is, on the one hand, the daily growing number of Indian companies and the new entrants, in a frantic struggle for existence, multiply their costs for procuring business and thus forsake the strictly scientific bases of insurance. On the other hand, there are the foreign companies who can afford to work at a larger cost in India because they are safely entrenched behind a large volume of well-established and economic business throughout the world. The result of this competition is to force up the cost of insurance business in India generally and I invite your serious attention to this question. A comparison of the relative new business and premium income of Indian and non-Indian companies also shows that the better class of business even now goes to non-Indian companies. We should endeavour to wean the well-to-do intelligentsia of the country from this unreasoning and unpatriotic partiality and to enlist their support in the cause of indigenous insurance business, for, business of an improved quality generally means lower costs.

It is not for me here to suggest ways in which expenses could be lowered : all I wish to emphasise is that serious thought and attention should be devoted to this problem ; and endeavours should be made to approach and tackle this problem from all sides. No part of our progress must be a profitless progress, and the question of costs therefore must be given our anxious consideration to-day. But we must clearly realise that the nature of the problem is such that its solution demands, and rightly demands, the combined efforts and interested co-operation of the various life offices.

I should also like to add a few words on the problem of investment of insurance funds. During the years after the War, which saw such a rapid expansion of insurance business in India, Government and analogous securities offered at once profitable and safe avenues of investment and the handsome yield to be derived from such investments enabled the insurance companies to earn large profits. But the rates of interest on these securities have now fallen and it does not seem likely that they will soon be raised. This has made the problem of investment of insurance funds more complicated. There was a tendency all along to depend largely on Government securities for investment and in the public mind also there is an unquestioning faith in gilt-edge. But the interest rate on Government securities has shrunk to such an extent that investment in these alone is sometimes not enough to earn for an insurance company even the minimum interest on which its premium rates are based not to mention surpluses for a bonus declaration. So far as interest rates are concerned it is probable that life insurance business is entering upon a long period of less favourable conditions. It is no longer possible to earn the abnormal interest profits of the early post-war years which were largely responsible for high bonuses and low premiums on without-profit policies and there are thus greater handicaps now against which life assurance offices have to contend—especially those who are new entrants in the field.

This problem of low interest rates on securities needs very careful attention. It is obvious that dependence on Government and other low interest bearing

securities alone will not enable us to earn the surplus necessary for declaring suitable bonuses and it is also a fact that an unreasonable expectation of high bonus rates persists in the public mind. It is true that owing to the appreciation of security prices it is perhaps possible to hold on to the high bonus rates of previous years for some time longer but I am sure it is widely recognised that it is unscientific to attempt to squeeze out of our modest interest income an immoderately large bonus from year to year. It is a much more honest and straightforward way of dealing with the problem of shrinking yield to lower correspondingly the bonus rate than to sharpen the edge of public expectancy and eventually to engender public distrust by holding on to high rates that are not justified by scientific valuations. I am sure that all of us appreciate the implications of this problem ; but it is a question of who will first face the odium of lowering the bonus rate. In my opinion the lead should come from well-established companies that have built large reserves and can afford comparatively stringent valuation than from relatively younger institutions who are not yet so firmly established in the public confidence.

I should like to say a few words about publicity and press propaganda in this country. No doubt you all realise the great importance of educative propaganda, particularly at this stage of our progress. Whether to make the public more insurance-minded and take a more intelligent interest in the fortunes of insurance business in India or to make the agents more efficient and successful in their great humanitarian calling, educational propaganda has taken on a new emphasis everywhere. Many journals mainly devoted to insurance matters have appeared in the field during recent years and political and other journals also are taking an increasing interest in insurance matters. But may I point out that some of these journals do not always follow the path of healthy and constructive criticism ? They frequently attempt to run down individual institutions and personalities under the pretext of honest criticism and allow the sanctity of their columns to be defiled by the show of personal malice and ignorance. There has also appeared in the field a type of so-called experts who take upon themselves the role of insurance reformers. They start preaching dogmatically about the scientific methods of investment of insurance funds which they have never handled : about general administration of which they have no practical experience and about actuarial matters of which they know little or nothing—all with a view to discredit particular individuals or institutions. The only credential of many of those who write so glibly on these highly technical matters is that at some stage they had belonged to the field force of an insurance company and their only motive, perhaps, that there is money in this game. It has to be admitted with regret that these propagandists often receive open or covert encouragement from even influential and well-established companies who mistakenly see in these attempts to run down their rivals an opportunity of furthering their own prospects.

Healthy criticism is always welcome and has its uses and honest journalism, it must be admitted, plays a great part in the development and progress of a national industry. But this type of unfounded and malicious criticism containing vague innuendoes or open insinuations against specific companies is a decided handicap to the development and progress of insurance particularly at this stage. The unwary public, not having the necessary education to weigh the value of such criticisms, frequently accepts them unhesitatingly at their face value and tends to become sceptical. It is obvious that only sincere co-operation and free-masonry amongst insurance men and insurance institutions can weed out this malignant growth from the insurance sphere ; for, an insurance company, no matter how well-established and trusted, has little to gain and much to lose from such unmerited and ill-willed attacks on a rival.

Gentlemen, the path of progress is seldom rosy and in spite of these impediment and handicaps we have to go on. But these difficulties need not detract from our enthusiasm or chill our ardour. In almost every sphere of activity, ours has been a history of a relentless fight against heavy odds but I am inspired by the confidence that we can overcome them and rise superior to the besetting conditions. But for that, it is necessary to rely not on the accident of circumstances but on efficiency and precision, on grit and sincerity. To-day we have to face the formidable competition of foreign companies and also the often unwise competition of ambitious new-comers. But if we look for a panacea for these maladies in State legislation and other extraneous aids we would be seriously circumscribing the scope of our own

progress. I like to visualise the day when Indian insurance will come into its own not only in its native soil but in other lands and climes. Let us in the pleasurable anticipation of that glorious future proceed to build on the solid foundation of strict scientific efficiency and intrinsic worth and not on the sands of protection and patronage. Let our very efficiency and soundness be the greatest bulwark against the perils of a crowded market-place.

A great responsibility thus devolves on our insurance administrators and executives to-day. The pioneers in every sphere are like the trustees of a future heritage and the traditions and conventions, the faith and fortitude which future generations of insurance men will inherit must depend largely on the devotion and integrity with which the present generation of Indian insurance administrators discharge their sacred trust. On the manner in which we fulfil the obligations which devolve on us, on the scrupulous and efficient management of our affairs will depend the value of the legacy which we bequeath to posterity. For it is now widely recognised that insurance plays an important part in the whole process of nation-building. Indeed, as I have already said, civilisation itself is founded on the intangible yet powerful forces of character which insurance fosters and promotes.

Few could have subjected this Bill to the careful scrutiny and consideration which it deserves, within so short a time and I shall therefore refrain from discussing the various provisions of this important measure. This Bill so vitally affects the fortunes of insurance business in India and is of such far-reaching importance, that it is needless for me to emphasize the necessity of a perfect understanding of its implications and of the pros and cons of all its provisions before we venture to offer a constructive criticism of this proposed legislation. It appears from the speech of Sir Nripendranath that the provisions, as at present embodied in the Bill, do not represent the final and unalterable view of the Government. We have the next six months in which to examine the Bill in all its implications and to prepare a considered verdict on the measure of its utility and suitability. I should like to stress the necessity of a very careful and serious scrutiny of the Bill and the dangers of hasty conclusions. We have, in short, to prepare careful brief for the Law Member and those who know him well will feel confident that once we can convince him about the justice and equity of the points we raise, our case will be safe in his hands.

But may I draw your attention to the risks of being carried away by the current of oft-repeated ideas? It is possible to be unduly alarmed by the possibility of encountering serious obstacles where none exist and the frantic effort to prevent hypothetical or superficial disabilities may result in over-legislation which would at once be a handicap to our progress and an indictment on our intrinsic worth. The wish, for instance, to be allowed free scope of development unhampered by any competition may lead us to take shelter under stringent laws which may react on the development of our own industry. Wherever actual facts reveal that we are being subjected to unfair competition by foreign companies or are being made the victims of inequitable laws and differential treatment, let us by all means agitate for relief. But we must be able to substantiate the justice of our claims and to prove from subsequent results how necessary such measures were for our progress. Let it not be said of us that we merely patronage while what we needed was efficiency or that our progress was based on the artificial supports of elaborate legislations. All this points to the imperative necessity of a cool and unbiassed survey of actual facts before we proceed to remedy the ills or proscriber the privileges. In the light of our experience in course of the last quarter of a century, let us seek to remove the hardships where they exist or guard against the dangers where they are real, but let us otherwise leave the sphere of insurance free from elaborate interference by the State or from any but the natural forces of service and progress.

Gentlemen, I shall not inflict myself any longer on your tolerance. You are no doubt anxious to hear the President's address and who would not be who has known Mr. Walchand Hirachand and his activities in various phases of public life? An industrial magnate and a Director of the leading insurance company in India Mr. Walchand Hirachand has come to be a familiar figure in the economic sphere. And the reputation he possesses of being a free and fearless thinker on various problems has no doubt whetted your appetite to hear him on the important subject of insurance. I therefore leave you to the enjoyment of that pleasure. Let me once more extend to you all a warm welcome to this city and to the precincts of this conference.

### The Presidential Address

Presiding over the Conference Mr. *Walchand Hirchand* said :—

It is a privilege and honour to be asked to preside over an All-India Insurance Conference and I thank you all for giving me this opportunity to contribute in my humble way my share to the progress and development of Indian Insurance Companies in our country. Let me at the outset congratulate Calcutta for organising this Conference this year in Bengal, because important issues affecting Insurance business are on the anvil to-day.

I must congratulate the Congress on securing a majority in most of the major Provinces in the recent general elections. I think we Industrialists also should congratulate ourselves on this result, as the same will enable Congress to put into practice what it has all along been wanting to do and what for want of necessary power, it could not do so far. I hope it will now be practicable for the Congress party to act in such a way, at least where it enjoys a clear majority and forms a Government, as to directly benefit Swadeshi enterprise. If in the Provinces with Congress majority all Insurances, Banking and Shipping business, whether of Government or local Bodies such as Municipalities, District Local Boards etc., are in practice placed with Indian Companies and those Companies are allowed to announce themselves being under Government patronage as the public at large follow the Government lead, I do not think safeguards can come in the way of their doing this. The Congress has so far shown itself to be the master mind as regards propaganda and organisation, and I think this should prove very useful to Congress representatives in making the country self-contained as regards these Industries by emphasising the need of public patronage in this country.

It is by conferences and conventions like this that the peoples of the Western countries have been able to advance rapidly in the various spheres of commercial and industrial activity. In case of Insurance especially, the London Chartered Insurance Institute with branches scattered all over England has been mainly responsible for the insurance mindedness which obtains there, as a result of which over 40 per cent of the country's population has a direct interest in the business of insurance. Similarly America, the land of Conventions and Conferences, has done more in the cause of Insurance than all the rest of the world, the result being that practically the entire population of that Trans-Atlantic Republic is one way or the other connected with insurance business.

In the early stages Indian Companies encountered many difficulties; gradually some of these were overcome, but the greatest menace to the growth of Insurance business in India to-day is the competition from non-Indian Insurance Companies operating here. Competition takes many forms in a country like India. It may be recalled that the Chairman of one of the leading British Insurance Companies definitely stated that out of the premiums on new shares obtained by this Company, a good portion was to be spent in India. Continental Insurance Companies ply havoc in India by actually experimenting on the Indian business and when ultimately they find that the Indian field is not encouraging they quietly quit the field, but not before they have done a great deal of harm to our Companies. I do not propose to quote specific instances as many of our Companies know but too well how this competition and how this experimentation on the Indian market have affected Indian insurance business. In face of this fact, it is flabbergasting to be told by the Hon. the Law Member of the Government of India that there is no dumping of Insurance by foreign Companies, when instances are not wanting to show that dumping is actually going on. If only the Indian Insurance conditions are closely examined, say, by a body like the Tariff Board, this can be conclusively proved and a good case can be made for the protection of Indian Insurance Companies. After all any Act or Law that may be passed by Government of a country should have a beneficial effect on the industry concerned, and if there is no tangible evidence, of this good to the business one cannot become enthusiastic about the action of Government.

This naturally brings me to the proposed Insurance Bill recently brought forward by the Government of India. The Hon'ble Law Member is entitled to credit from us for the Bill although I cannot but say that it falls short of supplying the most essential need of Indian insurance business, namely protection from non-Indian Companies. I am one of those who believe that Indian Banking, Shipping and Insurance are the three most important branches of our commercial life which

should be developed solely from the point of view of India's interests and not of the British Empire, that is they should be owned, controlled and managed only by the Nationals of the country. Nothing else should really weigh with us in this development, except, the rapid progress of these three important nation-building commercial services. Such things as "invisible items" which play so prominent a part in the foreign trade of Great Britain are simply unknown to India, although India contributes quite a good share to the "invisible exports" of Great Britain.

Examining the Insurance Bill introduced by Government from this standpoint, I should at once say, that in this, even the shadow of protection is woefully absent. Although the Indian insurance experts, some of them non-Indians of experience and standing, who had the opportunity of examining Indian insurance conditions minutely and who are the only persons really competent to know where the shoe pinches, demanded in their report direct protection to indigenous companies, their demand appears not to have weighed with the Government at all! Initial deposits and registration of Companies are welcome, and are good in themselves but, for companies which are old established and have enormous funds at their disposal, such regulations are negligible, cannot possibly touch even the fringe of the real problem that confronts Indian Insurance Companies.

In the matter of deposits, Indian companies to a large extent will be always at a disadvantage because of the fact that almost all external companies which are doing business in India have accumulated such large assets that they will be in a position to furnish any amount of deposits without inconvenience. For instance, a country like the United States of America is the very country which the largest deposit requires whether a company does a direct or re-insurance business. Yet many foreign companies have put up large deposits simply because of the fact that a large volume of business was available, although at the moment one sees signs of a move to make American insurance safe for American insurance countries. When therefore the question of deposit is considered in India, I firmly believe that the minimum deposit may be retained, but that deposits for all companies should be on the basis of a particular percentage of their total assets. It should be noted that those companies who do perhaps a small business in India compared with their total business, are in the habit of parading before the Indian public their total financial resources running into scores of millions sterling through advertisement and other literature. This naturally works on the imagination of the public. I am sure the Indian insurance officials will be able to evolve a scheme more favourable to India when the bill is discussed before the Select Committee.

I am disappointed at finding a reference to "Reciprocity" in the Bill. I wonder how there can possibly be any reciprocity in insurance or for that matter, in any other branch of industry or services between India and other rich advanced countries. Reciprocity between the giant companies of Great Britain and the infant of Indian companies born yesterday is self-deception and a farce pure and simple. If it is put before us seriously, I take it as an insult to our intelligence. The Indian public have been long demanding definite protection for Indian owned companies with a view to enable them to grow in India itself, and such growth is at present dwarfed because of the presence in India of foreign companies. Reciprocity is bound to work only as a one-way traffic in India as unlike other foreign countries, India cannot hope for any big volume of direct insurance business in any advanced countries, however much they may comply with State requirements.

There are many subtle devices adopted by various countries against foreign insurance companies as a whole. Taking the example of England, the home of insurance business, it may definitely be stated that so far as general insurance business is concerned there is no hope for any non-British Company of getting any respectable volume of direct insurance business from the Britisher. Even Colonial Companies cannot make and have not made any great headway in England. Statistics published by British insurance journals show that almost all the properties in the city of London are insured exclusively with the British insurance companies and Lloyds. What chance is there for an Indian Company, however powerful it may be, to get any share of direct insurance business there.

The mechanism of British industrialists is such that most of the trading organisations insist upon insurances being placed only with the British Insurance Companies. Other countries similarly protect their own insurance Companies. Other countries similarly protect their own insurance business for the benefit of their National Companies. I would like the Government of India to do for Indian Insu-



rance Companies what Japan did for Japanese Insurance Companies. From the year 1923 when the great earthquake occurred, the Japanese Government has been engaged in protecting its insurance companies, the sole idea being to develop and strengthen the position of the then existing Insurance Companies. Two steps were taken by Japan. One was not to permit the inauguration of any new Japanese Company and the other was not to allow the entry of non-Japanese insurance companies of which the Japanese Government can be really proud. To-day they have consolidated their position, strengthened their finances and have practically reached a stage where almost all the Japanese insurance business is being absorbed by the indigenous companies. I want similar steps to be taken by the Government of India in the interest of Indian companies and only if this is done can we hope for real forward movement in Indian insurance business.

Now that the Congress has gained a large majority in almost all Provinces, I hope no opportunity will be lost in pressing this plan, so as to enable Indian companies to attain a similar position to that which the Japanese companies have attained with the aid of the Government.

There should be a ban on the entry of any new companies indigenous or foreign without discrimination into India for some years to come because there are already too many, particularly Life Companies.

I will go a step further and suggest that an addition be made to the proposed bill making it a penal offence for the Indian public generally and Indian Industrialists in particular to insure with a company which is not an Indian Company. I would also suggest that another addition be made in the bill making it an offence for any one to insure with a Company which is not licensed by the Government to do business in India. In other words, I want the Indian insurance business to be placed in India itself.

I am quite alive to the fact that recently there has been a great increase in the number of life insurance companies in India and I should take this opportunity of sounding, if I may, a note of warning in its regard. I believe the time has come for Indian Insurance Companies to take stock of the situation and to find out whether some effective reform is not necessary in this regard. Just as the Japanese Government insisted upon many insurance companies either amalgamating with each other or getting themselves amalgamated with some of the larger companies, Indian companies also should seriously consider this problem and see whether early steps in this direction may not after all be conducive to the good of them all. That will eliminate not only a lot of unhealthy competition, but will achieve something far more important viz., making the business of insurance far more clean and responsive to public needs and interests. The public of India are becoming more and more insurance minded and are beginning to put their faith, in insurance. It is the savings of a life-time that are handed over to insurance companies and it is therefore the sacred duty of every Indian insurance company so to conduct its affairs that this public confidence in the great institution of insurance once gained shall never be shaken. Having the very best interests of the progress of Indian insurance at heart, I am making this suggestion, of that amalgamation and consolidation of our companies, because I do not want to give chance to any of our ill-wishers to magnify any of our shortcomings to our detriment. The time has come when we should examine, pause a little, and do a little introspection, instead of merely pointing our fingers to the shortcoming of our rivals in the field.

#### Resolutions

The conference reassembled in the afternoon to discuss resolutions. The following resolutions was passed :—

#### SWADESHI INSURANCE

Pandit *Santanam* moved a resolution urging the people of India to place their insurance business exclusively with indigenous concerns and thereby helping the economic development of the nation. In moving it the speaker regretted that a resolution of this kind should be moved before an Indian assembly from year to year not only from such a conference but also from the platform of the Federation of the Indian Chambers and Industry. He did not know whether it was their surville political condition that was responsible for this lack of patriotism on their part or vice versa. Any way it was a vicious circle and they should get out of it. It was an accepted theory that the wealth of the country should be kept in it as

possible and in the sphere of insurance there was no reason why that theory should undergo a change. He referred particularly to the numerous sugar factories established in the country and said that with the exception of a dozen of them none had insured with Indian concerns. He asked the conference to take steps that when the question of giving protection to the industry came they would see that unless the concerns insured with the Indian concerns they would send memorials to the Government asking for withdrawal for such protection to the industry.

Mr. *Ansari* supported the resolution and said that nothing tangible could be expected in this respect from a Government which was not national. He held that insurance companies could do a lot in providing social service to the people provided they got the support which was due to them from their countrymen. He hoped that delegates on return to their places would do every thing in their power to carry on propaganda on behalf of the indigenous concerns.

Prof. *J. K. Chowdhury* further supported the resolution which was carried unanimously.

#### DEFECTS OF INSURANCE BILL

The most important resolution of the Conference regarding its attitude to the Insurance Bill of 1937 as introduced in the Assembly was moved by Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarkar* characterising the bill as defective and which fails to make provision for really effective protection for indigenous insurance business.

Mr. *Sarkar* said that the Bill was a complicated one and contained more than 100 sections. Within the short time since it had been published it had not been possible to discuss it sufficiently and come to constructive conclusions. That was one of the reasons why the resolution had been made in general terms. The insurance companies were distributed all over the country and it had not been possible for them to meet the Bombay businessmen or for them to meet Madras within the time that had elapsed. They had yet six months of their time and intend to meet each other and by comparing notes would be able to put forward constructive suggestions to the Select Committee. The Bill required to be modified in the matter of supervision of management of companies. But that was a subject about which there were bound to be differences of opinion. When they could sit together and could have mutual discussions they, he thought, would be able to put forward constructive suggestions to the Select Committee.

Mr. *D. P. Khaitan* seconded the resolution which was unanimously adopted by the Conference.

Dr. *S. C. Roy* moved a resolution asking the Government immediately to abolish the postal insurance fund. The resolution was put to vote and adopted.

Mr. *L. S. Baidyanatham* moved a resolution urging the revision of the Indian Income-tax Law with a view to bring it in line with the law prevailing in Bengal and also subjecting Insurance Companies to a rate of tax much lower than the full company rate in view of the fact that several policy-holders were not subjected to the maximum rate of tax.

Mr. *P. C. Roy* seconded the resolution which was accepted by the Conference.

Mr. *S. L. Roy* moved a resolution urging that all companies should take effective measures for enhancing the prestige and status of fieldworkers and safeguarding their legitimate interests. The resolution was seconded, put to vote and carried.

Mr. *Bahadur U. C. Chakravarty* moved a resolution that the action of the municipal and other local bodies in subjecting insurance companies within their jurisdiction to taxation and demanding license fees even from agents without offices as vexatious and urging upon them to abolish all such taxes and fees.

Mr. *Sasanka Ghattak* supported the resolution and hoped that the Chairman of the Reception Committee who was a Councillor of the Calcutta Corporation would move in the matter and bring the redress that was so badly required.

After the Chairman of the Reception Committee had thanked the delegates and the President and Pandit *Sanatnam* replied on behalf of the delegates the Conference dissolved.

**British India and Indian States**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**

# The Chamber of Princes

14th. Session—New Delhi—24th. February 1937

## VICEROY'S ADDRESS TO THE PRINCES

The 14th session of the Chamber of Princes commenced at New Delhi on the 24th. February 1937 after two years' interval. The attendance was fairly large, about 45 Princes being present. A large number of Heirs-apparent sat in a row behind the Princes, while Ministers were watching the proceedings from the Visitors' Galleries. The Marchioness of Linlithgow was amongst the distinguished visitors.

Before the proceedings started the Viceroy received the Princes in the room adjoining the Chamber and exchanged greetings. Punctually at 11-12 a. m. the Viceroy was ushered to the throne from where he delivered the following address :—

"Your Highness,—It gives me great pleasure to welcome your Highnesses this morning on the first occasion on which I have had the honour to address the Chamber of Princes. I am glad to see such a large and representative attendance of Princes at this the 14th session since the inauguration of the Chamber.

"It is now just two years since the Chamber of Princes last met. In this interval we and the whole of the British Empire have had to mourn the passing of a sovereign greatly beloved, His late Majesty King George V. Many of your Highnesses had the honour of His late Majesty's personal acquaintance and throughout his long reign he was known to all as a true and sympathetic friend of the Indian Princes, in the welfare and progress of whose order he always took so close and personal an interest. In His Majesty King George VI, I know that your Highnesses will have no less firm a friend who, in this and in many other matters, will follow the high example left him by his august father. I will say no more of these subjects now, as I see that there are upon your agenda loyal resolutions to be moved by His Highness the Chancellor.

"Since last this Chamber met, the Princely Order has suffered severe loss by the death of no less than six Rulers. I would refer in particular first to His late Highness the Raja of Rajgarh whose long rule of 30 years was brought to a close by his death last October. He was a beneficent Ruler whose passing will have been a source of sorrow to his people as well as to the whole of his Order. Others whose deaths we deplore are Their Highnesses of Chamba of Khairpur, of Radhaipur and the ex-Raja of Samthar and the Maharani of Bastar who was a member of the representative electorate of this Chamber. I would express on behalf of your Highness as well as myself our very deep sympathy with all those who have been bereaved by these deaths. To the successors to these Rulers, I would express our warm congratulation on their accession and our confident hope that they will continue to maintain the high traditions of their Order as well as to bear worthily the heavy responsibilities which must henceforth rest upon their shoulders.

"We welcome Their Highnesses of Gwalior and Cooch-Bihar who have been invested with their Ruling powers since last this Chamber met and we trust that they will take an active part in the deliberations of this Chamber. The Raja of Nagod has also recently been invested with Ruling powers on the termination of his minority and has become a member of the representative electorate. I would congratulate also on the recent succession of His Highness the Mir of Khairpur and His Highness the Nawab of Radhanpur.

"To turn now for a moment to the international field, I would refer with warm appreciation and I feel sure that, in doing so, I shall be voicing the sentiments of all of Your Highnesses, to the work of Sir Seray Mal Bapna in 1935 and of Sir V. T. Krishnamacharya in 1936 as members of the Indian Delegation to the League of Nations. Their reports are to be laid before Your Highnesses in the course of this session and will, I know, be studied with the keenest interest.

"My distinguished predecessor, Lord Willingdon, informed Your Highnesses in 1935 of the advance that had, up to that time, been made in the policy of bringing all the Indian States into direct relations with the Government of India. That pro-

cess has recently been completed, a fact which I trust Your Highnesses will regard as a cause for satisfaction, though I would not wish to appear in any way to minimise the reality of the debt of gratitude towards those Provincial Governments with whom they have for so long been in such close relationship, which, I know, these Rulers naturally feel. But the change is one that is demanded alike by logic and the force of circumstances as they are by the advent of new constitutional conditions in India. Your Highnesses are aware of the steps taken by me since I assumed charge of my present office designed to assist individual Rulers in reaching, at an early date, a decision in regard to their attitude towards the Federation of India. I am encouraged by the communications that I have received from many quarters to believe that the discussions that have taken place, with my representatives, have been of assistance and have served to clarify a number of points. I can frankly tell Your Highnesses that one outcome of these discussions has been to present in a new light to my own mind more than one aspect of this many-sided problem. The substance of these discussions has now been collected and is being subjected to close examination. My strong hope is that means may be found in the not too distant future to reach conclusions satisfactory to all concerned.

"Your Highnesses are, I know, as fully alive as I am to the importance at the stage which we have now reached of a very early decision as to your attitude towards the Federal scheme. You can rely on me to continue as in the past to do all in my power to help you in reaching that decision by placing at the disposal of the Princely Order all such assistance as I properly can. I will no longer detain Your Highnesses from proceeding with the agenda which you have before you. In all the matters which come up for your consideration I am confident that Your Highnesses will keep before you the true interests of your several States, the welfare of the Princely Order and the highest good of India and of the Empire."

His Excellency was loudly cheered when he concluded his address.

#### Resolutions

The Viceroy then took the chair and the Chancellor, the Maharana of Dholpur, moved the first resolution of condolence on the death of King George V.

H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner seconding the resolution said that having served His late Majesty as an A. D. O. for 33 years, he knew the extent of His late Majesty's love and sympathy for the people and his kindly and general nature.

The *Raja Sahib of Korea* and the *Raja Sahib of Mandi* supported the resolution which was passed, all standing.

The *Maharana of Dholpur* moved the next resolution expressing profound and steadfast loyalty to the person and throne of His Majesty King George VI and offering their felicitations on his accession to the Throne.

The *Maharaja of Patiala*, seconding the resolution, said that their loyalty to the Throne was traditional and did not require reiteration. The Throne was the symbol of the unity of the Empire. To the King, they looked for protection of their rights and continuance of their privileges. The loyalty of Princes was based on no selfish motive but was inherent. They were looking forward to the visit of their Majesties the King and the Queen to India when they would have an opportunity of demonstrating their personal loyalty.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner* said that in the midst of disintegrating influences visible in all parts of the world, the personality of the King-Emperor was a great force to preserve the integrity of the Empire. King George VI had made it clear that he was determined to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious father. That was a good augury. They were anxiously looking forward to the visit of the King and the Queen to India, and despite the opinion of a certain school of political thought, Their Majesties would receive the warmest welcome in India.

The *Maharaja of Rewa* said that the Chancellor had echoed the sentiments of all the Ruling Princes. In India, the person and throne of the King were held sacred and their relationship with the Throne was sanctified by treaties which were inviolate and inviolable.

The *Raja of Bilaspur* said that the personal touch of His Majesty was very valuable. The King was the symbol of the Empire. In the midst of destructive influence, the Empire maintained its unity. With the valuable advice of the King, the States would face the changes necessary to-day which would lead to better understanding within the Commonwealth.

The resolution was carried, all standing.

The *Maharaja of Dholpur* next moved a resolution, welcoming Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy. He said that India was at the cross-roads when the Viceroy assumed office and was embarking on a difficult constitutional experiment. Lord Linlithgow had made a special study of the problem and was actively associated with it at a very important stage of its consideration and was greatly responsible for the building of the new Constitution. During the last ten months the welfare of the masses had been the key-note of the Indian administration. The Chancellor had no doubt that the Viceroy would prove a real friend of the Ruling Princes.

The *Maharaja of Rewa*, seconding the resolution, said that in Lord Linlithgow they would find a most sympathetic Ruler who would safeguard their rights and maintain their dignity. It was a matter of gratification that the Viceroy was no stranger to India. His visit as Chairman of the Agricultural Commission would always be remembered with gratitude whose labours ensured the well-being of the masses. The *Maharaja* also welcomed Lady Linlithgow who would share the cares and responsibilities of the Viceroy's high office.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner* said that the Princes would not look in vain to the Viceroy for safeguarding the interests of States under the new Constitution in which Rulers will take their proper place as willing and contented partners. He hoped that the constitutional problem would be settled to the satisfaction of Rulers, in a manner conducive to the preservation of imperial interests. He heartily welcomed Lady Linlithgow.

*His Excellency the Viceroy* thanked the Princes for their warm welcome to himself and Lady Linlithgow and said that their generosity and good wishes were precious things to him. He was very much touched at the expression of their good will. The *Maharaja of Dholpur* next moved two resolutions, one recording sorrow at the demise of the Mir of Khairpur, the Raja of Chamba, the Raja of Rajgarh and the Nawab of Radhanpur and the other offering congratulations to the *Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior* and the *Maharaja of Cooch Behar* on their investiture with Ruling powers and to the Mir of Khairpur, the Nawab of Radhanpur, the Raja of Rajgarh and the Raja of Chamba on their succession.

The Chancellor presented a statement showing the work done by the Chamber during the last three years, specially thanking the members of the Standing Committee for their valuable collaboration.

The *Maharao of Cutch* and the *Maharaja of Patiala* thanked the Chancellor. The Chamber then adjourned.

### Second Day—New Delhi—25th. February 1937

The Chamber of Princes again met this morning with H. E. the Viceroy in the chair. Forty-four Ruling Princes were present, while the galleries were crowded with visitors.

The *Maharaja of Dholpur*, Chancellor, presented to the House the reports of Sir V. T. Krishnamachari who represented Indian States on the League of Nations and of the Standing Committee on the question of abrogation of the mail robberies rule as applicable to Indian States. The House approved both the reports.

Under instruction from H. E. the Viceroy, Sir Bertrand Glancy, Political Secretary, announced that the *Maharao of Cutch* and the *Maharaja of Bikaner* having withdrawn, only two candidates were left to the contest for election to the Chancellorship. The *Maharaja of Patiala* was elected Chancellor by 30 votes to 13.

The *Maharaja of Patiala* thanked Their Highnesses for the confidence in him and assured them that he would carry out, to the best of his ability, the traditions of the Chamber and serve the Princely Order as he had done in the past.

The *Jam Sahib of Navanagar* was elected Pro-Chancellor unopposed.

The *Maharaja of Dholpur*, the outgoing Chancellor, addressing the Viceroy said that His Excellency must be glad to see a large number of Princes represented in the House, which was an indication of the rehabilitation of Princes' interest in the Chamber. It had been a matter of great satisfaction that the policy of bringing all States into direct relation with the Government of India had been pursued but there were some Rulers whose connection with the Government of India was not direct and he hoped that their relations would be simplified. He thanked the Viceroy on behalf of the Princes for sending his representatives to clarify the issues involved in their joining the Federation and for the personal interest taken by His Excellency in the welfare of the Princes. "As the result of discussions which States had" said

the Maharana "with Your Excellency's representatives and between themselves, they have found with regard to the Instrument of Accession and the Schedule attached to it that certain amendments, reservations, and limitations were necessary for the proper safeguarding of the rights and privileges of States and their Rulers. The proposals that States are able to evolve will be submitted to Your Excellency in order to ensure that the agreed standard Instrument of Accession contains provisions of general applicability requisite to safeguard the interest of States. While it is recognised that the final decision regarding accession must rest with each State, the fact that the standard Instrument of Accession will be uniform to all States makes it necessary for States to co-operate in the work of producing an Instrument which would meet the requirements of States generally."

The Maharana of Dholpur hoped that His Excellency would give due consideration to the proposal which were to be forwarded by the Chancellor and the Standing Committee on behalf of States.

The Viceroy, in reply, thanked the Maharana for the kind words used and assured him that he would give personal attention to several matters he had raised (applause). His Excellency said that it had given him great satisfaction to work with the Chancellor (Maharana of Dholpur) and he felt sure that he would find it an easy to work with his successor (Maharaja of Patiala). Referring to the duty he had performed as Chairman of the session of the Princes' Chamber, the Viceroy remarked that his task in the chair had been much more easy than in another Chamber (laughter).

The Maharaja of Patiala proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chancellor. He said that the Maharana of Dholpur had worked as Chancellor "with such efficiency and hard work."

The Raja of Bilaspur supported the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The House then adjourned *sine die*.

## Indian Princes and Federation

### Mr. J. H. Morgan's Opinion

The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes met at New Delhi on the 19th. February 1937 under the Chairmanship of the Maharana of Dholpur, the Chancellor. Those who attended were the Maharajas of Dewas (Junior) and Dungarpur, Maharana of Jhalawar and Raja of Mandi. It was believed the meeting reviewed the position of Indian princes *vis a vis* the Federation in the light of various reports of committees which recently met in Delhi, specially the report of the Constitutional Committee, and deferred decisions to the general meeting of Princes which was to be held on the next day.

One of the documents which engaged the most anxious consideration of their Highnesses was Mr. Morgan's Report which was believed to have been submitted to the Chancellor. Mr. Morgan who had very carefully analysed the Government of India Act and the Constitution Committee's report was understood to have taken the view that the Government of India Act as such was unsatisfactory inasmuch as it left too many loop-holes through which autonomy and sovereignty of the Princes would be encroached upon by the Federal authority. Lobby talks indicated that Mr. Morgan was opposed to the Princes entering the Federation until their right of secession was definitely recognised in the Constitution Act. In support of this Mr. Morgan had given the analogy of the Statute of Westminster whereunder any member of the British Commonwealth could secede after giving due notice to other members.

Mr. Morgan also was believed to be advising the Princes to insist that the tenure of membership of their nominees in the Federal Legislature should be during their pleasure only and if, at any time, a Prince was convinced that his representative was not acting in accordance with his instructions or in the interests of his State the ruler will have the right to recall his nominee irrespective of the life of the Federal Legislature.

Two points it may be useful to remember in connection with Prof. Morgans recommendation to the Princes are that they should demand the right of secession from the Federation as a condition precedent for joining. One is that in 1934, along with Sir Wilfred Green, now Lord Chief Justice Wilfred Green, he signed a statement that the Government of India Bill had been drafted with scrupulous regard for the interested States. After that statement was made at least 40 amendments had been suggested by the representatives of the States and been incorporated in the Bill, affording further protection to the States.

Secondly, the States themselves have said nothing about the right of secession from the Federation for the last three or four years and among the original demands published as an annexure to the report of the Constitution Committee, this does not find place.

Apart from these documents an informal Conference of Princes and States Ministers will consider the question relating to the appointment of Europeans in the Indian States and will decide what points should be incorporated in reply from the Princes when the Viceroy addresses the Chamber.

### Mr. Morgan's Report and Opinion

"It is my duty as Counsel to advise the Chamber in the fateful decisions it has to take with complete impartiality and entire detachment from politics," said Mr. J. H. Morgan, K. C., in submitting his opinion, which was submitted to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the 18th. February 1937. In this report, which extends to 65 quarto pages, Mr. Morgan has subjected the whole of the Government of India Act, 1935 and the Draft Instrument of Accession, together with the reports of the numerous Committees of States to a close and exhaustive examination.

Mr. Morgan had been attending most of the meetings of the Constitution Committee in his capacity as Legal Adviser to the Chamber and many questions of law were referred to him by His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala for his considered opinion. At a meeting of the Committee Mr. Morgan pointed out that he could not regard himself as necessarily bound by its conclusions and that on some points he found himself in disagreement with the Committee as is apparent from his opinion.

Mr. Morgan had brought to bear on his examination of the questions innumerable cases from the law reports of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council relating to the Federal constitutions of Australia and Canada in order to determine the legal principles which would be applied by the Privy Council interpreting the Government of India Act. Mr. Morgan says that he had noticed with surprise that in none of the Committees and recommendations made by them were to be found any reference whatsoever to Privy Council cases. This was unfortunate in as much as officers of the Political Department may vary properly complain that the proposals for amendment and limitations had been passed upon them which were of a vague, speculative and imaginative character and often based upon apprehensions which had no foundations in fact.

Mr. Morgan says, as Counsel is to enlighten the Princes Chamber as to every consequence prejudicial to the rights of States as a result of their accession to Federation which his knowledge and experience as a constitutional lawyer might suggest to him. If he did not do this he should be neglecting his duty and States might well have reasons to complain if in years to come such consequences occurred without his having foreseen of their occurrence. It was no part of his duty, emphasises Mr. Morgan, to attempt to dissuade the States from entering the Federation even as it was no part of his duty to persuade them to enter it. It was for the States themselves after due consideration of his (Mr. Morgan's) opinion on these questions to decide whether or not they will accede. It may well be that the advantages of entering the Federation outweighed dangers, in other words disadvantages, legally speaking, which are attendant on any contract so uncertain in its actual operation as a Federal contract had always and everywhere proved to be. That however is a political question on which I express no opinion. In pointing out "the elements of danger" in this opinion the object is not to raise difficulties in the way of entry of Indian States into the Federation but to remove them if removable they be. They can, I think, be removed if the Government of India is prepared, as I feel sure it is prepared, to consider sympathetically every proposal by way of "safeguard" which can be shown to rest on appreciations well founded in law; in other words on judicial constructions enacted by Parliament.

Finally, Mr. Morgan says it is his duty as Counsel to advise the Chamber in



the fateful decisions it has to take with complete impartiality and entire detachment from politics. "My instructions are simply 'to advise' the Chamber and no attempt whatsoever has been made directly or indirectly by the Standing Committee or any member of it to influence the advice which it is my duty to give. The fact, I have good reason to believe, is perfectly well understood by the Government of India whose cordial reception of me I take this opportunity to acknowledge. According to the rules of my profession in England as soon as a Counsel is briefed he dismisses entirely from his mind any political views of his own which he may at one time or another entertain upon the subjects and confines himself with all sincerity to the purely legal aspect of the questions submitted to him.

Mr. Morgan then deals with the "explanatory memorandum" on "safeguards" laid before the Constitution Committee. He lays emphasis on the question of sovereignty which has been already discussed in the explanatory memorandum circulated in January last.

Dealing with transformation in the scope and character of sovereignty of the States in the event of their accession which is affected by the Act, Mr. Morgan says that sovereignty is very considerably "impaired" and wholly transformed. In this respect the Act itself is quite as revolutionary as was the original Bill. Amendments put up by Mr. Morgan and his colleagues of the States in 1935 in accordance with their Instruments were to a considerable extent not accepted by India Office while the effect to their acceptance in other cases was merely verbal. During the passage of the Government of India Bill some of the leading Princes in a communication to the Government formulated certain observations on the Bill expressing apprehensions at the "fundamental points" put forward by them not being accepted. As the result of their objection, certain amendments were accepted by the Government and duly passed. Those amendments were purely verbal and quite illusory. They have not changed the legal effect of the original draft of section 6 of the Act in the slightest degree. To legislate for the Federated State is to legislate for the subjects of the Ruler of that State and it matters not whether subjects are expressly mentioned, as coming within the scope of the federal legislature or whether they are not so mentioned. There can be no question that the power is to legislate for all subjects of His Majesty in British India and indeed for everybody else resident. It is, therefore, obvious that the subjects of every Ruler of the Federated State will be just as much subjected and as directly subjected to the federal authority as His Majesty's subjects. Their allegiance would henceforth be divided between the Ruler and Federation.

Turning from legislative sphere to the executive, Mr. Morgan is opinion that it is of the utmost importance that the Princes should bear in mind that coercive power of the Federal Government in securing Federal legislation to compel the States to carry out any executive obligations imposed on them is quite unlimited under the Act. The Federal legislature is as has been well said in a Canadian case, "omnipotent" within the Federal sphere and although the States hope and expect that enforcement of the federal obligations upon a State will be confined to the Viceroy in exercise of paramountty, it is not so confined in the Act or in the Draft Instrument of Accession.

It remains therefore to consider this "explanatory memorandum" in the light of "Federal Union" instead of by the Act. A federal union means in law the surrender of sovereignty and an irrevocable surrender. Mr. Morgan concludes his observation on the sovereignty of States according to the Federation in relation to the amendment of the Constitution Act. He says the subject of amendment may be looked upon from two points of view: (1) the amendment of the Act on the initiative of States, (2) amendments of the Act in opposition to the wishes of the States, but on the initiative of the Imperial Government or Federal Government. As regards the first case, the States might on some future date find their rights, authority and powers so seriously curtailed as the result of judicial construction of the Act as to move them to petition the Government and Parliament of Great Britain to amend the Act in such a manner as to restore the construction which the Rulers of States had put upon the Act when they decided to accede to the Federation. This is of course the only way in which the judgment of the Supreme Court of Appeal interpreting the Act of Parliament in a sense contrary to that intended by the legislature which passed it or to the intentions of parties who promoted it can be corrected. The possibility of such a remedy is not excluded by the Act but as a matter of constitutional practice it is extremely unlikely that the Government and Parliament of Great Britain would consent to give effect to any petition on the part of the States.

The question of constitutional amendment has an important bearing upon the "indissoluble" character of the Federal Union which will be created by the accession of the States. The word "indissoluble" is nowhere used in the preamble to the Federal constitution of Australia. But the union is just as indissoluble as in the case of the Australian Commonwealth and in the same sense. The States according to the Federation have no right of secession. Secession is only possible if the Imperial Parliament at the request of the States amends the Act to that effect. This it may be taken as certain that the Imperial Parliament will, as a matter of constitutional practice, never consent to do. To do so would be to negate the "pledge" of ultimate grant of dominion status made by the Secretary of State during the passage of the Bill through the House of Commons.

Mr. Morgan next deals with the question of interpretation of the Federal Constitution within the empire and says it is a historical fact that always and everywhere the contracting parties to the Federal constitution have found that as the result of judicial construction the federal contract has turned out to have a meaning which they never intended when they made it. On the whole, the judicial construction has resulted in their finding that they have given up power, rights and authority which they never intended to give up. None the less, surrender of these rights has proved to be irrevocable. It could only be revoked either by secession, in other words withdrawal from the Federation, or by amendments at the instance of the States of the Federal constitution. Neither course will be open to the States once they have ceded to the Federation.

Referring to the Instrument of Accession, Mr. Morgan says even if the Instruments were to be regarded as treaties in the sense accorded to such agreement in international law, it must be taken as certain that any extrinsic evidence of what was said or done in the negotiations preceding the accession of the States to the Federation will be held by the Privy Council to be totally inadmissible as evidence of the meaning of Instruments or of the intention of the parties, the Crown on the one hand and the Rulers on the other, who made it. English courts in construing a treaty follow the same rules as they apply to the construction of statutes and other Instruments, namely, that the text must be construed as it now stands in the ratified convention and the intention of its proposer is immaterial.

Dealing with the Instrument of Instructions Mr. Morgan says it will be recalled that various proposals have been made for the inclusion in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General of the provisions for the protection of the rights and interests of the States in particular in such matters as "discrimination". The question arises as to what, if any, legal efficacy is to be attached to the Instrument of Instructions. In his opinion provisions of the Instrument of Instructions are unenforceable in law and that the "silent" operation of the constitutional principles may and probably will in the long run result in safeguards contained in the Instrument becoming a dead letter. Even as things stand at the present moment and without anticipating the grant which may be either proximate or remote of the Dominion status to the Federated India, the safeguards provided by the Instrument of Instructions are by no means so "safe" as might appear. Mr. Morgan adds "it is hardly necessary for me to say that in observations on the weakness of the Instruments of Instructions as safeguards for "the protection of the rights of the States, no reflection whatsoever on the good faith of the Government which is responsible for it is intended. So long as that Government is in power, there can be no reason to doubt that the Instrument will be honourably observed alike in letter and in spirit. But a Government equally with Parliament to which it is responsible cannot bind its successors. As things are therefore the Instrument will hold good as safeguard for just three years and no more. What may happen after the dissolution of the present Parliament it is idle to speculate."

As regards the Federal Legislative list Mr. Morgan states that States must really bear in mind that there will have to be a definite limit to the limitations. In other words federation will never be brought into existence and will certainly never become a "working proposition" if it is sought to impose limitations on the acceptance of the items in the Legislative list such as would prevent the Federal Legislature from legislating effectively at all.

Referring to the Executive power of the Federation, Mr. Morgan says it would be impossible to institute much more to develop responsible Government in the Federation if the executive power was reserved to the States. The whole idea of responsible government is that the Federal Executive should be responsible to Federal Legislature. If the States were allowed to reserve to themselves executive

power, the Federal Government so far as the States were concerned would be shorn of its responsibilities to the Federal Legislature. The States must really make up their minds either to accept a share in the Government of the Federation or to remain outside the Federation altogether.

Regarding paramountcy, Mr. Morgan is of opinion that the dualism of the office of the Governor-General contemplated by the Act itself seems to be an artificial one and must result either in the Viceroy being completely absorbed in the Governor-General on the separation of the two offices by their assignment to two separate persons. This separation is bound to come if and when Dominion Status is granted to India.

Concluding his opinion, Mr. Morgan says that most of the imperfections of the Federal constitution are due to the fact that the authors of it have had to incorporate in one and the same political structure two fundamentally different polities, the Indian States and Provinces of British India. This is the explanation of a certain want of harmony in design. The constitution is like a building which began in one style of architecture is to be completed in another, in part Gothic, in part Renaissance and it may well be that the distribution of the stresses and strain of structure will appear in course of time unequal to the burden of its support. In that case, amendment will become inevitable. It conforms to no theory of federalism if such there be, but it is none the worse for that. It is empirical but so is the British constitution and the British constitution has endured while more fanciful constitutions have long since passed away.

Mr. Morgan pays a warm tribute and expresses obligations to Mr. D. G. Dalvi, Advocate of Bombay and Junior Counsel to the Chamber of Princes who, he writes, has given him most devoted assistance in the task performed under great pressure of time and one without his assistance could never have been completed.

### Mr. Morgan's Views Criticised

Mr. Morgan's opinion regarding the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Accession was considered at the meeting of the Constitution Committee held under the chairmanship of the Maharaja of Patiala.

It transpired that during discussions it was the general feeling that the insinuation against Mr. Judge Wadhams that, being an American lawyer, his opinion in regard to the Act and Instrument was not sound and could not be taken seriously, was much resented while the Committee also felt that the suggestion that he was imported for the purpose of advising the Constitution Committee was not true as the Committee's report was based not only on Mr. Wadhams' advice but also on the memoranda prepared by the different committees such as the Informal Committee of Ministers and the Bombay Conference of Princes and Ministers, members of which had been advised by eminent English K. Os. such as Sir Wilfred Greene, Sir Walter Monckton and Mr. Gavin Simonds, while some of the members were advised by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Besides, it was held that the report of the Constitution Committee was substantially the same as the recommendation of the Informal Committee of Ministers, advised as it was by Sir Walter Monckton. It was generally felt that Mr. Morgan's opinion was not strictly the opinion on the Act or Instrument so much as a criticism of the different memoranda on the basis of which the Constitution Committee worked.

The general feeling was that there was an undercurrent of suspicion in Mr. Morgan's opinion against the binding nature of the Act and Instrument—an assumption which would make it impossible for any understanding to be arrived at between the States and His Majesty's Government. For instance, the Act was liable to be changed by Parliament, if Instrument of Accession would in effect be violated and the Instrument of Instructions by His Majesty disregarded by the Secretary of State by means of a secret despatch, it was no use, discussing either the Act or the Instrument of Accession or the Instrument of Instruction on any permanent basis by which reliance could be placed on the word of the Crown or the Imperial Parliament enacting legislation. As one of the members effectively put it, Mr. Morgan's opinion approached the question from an angle which is tantamount to asking what would happen if the law of gravitation was changed or the rule of the road was not observed by the other part.

It is understood that the Committee regard the opinion as unnecessary apprehension in the minds of States which, in part, confirms and strongly supports the con-

tion of the Constitution Committee. Some members apprehend that whereas States were probably nearest to Federation a few days ago, the position at the present moment is far from being so. Optimism, however, prevails regarding the ultimate success of the Constitution Committee in removing the apprehensions raised by Mr. Morgan's opinion section by section and it wrestled with the document for nearly six years.

## The Constitution Committee Report

### Hydari Committee Members' Statement

A statement signed by Sir Manubhai Mehta, Mr. Aliyar Khan (Hyderabad), Rai Bahadur Amarnath Attal, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani, Mr. Y. A. Thombare, Mr. K. M. Paunikkar and Mr. D. K. Son, members of the Hydari Committee, says :—

"An attempt has been made to discredit the Constitution Committee's Report on the ground that it had been based on advice of foreign lawyers. We desire to point out that the Constitution Committee's report follows in essentials the views of the Informal Committee of Ministers known as the Hydari Committee. The States represented on the Informal Committee of Ministers have had the advantage of opinion of four distinguished K. Cs. Lord Justice Wilfrid Greene for the Chamber and for His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sir Walter Monckton for Hyderabad and Kathiawar States, Sir William Jowitt for the Chamber and Mr. Gavin Symonds. Apart from these distinguished British Counsels, some of the States represented on the Committee were also advised by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It is also important to note that when the recommendations of the Hydari Committee were formulated in September, Sir Walter Monckton, K. C., was not only present 'throughout the discussions but helped along with Mr. Judge Wadhams to shape the decisions'.

### Report of the Committee

The following is the full text of the report of the Constitution Committee :—

1. A copy of resolution No. 3 is given as Annexure I to show the composition of the Constitutional Committee and its terms of reference.
2. The Committee met from the 25th January to the 6th February, 1937, and the present report deals with the conclusions unanimously arrived at by the Committee in respect of the general form of the Instrument of Accession, Treaty and other rights within the Federal sphere, Administration and the Federal Legislative List. The names of members present during the session and of those who attended as observers are given in Annexure II. The Committee desire to make it clear that the present report forms only the first part of the full report and that it is proposed to meet again shortly in order to consider other matters affecting accession.
3. The Committee had before them both the essential and the negotiable safeguards suggested by the Chamber of Princes in 1933, and have examined them with a view to ascertaining how far they have been met by the Government of India Act of 1935, and by the proposed draft Instrument of Accession. A list of the safeguards is contained in Annexure III. Upon careful consideration they have come to the conclusion that the safeguards have been substantially met and that, in so far as they have not been met or remain open to doubt, the recommendations suggested below will effectively achieve the objects which the safeguards were designed to serve. Nor are the recommendations conceived only in the light of the safeguards thus formulated; they represent conclusions arrived at independently by an examination of the Act and of the Draft Instrument and by an appreciation of what they consider to be essential in the interests of the States.
4. The Committee have had the benefit of examining the material prepared by other Committees, such as the Informal Committee of Ministers, Committees constituted by various regional groups of States and the Bombay Conference of Princes and Ministers. In examining the various recommendations thus placed before them, they have been mindful of the fact that the Government of India Act has already been passed, and that, therefore, suggested for the amendment of the Act itself should, wherever possible, be avoided. Similarly, in the course of their examination, they have confined their recommendations to what they consider should be essential demands of the States. They are happy to be able to report that in formulating these recommendations the Committee are of the unanimous view

that they should be pressed, both collectively and individually, by the States, for inclusion in the Instrument.

5. The Committee first considered the general form of the Instrument of Accession, and a copy of the draft as finally approved, which has for its basis the draft Instrument circulated to the States by the Government of India, is contained in Annexure IV.

6. The Committee are unanimously of the view that the clause dealing with "purpose" which is altogether new should be entirely omitted. They consider that objection to the use of such terms as "united" is secondary in comparison with the consideration that the statement of a political ideal in a legal document may cause a tendency to set in which may have undesirable consequences whenever a matter of doubt or difficulty arises in regard to the construction of a particular clause. The omission of the clause would in no sense detract from the constitutional value of the Instrument as governing the accession of the States, and the Committee are convinced that the omission of the clause should be strongly urged.

It is felt, however, that the mention of the parties to the Federation, as made in the clause, should remain, and the Committee recommend that in view of the proposed omission of the clause itself, the following words should be inserted in the third recital to the Instrument after the words "Federation of India :—

"Consisting of the Rulers of Indian States, the Provinces called Governors' Provinces, and the provinces called Chief Commissioners' Provinces".

The order in which the constituent units have been mentioned above is in accordance with unvaried past practice.

7. Clause 3 of the States' Draft Instrument of Accession of the 9th July, 1936, has not been included in the Government of India draft. The Committee desire to propose an amendment to that clause as follows :—

"No function in respect of any matters specified in the first Schedule hereto or under any provision of the Act which applies to this State by virtue of this Instrument of Accession shall be exercised in relation to this State by any authority other than a Federal authority, and save in accordance with the terms of this Instrument".

The object of this clause is partly covered by Section 204 (2) of the Act which prevents the exercise of federal powers inside the State otherwise than by the Federation. The clause itself is intended to prevent the exercise in relation to the State of federal powers outside the State otherwise than by the Federation. It also covers the Railway Tribunal which has been omitted, perhaps by inadvertence, from Section 204 (2). Moreover, there is an advantage in making it clear in the Instrument itself that federal powers and paramountcy powers cannot co-exist in respect of the same area. The argument that, if it is a gloss on the Act, it usurps the functions of the Federal Court, does not appeal to the States as the clause represents what the States understand to be the intention of Section 204 (2). If there is room for doubt as to the meaning of Section 204 (2) the States are entitled to have the position clarified. If there is no room for doubt, there appears to be no valid objection to clause 3. The rigid insistence on the letter of the rule that the Instrument should not contain provisions which may repeat or explain the provisions of the Act itself may lead to difficulties which can be avoided without in any way going counter to the scheme of the Act itself. There may be a point in saying that the Instrument should contain provisions which, are not in any sense inconsistent with the Act, but so far as merely making explicit what is admittedly the intention of the Act is concerned, the Committee find it difficult to see what real objection there could be to this course. It may be added that the clause in question was recommended unanimously by the Informal Committee of Ministers both in September and in December last.

8. The Committee further support the view that the following clause should be inserted after the proposed clause 3 discussed in the preceding paragraph :—

"Nothing in this Instrument shall affect the rights and obligations of the Ruler of this State in relation to the Crown with respect to any matter not within the functions exercisable by, or on behalf of, the Federation by virtue of the Instrument and no Federal authority shall have jurisdiction with respect to such rights and obligations."

The effect of the two clauses read together would be that no one but the Federal authorities (or the Ruler) is to perform Federal functions, and that Federal authorities are not to interfere in the relations between the Crown and the Ruler.

Section 285 does not seem to cover the subject fully for it does not mention the rights of the Rulers, and the reference in it to the obligation of the Crown does not necessarily cover all such rights. Section 2 refers only to powers connected with the exercise of the functions of the Crown. Neither of these Sections fully covers the principle that the relations of the Ruler and the Crown are continued separate and distinct from their relations with the Federation and without interference by Federal authorities. It may be mentioned that this clause was urged by the Informal Committee of Ministers in September last, and at their recent meeting in December the Committee maintained their request for its inclusion.

9. Clause 4, paragraph 2 of the States' draft Instrument of 9th July, 1936, has not been accepted. Its object was to guard against a possible implication that the legislative powers conferred on the Federation by particular sections of the Act are tacitly accepted by the States. If clause 4 (2) were adopted, the Ruler, by his Instrument, would be sure that he would be accepting only such items of the Federal Legislative List and such legislative powers in the body of the Act as are specified in his Instrument. It might be urged that the Federal Legislature will not have power to make laws for the States except in regard to matters which have been expressly accepted in the Instrument and that the only matter which a State will be required to accept in the Instrument will be the items in the Federal List. Thus, for example, Section 215 of the Act corresponds to items 53 of the Federal Legislative List and if that item is not accepted the legislative power under Section 215 will not be exercisable for the State. The proposal to implement Section 138 (3) by the addition of a new item to the Federal Legislative List corresponding to it is satisfactory but is based on an interpretation of the Act and the Instrument that Federal Legislature will have no power to make laws for the State on any matter, unless that matter has been specifically accepted in the Instrument. The Committee consider that if the second paragraph of the proposed clause 4 were included this would clearly be the position; if not the Court may take a different view. The consequence appears so grave as not to warrant leaving the matter to the hazard of interpretation by the Federal Court. Section 101 is not a sufficient protection by reason of the fact that it only refers one back to the Instrument and if there is any room for doubt in the Instrument the defect is not cured by the Act. The possibility of doubt in the Instrument arises from the fact that by clause 1 of the Instrument of the State authorities the Federal Legislature to exercise, subject to the terms of the Instrument, such functions as may be vested in them by the Act. *Prima facie* the words "such functions as may be vested in them by the Act" would include all legislative powers which under any section of the Act read in conjunction with section 99 (1) purport to be made applicable to a State. Section 99 (1) must itself be read in conjunction with all legislative powers conferred by the Act, and it is immaterial whether a section conferring legislative power does or does not expressly mention the States, since in any case the States are brought in by Section 99 (1), unless there is some other provision of the Act to exclude them. The only other provision of the Act which might be relevant in this connection is Section 101 which, as stated above, does not appear to be a sufficient protection. The clause has been pressed by the Informal Committee of Ministers in their meetings in September and December last, and the present Committee desire to identify themselves with that view.

10. Clause 13 of the States' draft Instrument of 9th July, 1936, has not been accepted and an apprehension has been expressed that it might, as it stands, have possible re-actions on the powers of the Crown. It was not the intention of the Clause that it should have such effect, and in order to meet the objection the following amendment is suggested which may take the place of Clause 6 of the draft Instrument as circulated to the States:—

"Nothing in this Instrument affects the continuance of my sovereignty in and over this State or, save as provided by this Instrument or by any law of the Federal Legislature made in accordance therewith the continuance of any of my powers, authority and rights, and the exercise of any of such powers, authority and rights in and over this State is, save as above, reserved to me."

The Committee desire to add that the inclusion of the term "reserved" as suggested both in the present clause and in the one proposed in the draft of the 9th July, is important. The term was included in the Government drafts of February and March 1935.

11. Clause 11 of the States' draft of 9th July, 1936, had for its object, the protection of treaty and other rights within the Federal sphere which could be

affected by the Federal Legislation outside the State. The Clause provided for an additional Schedule which would enumerate such rights. The objection has been raised—(a) that the Instrument cannot deal with matters outside the State, and (b) that in any case the right of the Federal Legislature to legislate in British India or outside the State cannot be fettered by the Instrument of Accession of a State. Further, Section 12 (1) (g) of the Government of India Act has been referred to as affording protection for such rights in the Governor-General's discretion. Article XV of the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, however, makes it clear that protection under Section 12 (1) (g) is intended to cover rights in the non-Federal sphere. The Committee are not wedded to the form in which the protection is afforded but share the view expressed by the Informal Committee of Ministers in their letter to Sir Bertrand Glaucoy No. 69 CC dated 31st January, 1937, that the protection should be legal. While leaving it to the Government of India to suggest the form in which such legal protection may be given, it is felt that the object may be gained by recourse to agreements, such as those contemplated under Section 204 (1) (a) (ii) between the Federation and the State which may specially be made subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal-Court.

12. On the question of Administration, the Committee desire to explain that Federal executive authority in relation to items to which a State accedes is dealt with in five different ways in the Act and the proposed Instrument. The basic assumption as made clear in Clause 3 (2) of the Government Draft Instrument is that where there is a limitation on legislative authority, there will be limitation on the executive authority.

(a) An absolute limitation upon executive authority under Section 6 (2).  
 (b) An administrative agreement under Section 125.  
 (c) An entrusting of duties under Section 124 (1) conditionally or otherwise the consent of the Ruler.

(d) A conferment or imposition of duties under Section 124 (3) for which under Section 124 (4) a financial compensation shall be payable.

(e) Where the Federal executive authority obtains, but is not exercised concurrent executive authority will be exercisable by the States [ Section 8 (2) ].

The admissibility of a limitation upon federal executive authority under Section 6 (2) of the Act may possibly be questioned and it might be urged that in any case such a limitation was unlikely to be acceptable since it would exclude the possibility of the Governor-General in his discretion satisfying himself by inspection or otherwise that administration was being carried out in accordance with the Federal policy. The Committee takes the view that on the wording of the Act and particularly of Section 8 (1) (ii) the admissibility of an executive limitation under Section 6 (2) is clear. Moreover, one of the main reasons why the States objected to the original form of clause 6 in the Bill as presented to Parliament was that it did not permit of executive limitations differing from the legislative limitations and it was to meet this point that Section 6 (3) was amended to its present form. The Committee, therefore, considered that any rejection on principle of executive limitations should be questioned by the States. At the same time, the Committee would agree that a provision in the Administrative Agreement is generally a more suitable method of executive limitations than Section 6 (2). It is thought that each case in which such limitations are proposed ought to be examined on its merits. The method of providing for executive reservations by an Administrative Agreement under Section 125, is, however, recommended only where such reservation is intended or possible and each State will have to consider the choice for itself, bearing in mind both the requirements of Federal standards and of financing the administration wherever so reserved. Similarly, each State will have to determine what items to cover by administrative agreements.

Where there is no such reservation either under Section 6 (2) or under Section 125, Federal executive authority will be exercised by the Federation either under Section 124 (1) or under Section 124 (3) and if under the two above Sections neither the Governor-General entrusts to the Ruler nor the Federal Legislature by an Act confers or imposes duties, the concurrent authority of the State, as already explained, will continue to be exercised under Section 6 (2), unless the Federation prefers to implant its own Federal authority within the State.

13. The Committee have examined the items in the Federal Legislative List with a view to suggesting (a) reservations applicable to the generality of States and (b) reservations which the Committee considered it to be necessary for protecting special interest. They have also formulated general limitations

applicable to several items and concerning such matters as land acquisition, discrimination so far as taxation is concerned and the liability of Federal Agents and Officers to the jurisdiction of the laws of the States. These are included in Annexure V of the present Report. In suggesting these limitations the Committee desire to make it clear that each State will have to determine the limitations under which it proposes to accept each item as it will no doubt have to consider its own individual requirements. Nor can the committee take any responsibility for the form of the limitations suggested and it would be for each State to take competent legal advice so as to see what particular form is best suited for its ends.

14. The Committee endorse the view expressed in the Hyderabad Memorandum, paragraph 36, which favours the strengthening of clause XV of the Governor-General's Instrument of Instructions so as to permit the Governor-General's intervention in less serious cases of discrimination than those which may necessarily imperil the economic life of a State.

15. The Committee recognise the present occasion may not be convenient for a discussion of the vexed question of Paramountcy, but they would recommend that the question may, in its relation to Federation, be taken up in the not too distant future. The advantage of rather clarifying the practice governing the exercise of Paramountcy was recognised by the Secretary of State in his Despatch of the 14th March, 1936. It is difficult to believe that the exercise of Paramountcy will not be affected by Federation, and this question of no little moment may have to be considered.

Moreover, there is undoubtedly some nervousness amongst Rulers lest they may find themselves faced, even within the Federal field, by the double power of the Federation itself and Paramountcy. The States' understanding is that, broadly speaking, where the Federation can, if it wishes, exercise authority, the claim of the Paramount Power to intervene disappears. The Committee recognise that Paramountcy is the ultimate sanction for enforcing Federal obligations, but they assume that a State will be entitled, before Paramountcy intervenes, to have those obligations determined in the Federal Court.

Perhaps the States' general thesis could be best expressed by saying that they rely on the Viceroy as the representative of His Majesty in his special and personal relationship with the States being the friend of the States and not in any sense an agent of the Federation. The special relationship with His Majesty is very precious to the States and they are concerned to ensure that at some future date the relationship is not weakened by the fact that the Viceroy is also Governor-General. It can hardly be denied that the duality of personality existing in the person who is both Governor-General and Representative of his Majesty in his relations with the Indian States has in it some elements of danger. Federal responsibilities will necessarily engross the greater part of his time and the distinction between his two personalities could without difficulty become blurred. If it did happen to become blurred, the Federal personality would almost certainly become dominant.

Perhaps one step which could usefully be taken to avoid the dangers which the States foresee would be to recognise that this duality of personality should not be repeated in the Political Service. A Resident in a State, for instance, should be the Agent of his Majesty's Representative but never the Agent of the Governor-General and such a separation of functions appears to be correct in theory and necessary in practice.

It obviously might prove of great inconvenience to confine the Resident to the Paramountcy side if this would render necessary the existence of another officer as Agent of the Governor-General. It appears, however, that there is no room for such Agent. There will be no Agent of the Governor-General in a province. Such instructions as the Federation is entitled to give to a Province will be given by the Governor-General to the Governor as head of the Province. Similarly, it would seem that such instructions as the Federal Government is entitled to give should be given by the Governor-General to the department of the State concerned.

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The Constitution Committee meeting was presided over by the *Maharaja of Patiala* and among the members present were the *Yuvaraja of Limbdi*, *Sir Prabhashankar Pattani*, *Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetti*, *Mr. Kola Madhava Rao*, *Mr. Mirza Ali Yar Khan*, *Mr. Powar*, *Pandit Amarnath*, *Mr. Sen*, *Mr. Rushbrook Williams*, *Sir Manubhai Mehta* and *Mr. Zaidi*.



The Committee, while considering the first section of Mr. Morgan's opinion containing certain remarks against Mr. *Judge* Wadhams as irrelevant to the discussion of the subject, have expressed appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by Mr. *Wadhams* throughout their discussions. They proceed to state that the suggestion in Mr. *Morgan's* opinion that Mr. Wadhams was "imported for the occasion" and the inference that the Committee report was based solely upon his advice was entirely incorrect. They point out that they have had before them the opinions of eminent English Counsel such as Sir Wilfred Greene, Sir Walter Monckton, Sir William Jowitt and Mr. Gavin Simmonds, in addition to other counsel such as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Judge Wadhams and Mr. Morgan, K. C. himself. They observe that the details into which Mr. Morgan had gone with meticulous care, had been carefully considered and evaluated by other eminent counsels in the course of the last four years and had either been embodied in the advice already given or disposed of by the States' political and legal advisers, long anterior to the present stage. No new issue had been raised by those details requiring wholesale reconsideration.

The Committee also comment on Mr. Morgan's remarks on the possibility of the Act, in disregard of Section 6 (5) being radically amended, the Instrument of Accession being over-ridden by the Federal Executive and His Majesty's Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General rendered nugatory by a secret despatch of the Secretary of State. They say that on that basis it would be impossible to negotiate a treaty or agreement even between independent parties and that it is not practicable to isolate the three documents, which form an integral structure, in which each has a distinct function and value of its own.

The Committee further observe that Mr. Morgan's opinions are based more on the criticism of the literature placed before the Committee than on the fundamental problems arising from accession. Regarding Mr. Morgan's view that the sovereignty of States would be impaired by accession to the Federation, the Committee state that the original safeguard formulated by the Chamber regarding sovereignty remaining unimpaired related to that portion of the States' sovereignty, the exercise of which was not made over to the Federation and that it was all along clear to the States that, to the extent to which they would accede, they would contribute to the Federation constituted by themselves in conjunction with the Crown in the exercise of certain other sovereign powers, authority and rights, a contribution implicit in the conception of the Federation itself. They have no doubt, whatsoever, that the rest had been adequately safeguarded and they have been fortified in coming to this conclusion by Mr. Morgan's own opinion expressed previously, in conjunction with Sir Wilfred Green and Sir William Jowitt that the "Bill appears to us to have been drafted with scrupulous regard for the rights of rulers of Indian States."

In the view of the Committee, Mr. Morgan misunderstood the reasons that led the States to demand an amendment of Clause 6. Their objection to the "subjects" being included in the Clause as originally drafted was only secondary and was on the ground that the subjects would only be affected by virtue of Rulers' accession and that, therefore, only the Ruler as sovereign and the high contracting party required mention. The States' real objection was, however, to the proposal, implicit in the Clause as first drafted that Rulers of Indian States should "accept" a piece of British Parliamentary Legislation as binding upon themselves and that the Committee were satisfied that amendments in this essential regard were not illusory or purely verbal. They have in this connection annexed in extenuated opinions expressed by Sir Wilfred Greene and Sir Walter Monckton which they regard as decisive. Those opinions express the view that the amendments sufficiently meet the objections taken by the States.

The Committee have replied to Mr. Morgan's opinion in regard to the question of sanction of coercive powers by quoting his own earlier opinion expressed in 1935 in which he had stated that there was no such subordination, as was the case with a Province, of State Governments and State servants to the Governor-General and that the Federal Government had no means of compelling State servants to act in aid of the Federal Court. Mr. Morgan had also stated in the earlier opinion that the internal sovereignty of the Federated States was, in all these respects, saved by the Bill which did not contemplate the exercise of any Federal authority over the government of States. The Constitutional Committee express their agreement with this earlier view stated by Mr. Morgan and adhere to their view that Paramountcy is the ultimate sanction for enforcement of Federal obligations and that the Federation

has no power to penalise a contumacious State beyond resorting to the Governor-General's powers in his discretion to issue directions to the Rulers. They state that the failure to carry out these directions would clearly set into motion the play of paramountcy powers and the Section 138 and 2 are decisive on the point.

In regard to Section 124 also, which Mr. Morgan regards as a manifest violation of Federal principles in so far as it empowers the Federal Legislature to impose duties or confer functions on States, the Committee state that at no previous stage was any objection taken to this by the States as the result of strong support of the clause by counsel in the above quotation. Besides, the States had also in mind the alternative, namely planting of Federal officers in States to execute Federal duties or functions—an alternative which the States, throughout, had been anxious to avoid.

The Committee proceed to explain that Hyderabad's objection to the word "uniting" occurring in the "Purpose" Clause was not secondary. It was true that Section 5 itself contained the word "uniting" but it was a different matter altogether according to Hyderabad to put that word in the mouth of the Ruler himself by inserting it in his Instrument of Accession. Hyderabad's more serious objection was, however, to the entire clause which imported the political ideal into a legal document and Hyderabad had, therefore, urged the deletion of the entire clause and the Committee in their own report, had agreed with this larger proposal and had, on the lines of Hyderabad, recommended the entire omission of the clause.

The Committee proceed to state they have had no misconception in their mind in regard to the implications of Section 49 nor had they even thought that a right, such as secession, existed in that Section. They are glad to note that Mr. Morgan agrees with the view expressed in the course of the Constitutional Committee's discussion that it was unnecessary to go into the matter at this stage. They are satisfied, however, that Schedule 2 of the Act, read in conjunction with Section 6 (1) (a) and Section 6 (5), adequately safeguards the fundamental structure which the States will accede and that the amendment of provisions, saved from amendment under Schedule 2, will affect the accession of States in altering the basis given in the Constitution to which they acceded. The Committee refer to the opinions expressed by Sir Wilfred Greene, Sir Thomas Inskip and Sir Donald Sommerville in this connection which confirm their own view. They proceed to state that the argument employed by Mr. Morgan that if, later on, Parliament chose to amend Section 5 itself, a State would have no remedy was purely academic inasmuch as, in a similarly inconceivable event of Parliament deciding to annex their territories, the States would equally have no remedy. They fear that to take account of such contingencies is a procedure as remote from reality as a speculation of the effect likely to be produced if the law of gravitation were suddenly to cease to operate.

Commenting on the cases cited by Mr. Morgan, on which a separate annexure has been added, the Committee in Mr. Morgan's own words have uttered a warning regarding the dangers of analogies stating that the proposed Federal Constitution for India has no precedent or parallel either in Dominion Constitutions or in other Federations outside the Empire. They point out that no such element as paramountcy functions of the Crown or, for that matter, the Instrument of Accession over-riding the Act, exists elsewhere and that nowhere within the Empire, to which Mr. Morgan has confined his references, are there any such sovereignties as India's States uniting with the Crown for the purpose of forming a Federation. The Committee state: "While accepting in general the possibility of interpretations being given by the Privy Council on the basis of precedents wherever applicable the Committee cannot believe that the Privy Council would be incapable of distinguishing between two such essentially different types of political structures as are represented on the one hand by the proposed Federation of India and on the other by any one of the Constitutions of the Empire.

The Committee deal at length with the two suggestions made by Sir Akbar Hydari and the Hydari Committee, namely, the request to the Government of India to sympathetically explore the possibility of placing on record agreed understandings between the parties so as to throw light on the construction of the instrument and the suggestion that the extra-statal rights within the Federal sphere should be given legal protection. The Committee express the view that both the Hydari Committee and they themselves have throughout been aware of the difficulties inherent in the inclusion of provisions in the instrument itself for realising these two objects and that the States had, therefore, left it to the Government of India to devise other

methods, if inclusion in the Instrument was impossible for implementing the requirements of the States.

One of the methods which the Hydari Committee had in mind in regard to the first proposal was the incorporation of provisions in the rules of practice and procedure of the Federal Court which would make this possible, particularly in view of the essentially contractual nature of the Instrument, as distinguished from the Statute itself. In regard to the second proposal, the Government of India have been requested to explore the possibility of agreements with the Federation regarding such extra-statal rights and such agreements were contemplated in section 204 (1) (a) (iii) of the Act. The Committee remark that they are pleased to see that Mr. Morgan regards the first proposal emanating from Sir Akbar Hydari as a valuable one. They state, however, that while the arguments against the request of the nature made to the Government of India for exploration did not require such elaborate enumeration by the counsel engaged on behalf of the States, no attempt has been made by Mr. Morgan to suggest any other alternative in matters such as the legal protection of the extra-statal rights, which the States regard as important.

The Committee are confident that the difficulties are by no means insurmountable. They are glad that Mr. Morgan agrees with their own views regarding the power to contract out of the operation of particular provisions of the Act.

### Sir Tej Bahadur's Opinion

Sir *Tej Bahadur Sapru*, who had been consulted by the Maharaja of Patiala on some of the points arising out of Mr. Morgan's opinion on the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Accession, gave his opinion on those points and it was in vital disagreement with Mr. Morgan's views. Sir T. B. Sapru starts with discussing the peculiar character of Indian Federation from the Federations in Canada and Australia and says that while cases coming up for discussion before Privy Council or the Federal Courts are useful up to a point, they are not conclusive guides to questions which might arise under the present constitution. It would, therefore, not be proper to be dogmatic on any issue at this stage and create fears and confusion where none would probably at all exist.

With regard to the question of succession in the event of a breakdown of the constitutional machinery under Section 45 of the Government of India Act, Sir T. B. Sapru is of opinion that no provision has been made in the Act as to what the next step would be. Secession is not contemplated in the Act, but, in the event of any deadlock or extraordinary situation arising, the remedy would be in the direction of extra-judicial negotiations with the Crown.

Questions were put to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in order to obtain a definite opinion on some of the important issues the most important among them being,

(1) How is the sovereignty of the State affected by the Act except in so far as it has been voluntarily conceded by the Instrument of Accession? Sir T. B. Sapru's reply is that beyond the Instrument of Accession the sovereignty of the States is unaffected.

(2) Is the Instrument of Accession the final and complete limitation on the authority of Federal Courts and Privy Council?—The answer is in the affirmative.

(3) Has Parliament the power to legislate amending the protected provisions of the Act without, in substance, affecting the Federation as established under this Act?—The answer is that the States were acceding to the Federation as established under this Act. Therefore, any fundamental change in the protected provisions of the Act would be putting an end to the Federation established under this Act. Therefore the Instrument of Accession would have spent itself and the agreement between the States and Crown in that behalf would necessarily come to an end. The omnipotence of Parliament is not denied but an amendment of the protected provision would necessarily mean the termination of the existing understanding.

(4) Can the Instrument be disregarded by the Secretary of State thereby rendering the protection afforded to the States in the special powers of the Governor General nugatory?—Sir T. B. Sapru's answer is in the negative. It would be no violent assumption on the part of the States to think that the Secretary of State would act honestly and he would conform to the high traditions of public integrity. In the event of any such instruction being disregarded by the Secretary of State there would be enough remedies to bring him to book beyond the one of impeachment, which, in these days, might be considered by some as an obsolete and rusty weapon.

(5) Is it open to the Federation to confiscate money lying in a State bank or in a Bank in British India to satisfy a Federal claim against a federating State?—The answer is in the negative. The decrees of the Federal Court are declaratory and therefore cannot be executed as other decrees. There is no provision in the Act for passing special legislation confiscating such monies.

A few other questions were also referred to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to which his answers are regarded to be very convincing and satisfactory. Sir T. B. Sapru does not share the apprehensions of Mr. Morgan with regard to some of the provisions of the Act.

With reference to the question of secession, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru says: "Whether the Dominions, under the Statute of Westminster, of 1931 possess the right of secession or not does not seem to be a very relevant question, in dealing with the Indian Constitution. The fact is that India is not a Dominion yet. Even with regard to the true scope and import of the Statute of Westminster, there is difference of opinion among lawyers. Personally, I agree with the opinion of Professor Keith that Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia agree with New Zealand and Newfoundland in rejecting the existence of any right of secession. Moreover, the principle asserted in the Preamble of the Statute of Westminster is in harmony with the terms of Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, for Dominions, in accordance with the spirit of that Article, even accepting that it does not apply strictly to them, must be regarded as vitally interested in the territorial integrity of the Empire. At best to argue from Dominions to India seems to me merely academic and is apt to introduce confusion into the correct legal ideas about the relationship of Indian States with the Crown. Assuming a Dominion has the right of secession, it simply means that it has the right to sever its connection with the British Empire. I can scarcely conceive of Indian States entertaining any such idea. All that secession in their case can mean is desire to go out of the Federation. The whole Constitution is based on the assumption that the Federation will consist of Indian States and after a few years if they decide to walk out of that it may virtually mean breakdown of the whole Constitution as embodied in the Act. I don't think this was contemplated by Parliament or by other parties to the Federation, namely, British Indian Provinces or to put it otherwise by the Crown on behalf of the Provinces.

"Whether Indian States should now demand the right of secession is more a question of policy than a question of law, but it goes so much to the root of the Constitution that if a demand like this is put forward, practically the whole of the Constitution will have to be recast and remoulded. Not being an Englishman, I cannot speak with certainty as to what the attitude of an average Englishman in England or the average member of Parliament on a subject like this will be, but I think we ought not to forget the difficulties which this measure had to face in the Commons and from a certain class of politicians in Parliament and outside. I doubt very much whether the Government would be prepared to take the risk of bringing the Constitution into the melting pot upon a demand of this character from any direction. It is, however, more a political question than a legal question and on the political side, I am not willing to speak with authority.

"The next point I wish to make clear is under Section 6. The accession of an Indian State can come about only when its Ruler has signified his acceptance of the Instrument of Accession in accordance with Sub-section (1), Clauses (a) and (b). Indian States will federate not because the Act requires them to do so, but because they choose to accede to the Federation. They will accede to the Federation as established under this Act with the intent that the King, the Governor-General, the Federation, the Legislature, the Federal Court and any other Federal authority shall, by virtue of the Instrument of Accession, but subject always to the terms thereof and for purposes only of the Federation, exercise in relation to the States such functions as may be vested in them by or under this Act.

# The Orissa States Peoples' Conference

The Orissa States Peoples' Conference was held at Cuttack on the 23rd. June 1937, under the presidency of *Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramaya*. The President, at the outset congratulated the citizens of Orissa on the integration of Orissa as a separate Province and said :

"The problem of the States is a much complex one than that of the Provinces. It has been well said that 'an aristocrat may be disposed of with propriety by the use of guillotine or some other humane appliance. But what on earth can we do with his flunkey?' That more or less figuratively represents the position of affairs to-day in India. The Princes are truly in an unenviable position which deserves sympathy rather than condemnation from the public. They are clothed with a certain semblance of authority, the same, that the people of the British India are about to be dressed up in by which a certain loyalty is compelled towards the ruling power and is rewarded with the enjoyment of certain personal privileges which are gratifying to their sense of individual vanity. The immediate captivates the Princes and the people alike. The remote is a tangle, the unravelling of which is a task too intricate for the ease-loving public. Yet the task has to be faced. The first step in the process is the need to awaken the people of the States. They are in ignorance partly, and for the rest they are helpless. Their strength must be proved to them. Their immense potentialities must be unfolded before their vision."

You may not represent the whole of Orissa, but as representatives of the State, your concern for your culture and civilisation and for your fellow citizens inhabiting the British India is real. After all, how do you differ from them? We are so many subnationalities with common forms of worship, a common historical tradition and a common biological descent. Administrative boundaries are an accident and no such artificial boundaries can operate as barriers against the enjoyment of equal rights by people inhabiting the two sides of the boundary. Is it not then highly surprising why the British Government in India considers that the people of the States should not have the privileges of franchise which the people of the Provinces enjoy?

Referring to the question of Federation the President said :—"Federation is attractive and inevitable in a country like India where a third of the area and a fourth of the population are under the Princes. These have to be brought into the picture of a common government on the principles of Federation. Accordingly the idea had appealed to the imaginations of the Princes as well as the people of British India. Both had agreed to it at the First Round Table Conference. But in working it out it has been discovered by the Princes that Central Responsibilities without which they could not have Federation is nowhere. It has been further realized by the people of India that the "safeguards in the interest of India" which along with Central Responsibility and Federation formed the three beams on which the Congress had agreed to raise the future Indian Political structure, according to the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, have really overshadowed the other two and themselves proved ultimately to be safeguards in the interests of England, not India. Thus is Federation calculated to benefit neither the Princes, nor their people nor the people of the provinces, but only the fourth party,—British Government. It is a pity therefore that the Princes should not have been able to reject this deformed growth in one voice. The South Indian States having a large population and revenues and enjoying high honours in the numbers of guns they are entitled to are in a position of vantage and can easily load the dice, but moral influence of even the minor princes who occupy a relatively humble position cannot altogether be neglected.

Referring to the internal condition of the States, the President said :—"You are the representatives of 26 Indian States in Orissa covering an area of about 30,000 square miles and ranging in size and importance from a State like Mayurbhanj covering an area of 4,243 sq. miles and with a population of 8,86,745 and an income of Rs. 26,00,000 to a small state like Tigiri with an area of 46 sq. miles, a population of 24,680 and an annual income of Rs. 2,35,000. It is a well-known fact that a certain modified form of slavery still continues in the States. There is also the

system of forced labour, trade monopolies and interference in day to day administration prevalent in States all over and those in Orissa are no exception to this practice"

Proceeding Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya said :

There is a minor aspect of the problem which is being debated in the Hindi Press to-day. It relates to issue as to who should conduct the propaganda and educative work in the States. Is it the Congress, the All-India States' People Conference or the local Rajasthan Praja Parishat ? The third of these is only a limb and constituent of the Second, therefore, the issue resolves itself into the question whether the Congress should undertake this task or the All-India States' people Conference. There is a tendency to look upon the Congress as an outside body. But whatever truth there might have been in such a view before June 1935, after the passing of the Act, the object of which is to establish a Federation the States and the Provinces are to be equal partners under the Federal Constitution of India. The representatives of the two wings meet and hobnob with one another in the Central Legislature in a spirit of camaraderie and comradeship which should necessarily involve the extension of mutual hospitality to one another, the invitation of the States' representatives to the Provinces and vice versa, to study the problems appertaining to the different parts and Provinces of India. The Congress cannot be treated as alien body by the States in any measure or in any sense of the term. It may, therefore, be advantageous to lay down authoritatively the position of affairs regarding some of the issue on the subject.

The States' People are entitled to form Congress Committees in States and it is not permissible to any Provincial Congress Committee to so frame its constitution as to deprive Congressmen in States of the right to form Primary Congress Committees in the territories of the States and if any constitution is defective or doubtful in this behalf, it is upto the people of any State concerned to appeal to the Working Committee of the Congress to get it suitably amended. The Congress to-day contemplates the development of mass contacts and in shaping it, it is certainly within the range of practical politics to harness the immense latent powers of the masses in the States.

The President then concluded with an appeal to the people of the States to come in line with their fellow countrymen in British India and to organise themselves.

### Resolutions

#### PUBLICATION OF STATES' LAW

The following resolutions were passed:—

"Whereas the people in general of the States of Orissa have no facilities to know the laws, codes, rules, regulations and orders by which they are governed, whereas it is their bitter experience that their lives, property and honour are not secure, and whereas it is high time for the benefit of the rulers and the ruled alike that this feeling of insecurity disappears, it is hereby resolved that this Conference do take all such necessary steps for the purpose of impressing upon the Rulers of Orissa States the immediate necessity of declaring and publishing all those laws, codes and acts of the British Indian Legislature which they have adopted and also all such other laws, rules and orders having the force of law as they have framed for the administration of the States.

"This Conference strongly urges upon the Rulers of the Orissa States the immediate necessity of conferring upon their subjects (a) rights of occupancy on their holdings, (b) fundamental rights of citizenship.

#### ORISSA UNIVERSITY

"This Conference invites the attention of the Princes of Orissa States to the earnest attempts that are being made to carve out an Oriya University and exhorts them to contribute liberally to this endeavour so as thereby to conserve and enrich Oriya culture and pending the formation of such a University, the Conference urges the Princes to so organise their educational policy as not to affect adversely the cultural unity of the Oriya community of Orissa.

"This Conference urges upon the rulers of the States and the Government of Orissa that apart from the question of services, there should be no discrimination between the States' people and those of the Province of Orissa and requests that in particular no discrimination be made in the matter of scholarships of merit in University Examinations.

This Conference, while appreciating the spirit of the Government of India's recent statement regarding forced labour prohibition in pursuance of the Draft Convention of the International Labour Conference in June, 1930, records its emphatic protest against the continuance of the practices in a much more severe form than previously in some of the States, and particularly against double extortion in the shape of permanent additional taxation over and above the usual forms of Begar, and urges on the rulers the immediate abolition of every form of Bethi either in the shape of labour or a money levy or both, and requests the Government of India to investigate how far in reality Bethi has been abolished in the States.

This Conference draws the attention of the rulers to the wide-spread distress among their subjects caused by the evil practices of extracting Rasad, Magan and Bethi and strongly urges on them the total abolition of these.

#### FEDERATION

The Conference, while in favour of an all-India Federation of a genuine character, declares itself unable to accept the Federation proposed in the Government of India Act, on the ground, among others, that it fails to secure any representation at all of the States' Power of the protection of the elementary rights of citizenship through the agency of the Federal Court, and the Conference pledges the support of the people in the States in all attempts to be made to replace this mock federation by a real one to be fashioned by the mutual consent of the people in British India and the Indian States.

The Conference next reiterated the demands of All-India States' People Conference for international administrative reforms within States.

The Conference appointed a Committee consisting of Messrs. Satish Chandra Bose, Balabanta Ray Mahta, Brajasundar Das and Sarangdhar Das (convenor) to investigate and report on illegalities in the States.

The Conference protested against the serving of orders under Section 114 Cr. P. C. on Babu Dayananda Satpati by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Kuchinda in Bamra State in connection with the Orissa States Peoples' Conference with the collection of subscriptions for the purpose.

The constitution of the Conference was then decided. The object was declared to be the attainment of responsible Government by the people of the States and all bonafide residents of the Orissa States above the age of 18 who subscribed to the object of the Conference were eligible for membership. Provision was made for the starting of States People Association in each of the Orissa States and in portions of the States also delegates to the Orissa States' Peoples' Conference are to be elected by the affiliated bodies. The delegates of this year's Conference from the various States form the members of the States' Peoples' Sabhas of the respective States and are authorised to bring into existence Conferences of the States and also organise subordinate committees.

# **Educational Progress In India**

**JANUARY—JUNE 1937**



# Educational Progress in India

## Education in India 1934-35

The following is the comment which the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India made in his report reviewing the general progress of education in 1934-35 (says a pre-se note issued by the Director of Public Information, New Delhi on the 14th. April 1937.)

"What is wrong with the education has been pointed out time and again and the necessary steps to put it right indicated, but these steps are not taken. No Provincial Ministry since education became a transferred subject has had the courage to tackle the evils fundamentally. They could not reorganize and readjust in the higher stages of the educational system as there are too many vested interests to antagonize, while in the lower stages they are helpless to stem waste and extravagance."

But so far as the upper stages are concerned, says the report, there has been a change in public opinion and an awakening to the necessity of educational reorganization. In the United Provinces the opinion has been expressed in a Government resolution that "the value of University education is impaired by the presence in the Universities of a large number of students who are unfit for higher literary or scientific education, that these students cannot hope to obtain employment which would justify the expense of their education ; and that the only feasible remedy is to divert them to practical pursuits in the pre-University stage." The Inter-University Board in its third Conference also made similar recommendations, while the Punjab University Committee stated that a scheme of school reconstruction was a vital preliminary to the improvement of University teaching. Similar opinions were expressed all over India, and there seems at last a general disposition to tackle the problems in earnest.

While the problem has at last been handled in the higher stages, little has however been done to diminish the waste and extravagance which characterizes the administration of primary education. Primary education as a rule is controlled by local bodies. But when no less than 74 per cent of all boys attending the primary schools never attain literacy, it is obvious that the administration by local bodies of primary education has entirely failed. Local bodies complain of inadequacy of funds, but the waste involved is such that three fourths of the expenditure on primary education is rendered entirely unproductive.

The degree of control exercised by the local bodies varies from Province to Province, but broadly speaking, it is correct to say that Boards are very susceptible to local influence and open schools where there is no demand, and keep them going when they are dead for personal and not public reasons.

When the control of education in its primary stage was transferred to the local bodies it was expected that the local bodies acquainted with the local needs would be able to locate schools where they were needed. For a time there was certainly a marked quantitative increase in numbers, but the method of increase was wasteful. There was no plan, no provision of buildings, and no care in the selection of teachers. The amateur in education ran amuck and the professional looked on helpless—his advice not asked for nor required. The position must be retrieved, and the method of retrieval is undoubtedly closer co-operation between local bodies and the Departments of Education.

Coming to actual statistics, the number of institutions has decreased by 461 from 256,724 in 1931 to 256,263 in 1935. The main decreases are in Madras and the United Provinces; in the former it was due to a deliberate policy of providing a better and more economic distribution of schools, while in the latter it was due to consolidation and is therefore not a matter for regret.

The quantitative increase in numbers undergoing instruction, however, continues. This increase was 86,995 in 1932-33, when economic conditions and financial depression imposed a check. Next year the increase rose to 319,358; in 1934-35 it was 333,979, of whom 135,195 were girls and 198,784 boys. The total number of boys and girls

under instruction in 1934-35 throughout India was 13,506,869. The percentage of pupils under instruction, both boys and girls, is 5 out of an optimum figure of 12 per cent. as against 4.8 in the previous year. The percentage is, however, considerably reduced by the lag in girls' education, for while the percentage for boys works out at 7, that for girls is only 2.2. Taking, however, school-going age to mean the age of elementary education, it appears that out of the total number of boys of school-going age who should be in primary schools, 50.3 per cent are enrolled, while the percentage for girls is only 10.5.

But these figures take no note of the wastage at the primary stage, that is, of the large number who fail to complete the course and attain literacy. For the whole of India this figure is no less than 74 per cent for boys and 87 per cent for girls. These are terrible figures. The Education Departments are striving everywhere to reduce this figure, and that their efforts are showing results may be seen by the comprehensive reduction in the figures of wastage which were in 1931, 79 per cent for boys and 90 per cent for girls. In the first flush of enthusiasm, when education became a transferred subject, quantity rather than quality was the goal, but the defects have been diagnosed and everywhere primary education is being improved and mistakes retrieved.

The table below gives the distribution of the number under instruction in various institutions :—

Kind of Institution.	FOR MALES		Increase
	1934	1935	
Colleges	106,100	109,315	3,125
High Schools	915,114	944,922	29,808
Middle Schools	1,174,877	1,172,005	-2,872
Primary Schools	8,396,908	8,639,405	242,437
Special Schools	227,308	230,181	1,873
	FOR FEMALES		
Colleges	2,158	2,493	335
High Schools	92,430	98,975	6,545
Middle Schools	140,101	146,042	5,941
Primary Schools	1,409,330	1,459,267	49,937
Special Schools	17520	18,005	575

It will be seen that the most noticeable increase has been at the primary stage, where the number has increased by about two and half lakhs in the case of boys and by about half a lakh in the case of girls.

The total expenditure from all sources on education in British India shows an increase of Rs. 34,46,214, the total for the year being Rs. 20,62,11,420. 43.7 per cent of this expenditure was met from Government funds, 15.7 per cent from local funds, 22 per cent from fees and the remaining 15.6 per cent from other sources. Retrenchment measures due to sheer financial necessity are still in force, but the increase shows that the needs of education are not being entirely subordinated to the need for economy. Madras leads with an increase of Rs. 9.35 lakhs from Government funds. Bengal has an increase of 1.30 lakhs, the United Provinces Rs. 4.16 lakhs, and the Central Provinces Rs. 1.32 lakhs. The decreases are—Burma with as much as Rs. 3.6 lakhs, and Bihar and Orissa with Rs. 2 lakhs. Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Punjab, the Central Provinces, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province all contribute over 40 per cent of the expenditure directly from Government funds. The N. W. F. P. contributes as much as 66.4 per cent of the total followed among major Provinces by Assam with 56.8 per cent, the United Provinces with 53 per cent, and the Punjab with 51.2. Bengal and Bihar are the lowest with 31.5 and 31 per cent respectively. But the latter has 30.1 from local funds and Bengal, with its huge system of private schools, has 44.5 from fees.

The average cost per pupil for British India in high schools is Rs. 55-3-1, in middle schools Rs. 20-14-3, and in primary schools Rs. 7-15-8. The distribution of Government expenditure on the various types of institutions is as follows :—Universities and colleges 14.7 per cent, secondary schools 24.1 per cent, primary schools 34.3, girls' education 13.9 and direction and inspection 8.8. It will be noted that 38.8 per cent goes on higher education, and only 34.3 on primary education. In England the percentages are Universities 3.8, secondary schools 18.44, and elementary schools 65.2.

Increasing interest is being taken in physical education. There is a general recognition that the old type of drill is of little value, and physical training on modern lines is being introduced in most Provinces. The growing interest in games is reported to have created a demand for more playgrounds everywhere, but much leeway has yet to be made in the matter of physical training and games.

Scouting continues to grow in popularity, and the number of scouts in India has increased from 231,956 to 273,833. The Girl Guides movement is also steadily growing specially in the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Bombay, Madras and the United Provinces. There were 34,318 girl guides in India during the year under review, which is an increase of 1,833 over the preceding year.

More attention is also being paid to the medical inspection of schools, specially in the United Provinces where special school clinics have been set up in the larger cities and milk is also given to those needing it.

Coming to the education of special classes and communities it appears that the number of institutions for Europeans and Anglo-Indians has diminished by 6 to 413. The total enrolment has, however, gone up by 763 to 27,195 for boys and by 637 to 33,418 for girls. There has been an increase of Rs. 1,33,340 in expenditure, but fees and endowments still form more than two-thirds of the total. The usual high standard reached by these schools is being maintained everywhere, but there are abundant signs that the need for practical manual aptitudes is being more generally recognised.

There has been an increase in the number of Muslim boys under instruction by 47, 014 to 2, 823, 481, while the number of girls has increased to 749, 375 by 29, 272, which is, considering the circumstances, a satisfactory figure. All stages of education share in the increase, and there is welcome addition of 101 girls reading in the University stage.

The segregated school for Muslims undoubtedly retards the progress of primary education among them. Maktabas and schools of the same type are popular, but as factors in educational progress they are of little or no value as they are regarded primarily as religious institutions and not as part of the educational structure. The teacher or teachers are engaged for their knowledge of religion and not for pedagogic qualities. It is time, says the report, the situation was recognised and real efforts made to tackle it.

It is significant that steps are being taken in this direction in Sind, where efforts are being made to encourage children to attend board schools in place of segregated schools and in Bihar and Orissa, where Government have decided to call maktabas primary Urdu schools and are aiming at a common school.

The number of Depressed Class students under instruction continues to grow, only the Punjab showing a reduction, the total number under instruction being 1,206,193 against 1, 163,136 in the preceding year. The greatest increase has been again in Madras, with 16,044. But there is still very considerable prejudice in this Province against admitting Depressed Class pupils to ordinary schools. In other Provinces this prejudice is reported to be fast disappearing.

#### Primary Education in India 1934-35

"57.5 per cent. of all the schools in British India are schools which have only one teacher, and the majority of these single-teacher schools are incomplete schools, that is, schools which break up before the class where literacy is attained. These inefficient small schools are obviously useless schools from the point of view of literacy—but they are worse than useless, because they definitely prevent the spread of literacy by deflecting the bulk of the funds from schools which do make a proper return. Little will be done to increase literacy until amalgamation and consolidation of schools and the elimination of the incomplete and the single-teacher schools enable the money available to be spent on schools capable of making a fair return. Before this is done, however, local bodies who are responsible for the provision and control of primary education must appreciate the position and realize that the spread and improvement of primary education is their concern. So far they have not shouldered the responsibility placed on them by the transfer of primary education to their charge several years back. Before any other problem is tackled, this question of obtaining a fair return for the money spent on primary education must be faced and dealt with. Education Departments in every Province have pointed out the defects and indicated the cures year after year. A slow and painful rehabilitation is taking place in some Provinces, but the pace is too slow and local bodies everywhere prefer the political power the control of education gives them to the welfare

of the children entrusted to their charge. This is a severe indictment, but report after report proves its truth."

The total number of primary schools for boys in British India during this year was 166, 583, with an enrolment of 8, 639, 405 of which over 1,000,000, were girls reading in boys' schools. The number of men teachers in the schools was 327, 932, of which only 55, 1 per cent, were trained.

Though there has been a decrease of 292 schools, there has been an increase of 242, 437, in enrolment. The decrease has been the greatest in the United Provinces, as many as 454 schools being closed though enrolment has increased there by over 10, 000. The decrease in the United Provinces is due to the closing of small and uneconomic schools and was a step in the right direction, though nothing more than a step. The largest increases in enrolment were 78, 826 in Madras, 75, 877 in Bengal, 37, 157 in Bihar and Orissa, 30, 074 in Bombay, and 10, 669 in Assam. The Punjab records a decrease of nearly 6, 000.

The average number of pupils per primary school for boys was 52 for the whole of British India, the Provincial figures being, Madras 55, Bombay 79, Bengal 41, the United Provinces 63, the Punjab 66, Bihar and Orissa 35, the Central Provinces and Berar 75, Assam 48, the North West Frontier Province 56, Coorg 84, Delhi 92, Ajmer-Merwara 57, Baluchistan 28.

The figures show the large number of incomplete and one-teacher schools which continue to exist and cause wastage of both money and effort.

The total expenditure on boys' primary education was Rs. 69, 56 398, which is higher than the figure of the previous year by about Rs. 1, 00, 000. With the exception of Bombay, where there has been a decrease of a little over a quarter of a lakh, and of Burma, other Provinces show increases.

The average cost per annum per child in a primary school is Rs. 7-11- the cost in the various Provinces being as follows :—Madras Rs. 8-6-5, Bombay Rs. 16-8-3, Bengal Rs. 3-6-9, the United Provinces Rs. 7-7-2, the Punjab Rs. 10-13-5, Burma Rs. 7-9-11 Bihar and Orissa Rs. 6-0-5, the Central Provinces and Berar Rs. 10-5-2, Assam Rs. 4-9-7, and the North West Frontier Provinces Rs. 12-13-2.

It is not, however, the number of boys attending primary schools which is so important as the number which continue to the end of the course and their distribution. Statistics show that in Madras Class II has less than half the numbers that are in Class I, while in Bengal Class II has only 35 per cent, of the boys in Class I, the United Provinces has 54 per cent, the Punjab 46 per cent, Bihar and Orissa 67 per cent, and the Central Provinces 68 per cent. The distribution between Classes II and III and III and IV is more even; it is between classes I and II that the loss occurs.

In the whole of India, 74 per cent of those attending primary schools fail to reach Class IV, where they may be said to attain permanent literacy. In Madras the wastage is as much as 69 per cent; and in the United Provinces and the Punjab 75 per cent, Bombay with 59 per cent and the Central Provinces with 52 per cent are better, but Bihar and Orissa with 85 per cent and Bengal with 86 per cent wastage are the worst.

These figures are frankly appalling and the system which allows them is greatly inefficient and wasteful. The causes have been diagnosed: they are bad teaching in the infants' classes, leading to stagnation and loss of promotion, irregular attendance due to various causes including sickness, poverty, parents' lack of interest, and ineffective organisation by local bodies, which also, accounts for the bad teaching. There are of course cures which have been pointed out again and again, but the present system makes it difficult to put them into force.

Until the existing numbers of boys attending primary schools are rendered literate, it seems little use increasing these numbers.

In this connection the percentage of boys between the ages of 6 and 11—actually attending schools and the literacy figures for each Province given below are well worth studying :—

Province.	Percentage of boys in primary Classes to those of school-going age.	Percentage of literacy, i. e. who reach Class IV.
Madras	71.2	31
Bombay	59.5	41
Bengal	61.5	14
United Provinces	36.8	25

Province.	Percentage of boys in primary Classes to those of school- going age.	Percentage of literacy. i. e. who reach Class IV.
Punjab	51.0	25
Burma	39.0	18
Bihar & Orissa	36.1	15
Central Provinces & Berar	39.2	48
Assam	41.3	36
North-West Frontier Province	40.9	13
Coorg	56.8	62
Delhi	63.4	27
Ajmer-Merwara	34.5	(a)
Baluchistan	18.3	29
Bangalore	94.9	37
Other Administered Areas	75.1	34
British India	50.3	26

(a) Exact figures not available.

It will be seen that High enrolments do not necessarily mean high literacy figures. Thus Madras with far the highest percentage of boys attending school has for inferior literacy figures to Bombay and the Central Provinces which have comparatively low enrolment figures. Again the Punjab with just over half the boys available in school has no better literacy figures than the United Provinces with a little over a third attending. This reinforces the argument that quantity in education is no substitute for quality. As already mentioned, the percentage of single-teacher primary schools to the total number of schools is 57.5 for the whole of British India, but this figure is as high as 80.3 per cent for Bengal, 73.8 for Assam, and 71.2 for Bihar and Orissa. At the other end, the low figures amongst the Major Provinces are 23.2 in the Central Provinces, 39.6 in the United Provinces, 40.3 in Bombay, 44.4 in Madras, and 27.3 in the Punjab.

While most Provinces have introduced compulsion in some areas, it will be obvious from the figures given that compulsion has not been as successful as it should have been, mainly because the local bodies responsible for its enforcement have not taken it in earnest. As at present administered, it is far from a means to universal literacy and merely one other factor in the financial extravagance which is so marked a feature of the administration of primary education. Before this system is extended, therefore, it will be necessary to overhaul the machinery, specially the methods to obtain regular attendance. The real advantage of compulsion is not that it brings more boys to school but that it compels regular attendance. An estimate of the cost which British India would have to incur if compulsory education were made universal shows that a further sum of as much as Rs. 6 and half crores will be required in addition to the sums already spent to educate the boys of school-going age who are now not under instruction.

Co-education has of late been referred to as a solution of all difficulties. The figures for primary schools show almost as many girls in boys' schools as in girls'. Madras, the United Provinces, Burma and Assam show more. The mixed village school is already in many Provinces the most popular type. There is no real difference mentally between boys and girls at this stage, but for mixed schools to succeed it is necessary to have a proportion of women teachers.

Notwithstanding the restriction imposed by the method of administration, considerable activity in improving methods of teaching and in the general atmosphere of boys' primary schools, specially in primary schools in rural areas, is reported by all provinces. In deed for the past several years, Education Departments have devoted special interest to the improvement of education in primary schools which had the deficiencies of the system of administration of primary education not stood in the way, could have resulted in very noticeable results. Notwithstanding the obstacles inherent in the organisation, primary education improving markedly in both the manner and matter of teaching and in the attention devoted to the welfare and local attachments of the village. Attention has been devoted specially to the curriculum revision and to the length of the primary course. There is also evidence that the methods of training teachers for vernacular schools are being improved in almost every Province and that the movement for training teachers for rural environments continues with hopeful prospectus.

# Education in Madras 1935-36

The report of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras, for 1935-36 with the Government review of the same was issued on 1st. April 1937. The following is the text :—

There was a fall, says the report, in the total number of public institutions from 50,391 to 50,116, owing mostly to the reduction in the number of elementary schools for boys and girls. Their strength, however, rose from 3,053,446 to 3,133,426, the increase being shared by all grades of institutions. There was, however, a small increase in the number of private institutions from 1,171 to 1,191, though their strength fell from 40,757 to 40,554. Other special schools for Indians increased from 158 to 240 and industrial schools for Indians from 51 to 59. The number of public and private institutions taken together decreased by 255, but their strength increased by 79,777. The percentage of those under instruction to the total population was 6.8 (9.9 in the case of males and 3.8 in the case of females) in the previous year. The report proceeds:

The number of institutions in municipal areas increased from 4,073 to 4,104 and their strength from 552,630 to 572,152. The percentages of the number of institutions and scholars in municipal areas to those in the Presidency were 8.0 and 18.0 respectively, as against 7.9 and 17.9 in the previous year.

The total expenditure on Education increased from Rs. 540.94 lakhs to Rs. 551.51 lakhs, the increase being shared by all classes of institutions. The proportion which public funds and private funds bore to the total expenditure remained the same as in the previous year, viz., 61 and 39, respectively.

The total direct expenditure rose from Rs. 419.28 lakhs to Rs. 427.20 lakhs, while the total indirect expenditure increased from Rs. 121.66 lakhs to Rs. 124.31 lakhs. The increase in the case of the latter was mainly under "Boarding Charges."

The Budget Estimate for the year under "Education" was Rs. 252.30 lakhs and the Revised Estimate Rs. 255.50 lakhs. The actual amount, including that spent in England, was Rs. 255.10 lakhs.

The total Provincial receipts and charges, including the expenditure on buildings and on schools and colleges under the control of the other departments, amounted to Rs. 12.50 lakhs and Rs. 286.02 lakhs as compared with Rs. 11.27 lakhs and Rs. 282.04 lakhs in the previous year.

The Provincial subsidy to Local Bodies inclusive of the amount placed at the disposal of the District Educational Councils and the Inspector of Municipal Councils and Local Boards for Elementary Education amounted to Rs. 156 lakhs.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION

This is perhaps the first year in the history of secondary education in this Presidency in which it is possible to record that there has been no increase in the total number of public secondary schools for Indian boys. The number of secondary schools actually decreased from 541 to 540. This slight fall in the total number of secondary schools is due to the fact that more schools closed down than were newly opened, owing mainly to the inability of the managements of schools to comply with the stricter conditions of recognition as regards accommodation, equipment, play-ground, staff and financial stability enforced in recent years. It is, however, remarkable that while there was a slight reduction in the number of schools, there has been an appreciable increase in the number of boys and girls attending secondary schools. The number of pupils under instruction in secondary schools for boys increased from 177,220 to 18,687, and the number of girls reading in boys' schools rose from 7,368 to 8,649. The disappearance of poorly attended and uneconomic secondary schools is a healthy sign and does not result in a fall in total strength. There were at the end of the year 1935-36, 377 high schools and 163 middle schools. Malabar, Tanjore, Tinnevely and East Godavari districts continue to lead with 45, 37, 33 and 30 secondary schools, respectively, while Karnool, Anantapur and Cuddapah have less than 10 schools each. In the matter of secondary schools for girls, Madras occupies the first place with 16 schools, Malabar, Tinnevely and South Kanara coming next in

order with 10, 8 and 6 schools respectively. The districts of Vizagapatam, Godavari West, Cuddapah, North Arcot and Chingleput have each only one secondary school for girls, while Ramnad district has none.

#### S. S. L. C. EXAMINATION

The number of candidates who sat for the S. S. L. C. examination decreased from 18,509 to 17,795 including 1,724 private candidates. The certificates of 17,683 candidates of whom 16,723 were boys and 959 were girls, were completed during the year as against 18,393 in the previous year. There was an increase in the number of first-year candidates while there was a decrease in the number of supplementary candidates. The fall in the number of candidates of the latter category is mainly due to the operation of the rule restricting the chances for appearing at the examination. The number of girls whose certificates were completed increased by 76, while the decrease in respect of boys was 787. Ninety-five pupils belonging to the Scheduled classes and 38 who were dependents or children of Indian Soldiers, were admitted to the examination without payment of fees. One hundred and seventy-eight schools against 163 in the previous year use a vernacular as the medium of instruction in non-language subjects in the higher forms and presented pupils for the public examination. Some of the private candidates also adopted the vernacular as the medium at the examination in non-language subjects. As usual, the most popular subjects taken up by the pupils as optional were History, Algebra and Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, Book-keeping and Typewriting.

The 1934 S. S. L. C. scheme approved by the Government in their order No. 1469, Law (Education) dated, 15th June 1934, and introduced in Form IV in July 1934, was held in abeyance and the 1929 scheme was re-introduced in Forms IV and V from the school-year 1935-36. In their Orders Nos. 17 (S), Education dated 15th June 1935, and 766, Education, dated 20th April 1936, Government approved the proposal to continue the 1929 scheme for the S. S. L. C. Examinations of 1937, 1938, and 1939.

The total direct expenditure on secondary schools for Indian boys increased from Rs. 81.10 lakhs to Rs. 83.68 lakhs, towards which public funds contributed Rs. 31.56 lakhs or 38 per cent, fees Rs. 43.78 lakhs or 52 per cent and other sources Rs. 8.34 lakhs or 10 per cent as compared with 37, 55 and 9 respectively, in the previous year. The average cost of educating a pupil was Rs. 44-11-8 as against Rs. 44-12-7 in the previous year and each pupil paid an average fee of Rs. 23-6-7. Fees met 42 per cent of the total cost in municipal and local board schools and 63 per cent in aided schools, the corresponding percentages for 1934-35 being 44 and 63, respectively.

#### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The number of public elementary schools for boys decreased from 43,787 to 43,665. The number of elementary schools under Government, Panchayat and Unaided slightly rose, while there was a reduction in the number of schools under all other managements, it is gratifying to note, however, the increase in the strength of all elementary schools from 2,417,410 to 2,485,077. The fall in the number of part time and night schools continued during the period under report and on 31st March 1936 there were only 797 such schools, as compared with 976, in the previous year. The percentage of male pupils in elementary schools to the male population in the Presidency was 8.8 as against 8.7 in the previous year, the percentage varying from 15.3 in Malabar to 4.9 in Godavari East Agency and 2.4 in the Vizagapatam Agency.

There were in the Presidency 343 higher elementary schools for boys with standard VI, 215 with standard VII and 1,167 with standard VIII as the highest class. The majority of these schools were under the management of local bodies.

The total number of teachers employed in elementary schools for boys increased from 96,102 to 97,788 as also the number of trained teachers in them from 64,643 to 67,207. The number of schools managed by teacher-managers decreased from 13,996 to 13,707, but the number of trained teachers in them rose from 10,761 to 11,533.

The number of buildings constructed during the year for the accommodation of elementary schools for boys was 735 of which 116 were for schools under public management.

The number of school-less centres for boys in the Presidency with a population of 500 and above was 2,012. There were 354 single-teacher schools having standard I only, 1,334 having standards up to II only, 3,911 having standards up to III only and 13,246 having standards IV and above.

## PANCHAYAT SCHOOLS

The following extracts are from the report of the Inspector of Municipal Councils and Local Boards on the working of the Panchayat schools during the year :—

"The year started with 1,437 schools actually working as against a total provision of 1,512 schools in the Presidency. Sixty-three schools were started during the year under review and 56 were abolished for the following reasons :—

(1) Low attendance; (2) Obstinate refusal on the part of the Panchayats to admit Adi-Dravidian pupils; (3) Apathy of the villagers; and (4) Indifference of the Panchayats to the proper running of the school.

"There were also a few cases of temporary closure of schools for want of teachers with prescribed qualifications. The year thus closed with 1,444 schools. Of these, five schools were maintained exclusively for girls.

"The total number of pupils in these schools at the end of the year was 59,253 including 9,518 girls and the average attendance was 48,605. Adi-Dravida pupils continued to be admitted freely and the number of such pupils in Panchayat schools at the end of the year was 7,325.

"The total number of teachers employed in Panchayat Board schools at the end of the year was 1,871. There were application from many Panchayat Boards for the entertainments of additional teachers in their schools consequent on the increase of strength and attendance of pupils. As Government did not make any provision for the additional teachers for the year it was not possible to comply with such requests. This difficulty has since been overcome as Government have sanctioned provision for 126 additional teachers during the current year. The policy of enforcing the minimum standard of qualifications prescribed for teachers in Panchayat schools and of requiring Panchayats employing more than one teacher to have at least one trained hand was continued during the year under review. The results were satisfactory. Five hundred and eighty-one Panchayats employed 621 teachers with higher elementary trained qualifications and 123 Panchayats employed 131 secondary trained hands.

"In the year under review, Government granted a provision of Rs. 14,000 for payment of building grants to Panchayats on the half grant basis, subject to a maximum of Rs. 500 for tiled building and Rs. 150 for a thatched building. The actual expenditure incurred under this head was Rs. 13,850. Building grant was allotted to 42 Panchayats. One noteworthy result of this policy of giving subsidies towards the cost of construction of school-buildings is that Panchayats have begun to put up decent buildings of their own and there has been a gradual rise in the percentage of owned buildings.

"No provision was made by Government during the year for payment of equipment grant. The policy of transferring articles of equipment from abolished schools to the newly sanctioned schools was continued during the year under review and in cases when Panchayats could not get a supply of equipment from Government they got the minimum equipments from their own funds.

"Out of a final appropriation of Rs. 2,80,000 the total expenditure incurred during the year was Rs. 2,73,641. Teaching grants for Panchayats continued to be paid on the strength of the certificate received from Presidents of Panchayats and these certificates were sent to District Educational Officers for verification. In cases where the certificates were found defective or otherwise incorrect in any respect, payment of grant was at once withheld and renewed only after the defects were rectified.

The policy of withholding grants in cases where Panchayats refused to admit Adi-Dravida children was rigorously enforced and this has had the desired effect."

## DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCILS

The Madras Elementary Education Act was further amended during the year under review and the amending Act came into force from 1st November 1935. Under the present Act the powers of the director to interfere with the resolutions of the District Educational Council under Sections 41 and 42 of the Act were enlarged and Government also took the power to suspend, modify or cancel any order passed by the District Educational Council or the Director of Public Instruction under the two sections. A provision for surcharging the District Educational Council and of recovering the sums surcharged has also been inserted.

The rules under the Act were also amended so as to ensure that schools are neither granted recognition nor admitted to aid unless they are situated in localities accessible to all classes of population and pupils are actually admitted into them irrespective of the casts of community to which they belong.



The draft amendments to the rules framed under the Act for the introduction of modified form of compulsion were also published for criticism.

In regard to the amalgamation of schools the Director of Public Instruction was empowered to accord sanction for the proposals in G. O. No. 131 Law (Education), dated 20th January 1936.

More than a dozen Municipalities have given effect to the scheme of consolidation and concentration of elementary schools as far as schools under Municipal management are concerned.

In rural areas there was appreciable progress in regard to amalgamation of schools.

Compulsory elementary education was introduced for all children of school-age in 4 wards in Salem Municipality and for girls in 2 wards of the Madura Municipality. Compulsion for boys was extended to the Sithakudu extension area of the Municipal Council Mayavaram and for 12 wards in Madura Municipality.

In the Industrial schools for Indians under the control of the Director of Industries there were 7, 187, pupils as against 6, 122 during the previous year.

#### WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The number of institutions intended for Indian girls decreased from 5, 560 to 5, 308, but there was an increase in their strength from 408, 404 to 411, 508. The numbers of girls reading in all grades of institutions was 881, 913 as compared with 845, 654 on the 31st March 1935.

As in the previous years the number of arts colleges for women was five. The strength in these colleges increased from 520 to 600. There were 313 women reading in arts colleges for men as against 254 in the previous year. The two training colleges for Women in Madras had a total strength of 77 pupils. The number of pupils reading in professional colleges for men was 93 and all of them were in the two medical colleges at Madras and Vizagapatam. The one Sanskrit College for Women at Rajahmundry had 10 pupils on the rolls during the year. Besides this, eight women were reading in Sanskrit colleges for men.

There were 79 secondary schools for girls during the year compared with 75 in the preceding year. The Bezwada Dornakal Diocesan Middle School and the Madurā St. Joseph's Middle School became high schools by opening higher forms. Four new middle schools were opened during the year. There were thus, on the 31st March, 1936, 59 high and 29 middle schools for girls with a strength of 21, 215 as against 19, 830 in the previous year. The total number of girls reading in secondary schools for boys and girls was 23, 901 as compared with 26, 337 last year.

The number of elementary schools for girls decreased further from 5,336 to 5, 083, but their strength rose from 381, 013 to 382, 523. The number of schools closed during the year was 344 and the number opened 91. The number of girls reading in elementary schools for boys rose from 453, 853 to 493,882.

The number of teachers employed in elementary schools for girls increased from 14, 753 to 14, 794, of whom 12, 674 were trained. As in the previous year the numbers of pupils per trained teacher was 30. The number of schools managed by teacher-managers fell from 648 to 603, as also the number of trained teachers in them from 895 to 746.

The numbers of part-time and night schools for girls decreased from 22 to 21.

The number of buildings constructed during the year for the accommodation of elementary schools for girls was 40, of which 4 were for schools under public management.

There were in the Presidency 104 higher elementary schools for girls with standard VI, 64 with standard VII and 271 with standard VIII as the highest class.

The number of school-less centres for girls in the Presidency with a population of 500 and above was 2,377. There were 50 single teachers schools having standard I only, 132 having standards up to II only, 443 having standards up to III only, 811 having standards IV and above.

As in the previous year there were 65 training schools for women in the Presidency; 35 were under Government management and 30 under private agencies. The strength of the Government schools was 1,758, compared with 1,691 in the previous year. The total strength of all training schools for women was 3,331 as against 3,250 last year. Classifying the scholars according to their grades, there were 437 in the secondary grade, 2,483 in the higher elementary grade, and 406 in lower elementary grade as against 417, 2,415, and 418, last year. Besides these, 25 women were undergoing training in institutions for men.

The total direct expenditure on Arts Colleges for women was Rs. 2,91,614 and the average cost per student Rs. 493. The expenditure on secondary and elementary schools for Indian girls decreased from Rs. 55.15 lakhs to Rs. 54.60 lakhs, towards which public funds contributed 75.8 per cent, fees 5.9 per cent and the other sources 18.3 per cent, as against 75.9, 6.0 and 18.1 respectively, in 1934-35. The average cost of educating pupil in a secondary school was Rs. 55-6-0 and in an elementary school was Rs. 11-7-0.

The total expenditure on European and Anglo-Indian education increased from Rs. 23.92 lakhs to 25.64 lakhs, the increase being due to higher expenditure on buildings. Towards the total expenditure public funds contributed Rs. 6.78 lakhs (28.4 per cent), fees 6.36 lakhs (24.8 per cent) and other sources Rs. 12.50 lakhs (48.8 per cent), the corresponding percentages for the previous year being 28.4, 27.4 and 44.2.

#### MUHAMMADAN EDUCATION

The number of public institutions intended for Muhammadans increased slightly from 3,631 to 3,617 and their strength from 248,975 to 260,272. The number of private institutions also increased from 530 to 523, though their strength fell from 20,362 to 20,115.

The number of students reading in arts colleges increased from 466 to 504. Of these, 88 were reading in the Government Muhammadan College, Madras, and 22 in the Islamiyah College, Vaniyabadi. There in the three Arabic Colleges at Kurnool, Vellore and Omorabad, 145 pupils, as compared with 102 in the previous year. One hundred and fourteen students, including ten women, were reading in Professional Colleges as compared with 109 in 1934-35.

The number of secondary schools intended for Muhammadans remains the same, namely, 16 for boys and one for girls. Their strength, however, increased from 3,665 in 1934-35 to 3,750 in 1935-36. The total number of Muhammadan pupils reading in all secondary schools for Indians also increased from 11,943 to 12,461.

The number of recognised elementary schools for Mappila boys, in the Malabar district increased from 1,447 to 1,461 and their strength from 112,622 to 122,581. The number of girls reading in them also rose from 38,078 to 40,326. The total number of Mappila boys reading in the elementary standards of elementary and secondary schools increased from 80,967 to 83,328. The strength of Mappila boys in elementary schools specially intended for them also increased from 72,918 to 74,727. The number of higher elementary schools for Mappila boys rose from 34 to 37.

There were 1,418 Mappila trained teachers in Mappila schools compared with 940 non-Mappilas. Of the 1,418 teachers, 42 were of the secondary grade, 512 of the higher elementary grade and 864 of the lower elementary grade. The number of untrained teachers in these schools was 1,212. The Malapuram Sessional School for Musaiara and Mullas had 40 pupils on the rolls.

There was a slight decrease in the total expenditure on Muhammadan and Mappila Education from Rs. 27,06 lakhs to Rs. 26,43 lakhs. Towards the total expenditure, public funds met 81 per cent, fees 2 per cent and other sources 17 per cent, as compared with 78, 3 and 19, respectively in the previous year.

#### SCHEDULED CLASSES

The number of public institutions mainly intended for the scheduled classes decreased from 9,614 to 9,393 and their strength from 371,914 to 364,155. The number of private schools for these classes, however, increased from 148 to 162 and their strength from 4,332 to 4,906.

The total number of pupils belonging to the scheduled classes in all public schools was 333,358 as against 316,141 in the previous year.

One hundred and fifty-nine pupils belonging to the scheduled classes completed their B. S. L. C.'s during the year, while 280 were successful in the T. S. L. C. examination of whom 30 were women. In the plains, the number of pupils belonging to the scheduled classes admitted into schools under public management not specially intended for them during 1935-36 was 49,097, as against 46,554, the number recorded in O. O. No. 241, Law (Education), dated 7th February 1936 for 1934-35. The figures show an increase of 5.4 per cent in the number of pupils.

The number of schools under public management not specially intended for scheduled classes and into which the pupils were freely admitted increased to 10, 134 during the year under report as against 9, 099 in the previous year.

Fifteen schools held in Aghaharams, Chavandis, etc., and 54 schools held in rented buildings, the owners of which objected to the admission of scheduled class pupils were removed to buildings accessible to all classes of pupils.

During the year under report, 441 teachers of the scheduled classes were employed in schools not specially intended for these classes.

Progress during the past few years in the matter of admissions of pupils belonging to the scheduled classes into common schools has been so slow that, during the year under report, Government decided to take the drastic step of imposing on the managements of elementary schools as a condition of recognition, the duty of enrolling pupils belonging to these classes. The newly framed rules under the Madras Elementary Education Act which were issued by Government in their order No. 1446, Law ( Educational ) dated 16th July 1935 have given a wider interpretation of "accessibility." Under these new rules a school is treated as inaccessible and is liable to loss of recognition if no pupil belonging to the scheduled classes is found on the rolls. It is hoped that these rules will strengthen the hands of the inspecting officers and enable them to record greater progress in the admission of the scheduled classes into the general schools for all communities.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDER

The Government, in the course of their order, observe.

In the year under review a Sub-Committee of the Provincial Economic Council was constituted with a view to formulating proposals for the expansion of elementary education. The Sub-Committee met three times during the year. Since the close of the year, it has submitted its report and steps are being taken to give effect to its recommendations.

Regulations were framed by the Madras University for conferring higher degrees in research in Arts and Science. The preparation of a Tamil Lexicon which was commenced in 1915 was completed during the year.

There was an increase of 6 per cent in the number of students reading in Arts Colleges in 1935-36 as against a decrease of 5 per cent in the previous year. The number of pupils in secondary schools for boys also showed an increase, the number on rolls being 181,637 or 4,467 in excess of that in the previous year.

There was a slight fall in the number of elementary schools for boys, but their strength rose by 67,667.

The large wastage that now occurs on account of the premature withdrawal of pupils from elementary schools has formed the subject of enquiry by the Sub-Committee of the Provincial Economic Council referred to above and the question of the prevention of this wastage is now engaging the serious attention of Government.

The number of girls reading in secondary schools rose by 9 per cent and that in elementary schools by 4 per cent. Compulsory elementary education was extended to girls in four wards of the Salem Municipality and two wards of the Madura Municipality.

There was a small increase in the number of pupils reading in schools for Anglo-Indians and Europeans. The Director points out that, in spite of the liberal help extended by the Government, there is not much improvement in the condition of Anglo-Indian European education. The Government hope that private agencies which maintain schools for these communities will take steps to improve the efficiency of these schools and impart education suited to modern requirements.

There was an increase in the number of Muhammadan pupils reading in secondary schools.

The Government are to note that the total number of children belonging to the scheduled castes in public institutions farther rose by 5 per cent.

## Education in the Central Provinces

A Government resolution on the annual report of the Director of Public Instruction, Central Provinces, on the state and progress of Education in the Central Pro-

vinces and Berar for the year ending the 31st. March 1936 states that Government notes with satisfaction the steady and all round progress recorded during the year under report in almost every branch of education. Numerical growth in some cases has outstripped financial provision and the realization of this fact had led to the closure of a number of primary schools in certain areas. This accounts for the comparatively small increase in the total number of educational institutions. The total enrolment shows a slight decline as the appreciable rise in number at the higher stages is more than counterbalanced by the decrease at the primary stage.

The continuance of a state of general apathy, specially in rural areas, and the unsatisfactory tone of administration are the main factors which have hampered the progress of vernacular education. Expedient and practicable measures to check wastage and stagnation have been enforced and it is hoped that definite signs of improvement will soon be discernible.

The increase in the number of scholars at all stages, except the primary, in spite of the persistent economic depression is a matter for satisfaction. It is particularly gratifying to note the appreciable advances at the various stages made by Aborigines, Backward Classes and Muhammdans. Female education, especially at the higher stages, shows signs of steady progress.

Government hopes that the contemplated legislative measures to improve the tone of administration of vernacular education will be persevered with and that the schemes of educational reconstruction already undertaken by the department will yield the desired results in due course. It is satisfactory to note that the needs of rural education are being examined. The advance of literacy, especially among the rural masses, is a matter of vital importance for the future welfare of the province and the results of the present activities of the department, which are supported by enlightened public opinion, will be watched by much interest.

## The Madras Provincial Educational Conference

### The Welcome Address

The Madras Provincial Educational Conference was held at Tanjore on the 6th. May 1937 under the presidency of Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar.

In the absence of Mr. V. Nadimuthu Pillai, Mr. Subbaraya Cheltiyar, Chairman of Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates and other assembled guests. The occasion, he said, was a unique one and without parallel as for that conference both the President and the Chairman of the Reception Committee had been elected not from amongst the teachers but from a body of future legislators in whom the people of this land had placed their trust and confidence. It was a happy augury that Mr. Rajagopalachariar was presiding over the deliberations and in his address they would hear of his plans and programmes to help the teachers to realise their aims and ideals. But for the impediments placed in his way, it ought to have been his privilege even at present to take them into his confidence and tell them all that he intended to do in the furtherance of their cause. The time was not far off when they would have opportunities of deciding upon a definite course of action in the nature of a five-year plan or a similar planned campaign for bringing about 100 per cent literacy.

Proceeding, he said: "None will gainsay the fact that our present system of education, particularly the branches of the Secondary and Elementary grades, calls for a thorough overhauling and immediate reform in the light of our past expenditure, present difficulties and our cherished ideals for the future. The curricula of studies must be remodelled by including elementary courses in Citizenship, Rural administration etc., in addition to the introduction of vocational classes. Interest in agriculture, arts, crafts, manual labour such as carpentry, rattan work, gardening and clay modelling etc., may be stimulated by practical work in those directions carried on by the teachers and the pupils as a hobby and thereby the right use of leisure may also be

cultivated. I may instance here the activities of the Ramkrishna Mission Schools wherein all these courses are available.

"The defects of our present educational system were discovered by our leaders long ago. And I may say that the starting of the Central Hindu College in Benares which has since blossomed into the Benares Hindu University, thanks to the untiring efforts of Pandit Malaviyaji, the founding of the Santiniketan Institution "Viswabhārathi" by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and the continuous support it is receiving from the public of India and other countries, inauguration of a National University by Dr. Besant which subsequently however could not be placed on a stable and permanent footing due to lack of funds—these are all signs of the reaction against the system of education which was thrust upon the 'Natives of India' by a body of commercial adventurers who became the rulers of their customers, and from whom they had to select their clerks, assistants, etc.

Offering a few suggestions for improving the secondary and primary educational system, he said: "At present there is too much of specialisation in the early High school classes. This is not helpful to a growth of general knowledge as the energies of the pupils are taxed in the special studies. Upto the 9th standard something of everything may be taught and for this the schemes of 'something about every thing series' adopted by the Madras Library Association may be followed. The place of fine arts, music, painting, etc., as aids to completeness of life has to be recognised. Subjects such as these should be encouraged in the early stages and our youngsters must be inspired by the ideals of Truth and Beauty. Vernacular as the medium of instruction has now become popular and it should be encouraged to a larger extent. Suitable technical and scientific terms without jarring and unattractive sounds should be invented and used more liberally in conjunction with the classical technical terms. In order to instil in our youngsters a national feeling they should be taught Hindi in all the High schools. The cinematograph, talkies and radio can be utilised for doing propaganda and for educational purposes. In a similar manner the reading habit can be encouraged by the opening of libraries and increasing the number of travelling libraries and occasional visits to the school, etc., as part of our rural reconstruction work during the holidays. The Middle School Examination at the close of the 8th standard of the Elementary School may be revived and after that the pupils should be diverted according to their aptitude or the careers settled for them, i. e., Arts course, technological course and subjects suitable to their taste and vocations. Handspinning and weaving—by the use of Charka or Takli and the loom—may be taught as an optional or subsidiary subject in all schools between the III and V classes and similarly other forms of cottage industries may be introduced in the lower classes.

"As for the education of girls, reforms must be introduced in such a manner that they may be capable of being engrafted in the present curricula of studies having regard to the important part which women have to play in moulding the character of children and in efficiently carrying through the management of the home. Some women have also to be trained for service as teachers, lecturers, doctors, nurses, etc., and for them higher courses of study are now provided. But for the generality of women, in my opinion, a knowledge of the following subjects is essential; music, sewing, stitching, spinning, knitting which can be made compulsory between 3rd and 5th classes; embroidery; cooking to be compulsory; domestic economy, domestic hygiene and child welfare; First Aid; fret work which may be made optional."

Besides the above he declared that a scheme of free compulsory education up to the 5th class for both boys and girls should be given effect to immediately and the necessary funds therefor should be obtained by the raising of donations, endowments etc., from the wealthy public, and the contributions to be made by the State. He urged the need for devoting greater attention to physical culture and training of young boys and girls to enable them to become healthy, happy and useful citizens. Plenty of out-door and in-door games should be provided for with large playgrounds wherever possible. Swimming, horse riding etc., may be taught as they formed the best types of physical exercise. "As we Indians must be prepared to have our own Air, Naval and Military Forces in course of time as a measure of defence, our youngsters must learn to be ready to respond to the country's call and enlist themselves."

He pleaded for the spread of the spirit of co-operation among the teachers and the parents of the pupils by the introduction of large number of co-operative societies in schools and colleges with the students being trained in their management,

the formation of Parent-Teachers' Associations by frequent exchange of visits by the teachers and parents, by instituting a Court of Honour a Hall of Greatness, where portraits of our leaders in art, literature, science, etc., might be kept and the building of Galleries of Wisdom and Learning.

He referred also to the necessity for religious instruction in schools and said: I think that if religion is made a subject of study in our schools, and universally free Compulsory education is adopted, there will be no longer any riots or disturbances in the name of religion. I will even go so far as to suggest that the teaching of the essence of all religions, the fundamental principles of all faiths that there is one God and that each of us contains within himself or herself a spark of that Divinity will make for not only religious toleration but also respect and regard for one another's feelings and thus eventually lead us to a realisation of the essential brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. It must be easy for you to resolve upon a practical scheme of combining the moral instruction class with systematised course of religious talks—something like the Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals which contains quotations from the scriptures of all religions of the world."

Adverting to the service conditions of teachers, he observed, "I am in accord with your demands for better pay and more secure service conditions. It is very desirable in the interests of the teaching profession that there should be no wide disparity between the remuneration of those employed in Government service and those employed by private agencies or local boards. I am confident that you may not have to wait long until we are in a position to undertake the provincialisation of the educational service and the necessary legislation being enacted for the formation of a Council of Teachers on the same lines as the Bar Council, Medical Council and Institute of Engineers."

#### Presidential Address

Rising amidst loud and continued applause, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar said that the duty of saying a few words had at last to be performed. He was sorry the Chairman of the Reception Committee was not there. He was extremely grateful to them all for the, not at all long but all too brief period of friendly intercourse they had within the last three days. It was not easy to get so many friends together for any man and he therefore considered himself very very lucky in having been in their company these three days, immersed in so much love, feeling and consideration. In the world they did not find so much good feeling and consideration always to surround them and therefore he greatly appreciated that experience.

The time of parting had come and he was not speaking mere conventional platitudes when he said that he was very sorry he was going away from them. To many of them also it might be a sad moment because he was sure they would have cultivated now friendship during these three days and revived old acquaintances. These annual conferences, either political or educational, gave great joy and then when the hour of parting came, great pain had to be borne. The President said that he was in that position at present. Getting over all those feelings, let them try to think a little. These conferences were a great education in themselves. The organisers got a very great opportunity for putting to test their executive capacity and their ability to conduct business quickly and to the satisfaction of numerous persons present. The volunteers got first class education which was neither elementary nor secondary nor collegiate. But it was very essential. He would tell them it was an essential education for life which people used to have in ancient days but which was very much neglected in later days. He was exceedingly pleased as President of the Conference with the work which the volunteers had done during these three days. To them it should have been a great education, which they did not even get on the play-fields—he could say that Mr. Andrews would agree with him—or in the lecture room or even in the laboratory. That sort of conference was something superior as they were educating themselves in the art of looking after other people. He could personally testify that the food arrangement was very good; it was an exceedingly remarkable feature. The organisers, it was said, lodged the delegates in various parts of the town which might have caused slight inconvenience to them; but it had its own advantages. Usually in conferences it was felt as a great drawback that all the people were clubbed together in the same place in an artificial city so to say and they did not know the place where they camped and they only knew a camp before them. That was not a very good thing. There he was glad that circumstances had compelled some of the delegates to live in various parts of the town, so that at least they

might know how far the places were from one another. In his opinion it would have been even better if the Reception Committee had been compelled to quarter their delegates with friends in the town instead of giving them vacant houses. If friends could have quartered delegates according to their capacity, they would gain new acquaintances and ample opportunities to come across many people, men and women. It would in a way lower its expenditure and the President hoped that in future conferences, the organisers would try to carry out these suggestions.

Referring to the Geographical Conference, Mr. Rajagopalachariar said he was very pleased to see a booklet of the Tanjore District published in connection with the conference. These booklets were very useful by-products of the conference. That was real geography in connection with conference. The speaker wished to tell them that the teachers and students in every district should make it a point and particular duty to know accurately and fully the entire geography of the district. They should know the whole place when they went to any place. Unfortunately in these days his experience was that when they went to a place literates and the so-called educated men know little about the geography of their place. If one wished to know where a particular place was situated, probably he would be better guided by a man who was not educated than by a boy who had obviously gone to the school. If he was correctly informed—he had never been to Europe—boys in England and in other European countries knew completely the geography of their own country or district or other place. They did not usually depend upon books. They actually went and learnt by their own personal experience the distances and the topography of their areas. The teachers and boys should know these things as a matter of course, so that when there were conferences, they should be able to take groups of the conference delegates for excursions to important and interesting places of the district. It was not everybody that wanted to hear discussions and take part in them. The conference was a whole thing and persons were, without any offence, permitted to take particular interest in particular matters. Particular groups could go and visit the shrines and historical places of interest. If they went to the Ceded Districts it would be absurd for them to finish their conference without visiting the ruins of Hampi. So also at Tanjore they had the Raja Raja Temple.

They should not always be depending upon books. It would be a pleasure if teachers and students divided themselves into parties and took various groups of delegates to various places and spent three or four days on excursions: all that would be a great education. The conference should not merely be a three-day affair but should be really a retreat. Conferences should cover grounds other than mere discussions over grievances and curricula. They were important and real but these things added an educational value to the conference itself.

He was very pleased to see geography exhibits. It was not possible for him to get at the geographical conference and he did not know how much matter of interest he had lost. But the exhibits were very good. One thing he might, however, remark was it was more an exhibition of the creative effort of various schools than an exhibition of educational methods. In respect of 'word building' which formed part of the exhibits in the children's department, the President said that it went contrary to what Rev. Knott had referred to in his paper. The synthesis was not the natural method for the child and the child took the whole world, the whole phrase and perhaps the sentence first. The sound was earlier than the form. Hence the exhibits went contrary to the proper word building and attention should be drawn to that matter.

Continuing, Mr. Achariar said that he could never forget the discussion over the abolition of examinations. The conference had left a deep impression on him with regard to examination. After all, it was no use packing too many things in a conference. That was a wrong method. They wished to get everything there and it was a very natural feeling. But he could tell them as a man of experience that all these things really reduced the net result to a fraction. The more subjects they packed into the conference, the less was the value of each particular achievement. If they stuck to a few things and got a solid backing, they got great value out of it. If each subject found its way, put together, they got a very huge appearance but its value was very little. What remained deeply impressed in his mind was the quarrel over the examination. They need not imagine that the subject was disposed of one way or the other. He wished to tell them that the fort had been breached by the proceedings. Those who stood for the demolition of the examination incubus had succeeded (applause) because the sacredness of examination had been removed and the thing would crumble to pieces in the near future. There was no doubt about it.

The Tanjore Conference had taken the life about it. It might no doubt go on for some time but with very apologetic existence. Persons who had voted for the examination did so not because they respected the examination but because they sensed danger in a change in transitional circumstances like the present. It was a sort of conservative terror that prevented them from a step like that of first class importance. Life consisted of both the forces of progress and the forces of conservatism. Both should be there for proper education of life and therefore it was not a hasty fanatical resolution if it went one way or the other.

People, he went on, had been anxious to know what his own view was. There was no secret about it. He would say examinations were no good (applause). It was a fundamental attack on truth and it was a sign of distrust. They had all sorts of rules to regulate the conduct of the Headmasters and teachers. Their qualifications were fixed. They were not satisfied with the ordinary school examinations. They set papers for the student to test his ability and month after month his progress was reported. He was treated like a miserable thief. At the end the boys had to undergo a public examination. Some questions were put and they were taken in a feverish anxiety to write answers at a public examination. For the first time, they went through an experience like that. Even grown-up people did not show their personality on such occasions. Examination was a harder thing. The tender boy was made to answer papers which were examined somewhere else. The examiner, poor man, they did not know his condition. He had got his own domestic and other difficulties. They did not know in what condition he would be at the time he valued the papers. These examiners corrected 30 papers to-day, 20 to-morrow and so on. But he could tell them that everybody would agree that the certificate of the Headmaster and the staff who had personal touch with the boy was more reliable than the results of any examination ("Hear, hear"). The only thing was that they should trust the people. Supposing they gave up the examination, there still would be some system of examining the progress of the pupil. Week by week, month by month and class by class, the performances of boys were tested. It could not be said that influence of pressure would be brought on the teachers. It was impossible. The record could not be tampered with by personal influences. It would be there month after month. When the examination was abolished, the whole record became important and it would be a reliable and correct picture of the boy's progress. The utmost dishonest trick that could be performed was that at the end, instead of saying that the boys' conduct was satisfactory, it might be said it was satisfactory, and vice versa. If a boy did not want to go to the University, he might have a decent certificate instead of having a 'failed' certificate against him. The speaker asked, 'Do you grudge it? There was no harm in it. Examining the matter from the practical point of view, Mr. Rajagopalachariar opined that there was no need for examination of any kind. The University would demand an examination, the Public Service Commission would demand an examination. The merchants would examine the boy before they employed him whether he wrote a good hand. There were examinations all through. But that last examination, an additional infliction, was what was proposed to be removed. He was very strongly for the removal of the examination. The time would come, he assured them, when those examinations if they were necessary would go. It did not depend on the votes of the people. If truth was on their side, they would win it at the end. They had really cleared much ground by that discussion. He wished the S. I. T. U. would do the needful in the matter. In all departments trust beget honesty and distrust beget tricks and therefore let them trust the Headmasters and they would find that the Headmasters and teachers would realise their responsibility and bring about a satisfactory state of things, even without an examination. (Applause).

Proceeding, Mr. Achariar said what had left greater satisfaction in his mind was the adoption of the mother-tongue. They had passed a resolution and they had passed similar resolutions. Each time they adopted it, there was greater and greater reality. That stamp of approval that conference had put upon the adoption of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction was a very good thing. Much had been talked about wastage and stagnation; more than all that was that continuous wastage involved in using a foreign language to teach things. To insist on the foreign language seemed to him like arguing that God existed for the priest and not the priest for God. He did not mean that there was not much to be said in favour of what Mr. Patrachari and Mr. K. Natarajan of Bombay had said. The speaker quite admired their courage. The opposition to the mother-tongue, the more severe it was, the greater was the certainty of their getting the mother-tongue in its proper place.



He was glad that they had adopted a resolution that Hindustani should be a compulsory subject in some stage of the child's education in South India. The conference had rightly fixed the stage between the ages of 8 to 12, a very appropriate age for learning a language other than the mother-tongue. Of course the mother-tongue should be learnt even at the age of 1 and 2 but they could not have school learning for that. A second language could be learnt not at too late a stage. He hoped and prayed that it would be given effect to very soon. It was a compulsory course. It was absurd for educational authorities to think that they had done much for Hindustani by making it optional. They could not include the mother-tongue by substituting Hindi for English, Sanskrit or for Mathematics. It was just like substituting mango for rice, and chutney for curds. Both of them were necessary and there was no real substitution. A working knowledge of Hindustani was all that was required and was necessary and it should be provided compulsorily and he hoped it would come in course of time. He had no doubt that in their own interest it should be given effect to immediately, without which South India could not attain its proper place in the Councils of India either in politics or trade. If they did so, then within the next five years the boys of South India would be everywhere in India. People in the North would then ask them not to learn Hindi. That was the consummation which the speaker wanted South Indian boys and girls to reach.

They had overhauled, the speaker proceeding said, elementary and secondary education and passed a comprehensive resolution. No educational conference would be worth troubling unless it offered comprehensive expert advice in respect of these matters as they had done. They had given careful attention and consideration to it. They had dealt with the elementary teacher as well as elementary education, and dealt with the secondary teacher and secondary school course. The organisers should be congratulated on having achieved these two things. The authorities, he hoped, would really pay the attention which it deserved. The elementary education problem was not merely a school problem but a national problem (hear, hear). Here all the efforts and imagination and skill of the statesmen of the country and builders of the nation would have to be brought into service. It was wrong for a nation to be illiterate. Literacy was not a mere luxury but was the sixth sense so to say. They should make the nation literate. The trouble was how to organise it for a nation of 30 crores and for this province of four crores. The subjects taught were not very easy and the time to be spent should at least be a few years. They could not have trained teachers for the purpose. Nor could they put it off till training schools and colleges have developed in strength and quality. It was a big problem. (In the course of the discussion on elementary education reference was made by Mr. Rajagopalachariar to the advisability of even police constables undertaking the work of teachers.) Mr. Rajagopalachariar, explaining what he had casually stated on the matter, said it was thought it was a slur on the teaching profession when he said that the services of a constable also should be used for the purpose of removing illiteracy. He stated that he did not intend that the friend should understand it that way. He could tell them what he had in his mind then. He was thinking about the rural reconstruction scheme. Rural reconstruction and elementary education might go together. They should develop the village and elementary education as part of the development work. How they should do it was the problem. The Provincial Government had been entrusted with that responsibility at present. But they were robbed of all the resources which should be legitimately available to provinces. Money was taken away for military expenditure, money had been taken away for central expenditure of all kinds. It was the business of the wise administrator responsible for rural reconstruction to get back all the resources available for the purpose and so to say re-steal all that had been stolen from him. To illustrate the position he said he would like the army to consist of all Indian soldiers and during peace time all these Indian soldiers should serve as rural reconstruction workers. During part of the time they might go through their drill. But during the other part they should remain in the village, look after the village and take charge of the village school. Why should not the soldier do it? Why should he be a frightening personality? He could tell them that the soldier was also a citizen and therefore a properly organised army should have properly qualified men who could be rural reconstruction soldiers in war. Then it would be easy to make use of these soldiers for five or six months in a year and part of the military expenditure would come back in way. That, however, was a very impracticable plan. England would never agree to it. They could imagine what he meant by policemen when he made a refer-

ence to them. He asked why qualified educated young men should not be posted as police constables. Why should they remain idle during some part of the year? Why should they not serve as schoolmasters? In England the soldiers played with children, they were friends of the people. Similarly policemen should be friends of the village. The villagers should think that a policeman was an ordinary man. He did not always wear khaki and red turban. There were some police constables in villages who had nothing to do; but they had something to do when a murder took place or an offence was reported. During spare time why should they not see to the sanitation of the village, education of the adults and attend to other welfare work? It was not his idea that illiterate constables should be appointed in villages and that those young men who were at present teachers should be dismissed. The great problem of rural reconstruction could be solved by utilising all the resources that had been unlawfully taken away from the people. In that way the problem of reconstruction in a huge province could be solved.

The village teacher need not be utilised only to teach. He could be a real reconstruction worker. That was exactly what Mr. R. Suryanarayana Row of the Servants of India Society had laid stress on his paper. Why should they not do that? His own dream of rural reconstruction was 'a good Minister at the top and a constable and village teacher at the bottom' could cover the entire area of the country very successfully. They had doctors. Why not agricultural graduates be rural workers? Many of them were unemployed and they did not go to the land to cultivate. They only waited for administrative places. The speaker did not blame anybody. Such was the state of things. Various things produced various results not contemplated by the original scheme. In the same way there were many engineers who had come out from the Engineering College, who were unemployed. Many agricultural graduates were unemployed. Why should they not think of taking up this sacred work of rural reconstruction? It was easy to give advice. It was not right to imagine that the school teacher's job was low and they were the only kind of people best fitted for rural work and not the graduates and men with superior qualifications. Rural reconstruction work should be taken up by graduates who were unemployed. The work could be taken up by all irrespective of the degree or qualifications which they had attained. The agricultural graduates, doctors, engineers and the lawyers could take up the work. The engineer could look after the roads and the lawyers could relieve the villagers from all the oppressions of paid officials and teach the villagers how to write petitions and replies to letters. In this connection Mr. Ashariar said that while he was in the Thiruvengode Ashramam, he used to draft letters for the poor illiterates and thus he was of great help to them. About twenty years ago, the speaker said, he had contributed an article to *The Modern Review* advocating intellectual conscription for graduates for at least six months and such a course, if followed, would no doubt remove illiteracy in the country. Unless each graduate had served for at least six months in a rural school, he should not get his degree, in that way, the speaker said, the rural reconstruction scheme could be worked out.

After referring briefly to the various papers read at the Conference, he made a particular reference to the paper read by Mr. T. A. Ramohandra Aiyar, Headmaster, Board High School, Ayyampet, on the place of religion in educational reconstruction, and held that religion should be taught in schools. But there were difficulties in the way, which should be solved first. The writer dealt more with religion itself than with how it could be introduced in class teaching. He remarked that the divorce between our religion and our education was not good. It made religion bad, diehard and useless and education bad, spiritless and all too secular. In short it was as bad as any other divorce. (Laughter). It was right that children should be taught from the earliest ages to respect other people's religion and understand their religion and tolerate it. He therefore welcomed the idea that was growing that religion should be taught in schools. The education of Indian child could not be said to be complete if the child did not understand the language of the neighbouring province and the religion of the neighbouring communities. Therefore he said a fairly accurate knowledge of several religions prevalent in India and a fairly respectable attitude towards one another were absolutely essential to complete the culture training which they wished to give in secondary and collegiate courses. The speaker said that he was a votary and supporter of the movement for the proper teaching of religion, it did not mean that the schools should be denominational. It was a cultural training just as the learning of Hindi. In that respect, much work had to be done by the teachers

They should bring it slowly and deliberately and continuous attention should be bestowed upon it.

#### Resolutions

At the concluding session a number of resolutions were adopted unanimously.

The Madras Education department was requested to recommend to all Secondary Schools and Colleges that, wherever capable and qualified Physical Directors and Physical Training Instructors were available, they be put in complete charge of all the physical activities in their respective schools and Colleges as Sports Secretaries, and to recommend to all Secondary Schools not to give Physical Directors and Training Instructors an unreasonable amount of teaching or clerical work outside their programme of Physical Education work.

The Secretary to the Government for Government Examination was requested to rescind Rule No. 22 of the Rules governing the selection of Superintendents for the Training School Leaving Certificate Examination which unduly discriminated against Physical Training Instructors.

The Executive Committee of the Madras Provincial Physical Education Association was asked to investigate the matter of salaries for Physical Training Instructors and Physical Directors in schools and colleges and report to the conference at its next meeting with their recommendations about scales of pay.

The Conference requested the Government to revive on an improved and scientific basis for follow-up work the medical inspection of all school pupils without which no scheme of education could be considered satisfactory and complete. The Executive Committee of the Madras Provincial Physical Education Association was requested to draw up a suitable syllabus of Health Education and submit for adoption at the next Conference and to look up the present syllabus of Hygiene and Physical Education and to suggest a revised syllabus in detail for consideration by the Madras Educational Department.

The Conference requested the Government to assist managements more liberally in the matter of acquisition of adequate playgrounds.

The Conference, being of opinion that in the interests of the health and physical welfare of students in schools and colleges, the school working hours were most unsatisfactory, and that more suitable hours should be adopted, requested the Executive Committee of the Madras Provincial Physical Education Association to study this question in all its aspects and submit a full report at the next Provincial Physical Education Conference.

The President said that he was fully in accord with the resolutions. It was wise, he said, to take up for consideration a little at a time rather than attempt too much. He hoped that better and more opportunities and facilities would be given to the profession to develop and prosper. He hoped that cordial relationship would grow between the S. I. T. U. and the Provincial Physical Education Association so that the educational efforts in the country would bear fruit.

At the business meeting of the Madras Provincial Physical Education Association held on the 8th. May, the report of the Association was adopted and the following office-bearers for the new year were elected; President, Mr. H. C. Buck; Vice-President, Mr. N. R. Krishnamma; Secretary, Mr. G. F. Andrews; Assistant Secretary, Mr. C. Satyanathan; and Treasurer, Mr. C. A. Abraham.

# The Indian Science Congress

24th. Session—Hyderabad—2nd. to 7th. January 1937

## [SIR AKBAR HYDARI'S ADDRESS

The Town Hall was packed to the full with officials and non-officials, members and visitors, when the 24 Session of the Indian Science Congress assembled at Hyderabad (Da.) on the 2nd. January 1937.

Sir Akbar Hydari, in opening the Congress, said that it was the first occasion on which the Indian Science Congress was meeting in that great historic city. He was happy that it coincided with the year, when they were celebrating 25 years of H. E. H. the Nizam's reign. He said that for what the State was to-day, Hyderabad was indebted to His Highness for the care, devotion and zeal with which he had carried out his noble stewardship of State. He expressed grateful thanks for his message and tendered sincere congratulations for the Jubilee year, which started yesterday and prayed that he might live happily and continue for many years to preside over the destinies of his people.

Continuing Sir Akbar said that Hyderabad was for long a centre of great culture and noble traditions. It had been the task of the Asafiah Dynasty to foster and promote the process whereby a synthesis of Dravidian, Aryan, Hindu and Moslem cultures had been effected and its scope enlarged so as to include in it the best of Western and Eastern life, manners and thought. This spirit was working in every sphere of their activity, the result being a real contribution to the ideal of a united, regenerated India.

The University, Sir Akbar Hydari continued, which welcomed them bore testimony to the spirit. Scholars there might study and acquire fruits of accumulated wisdom and research in East and West in one of their own languages which served effectively to express the abstruse thoughts of science and philosophy. The decision to adopt Hindustani as a medium of instruction in the University was a great step forward in national unity and all-India synthesis. "The decision is the cornerstone of our educational policy", he said, "and, fortified by experience, stands more irrevocable to-day than it did any previous time. They set the highest value in the University to scientific enquiry. They recognised that no nation or individual could afford to ignore the study of science, and material progress depended in a large measure, on the results of scientific inquiry. Although we in India entered the field of modern endeavour after considerable lapse of time, it is satisfactory to note that our Universities and research institutions have, despite difficulties, produced a standard of excellence and originality, of which we have reason to be proud. I am sure the ever increasing recognition by the average Indian of the value of science atmosphere as conducive to creative work in the realm of science has come into being." While critics of the materialistic conception of the life and scientific achievement may mismiss the sum total of their efforts for human happiness, none can deny the immense service rendered by science in liberating mankind from the trammels of blind superstition and barren dogma, generating a higher, better and more correct sense of values.

Sir Akbar Hydari continued: "Those in India, who have to deal with the problems of administration feel constantly the disadvantages they labour under by the absence of statistical data, scientifically recorded, checked and treated, relating to every sphere of sociological activity with which the administrator has to deal and without which it is impossible to have sufficiently accurate and comprehensive picture of a particular problem."

Concluding, Sir Akbar Hydari said that Hyderabad will be of interest to them in all directions. Its political and cultural history, its ancient geological character, its beautiful archaeological monuments, its ethnographical features and mineral resources proved a rich field for development of industries and deserve observation and study. It was in the fitness of things that Hyderabad, whose Rulers had been great patrons

of art and science to-day should welcome eminent scientists of all India on her soil. He wished their deliberations all success.

#### Welcome Address

*Nawab Mehdi Yar Jung Bahadur*, Political Member, in the course of his address, welcoming the delegates referred to the growth of science in recent years at length after which the President, Rao Bahadur Venkataraman delivered his illuminating address.

#### Presidential Address

*Rao Bahadur Venkataraman*, Imperial Sugarcane Export, delivered an address on the "Indian Village—its Past, Present and Future." After analysing the condition of the Indian village in the past and the present, he pointed out that the duty of Indians was "to improve the village, the nucleus of our country life and infect its chief agent, the villager, with a chosen culture of the virus of modern age through education and industrialisation."

In the course of his address, Mr. Venkataraman dealt at length with the position of the Indian village in the past and in the present and indicated the lines of its development in the future. After referring to the Aryan colonisation and the types of villages prevailing then, he described the polity of the Indian village with its democratic form of the Government. He then traced the changes brought about by the impact with the west and the present condition of the village as evidenced by the condition of agriculture which was the main occupation of the villages. Dependence on the monsoon, absence of touch with world markets, sub-division and fragmentation of holdings which ruled out large scale operations by modern methods were some of the factors which stood in the way of agricultural efficiency.

The speaker then went on to discuss the present condition of the villager. Though till recently but little affected by the changes around him, on account of his isolation, both mental and physical, he was being made increasingly aware of the changes around by the extension into the village of such symbols of modern life as the Post and Telegraph, the bicycle and motor bus. Economically he found himself in a very disadvantageous position owing to his steadily diminishing agricultural income in contrast with increasing expenditure due to changes in living even in his own household. Innovations in dress and habits and new wants like tea and coffee were steadily forcing up family expenses. Dependent as he was solely on agriculture, the need for money always existed. This was true of the agriculturist all the world over and resulted from the fact that, whereas agricultural income came in only at particular times like harvest his expenditure was of a monthly if not a daily nature. Extra profits from an exceptionally good year were more often wasted in urbanising his surroundings than being put by as a reserve against lean years. The heavy indebtedness of the Indian villager was well known and had attracted the attention of all that have cared to study the village.

The speaker then referred to the agricultural waste resulting from the uneconomic sub-division and fragmentation of land which precluded its cultivation to maximum benefit. There was then the waste of cattle and human labour, the drain of village money by way of interest on loans raised by the villagers and loss of valuable manures like human and cattle voids. Another important waste which had far-reaching results was that caused through forced idleness. The most serious of the unfavourable changes coming over the villages was the steadily increasing exodus of people from the village to the town. Apart from the number, the quality of human material contained in the exodus constituted a serious drain.

Discussing the future of the Indian village, the speaker observed: In spite of its having become trite the statement that ours is an agricultural country warrants reception on account of its far-reaching effects on all our activities. The plough with a pair of oxen is perhaps the one symbol that would properly represent India as a whole with its different classes and communities. The clearly indicated line of advance for the future, therefore, lies in improving rural conditions and rendering our villages better and more efficient in the discharge of duties set to them by the country as a whole.

Both town and village are needed for the full and complete development of our country as a whole. Each has certain specific advantages and inevitable defects. The open air extensions that have grown round towns in recent years with compound houses and gardens—indicate the attempt to ruralize the town in

the matter of health and surroundings, while the Post Office, the rural dispensary, the school, and even the bus hornning its way through the village are in the nature of urbanising the countryside.

Advance in the direction of the improvement of crop type and distribution of its seed—has been the most suitable to our present conditions of comparative poverty of resources in other directions. For the production of these types, the resources in the way of plant material of more than one country has been and is being systematically employed. Combined with substantial tariff protection afforded by a kind Government, it has resuscitated our sugar industry and thus saved a drain to the country of 15 crores of rupees per annum on the average.

As the efficiency of any programme of rural improvement depends primarily on the Chiet Agent in it, the Villager, it is important to consider means for increasing his efficiency. If we compare the villager with the townsman, one point in which the latter often scores over the villager is this literacy, if not always his education.

Though it is true that the village teacher did exist in the olden days, regular schooling and education were not considered essential. Education given in the village school should obviously possess the rural and agricultural outlook and be vitally linked with the everybody life of the village. Nature study lessons fit in well with the agricultural life of the villager. Village vacations should be timed to the conveniences of metropolitan examinations rather than to the busiest agricultural seasons in the village when the boys could perhaps help their parents in the field and gain first-hand knowledge of subjects taught in the school-room.

A second characteristic of the villager as contrasted with the townsman is often the slower moving intellect of the former. This is not mentioned here in a derogatory spirit; the difference is due to difference in the environment. The everyday struggle with the great forces of nature develops a deep character in the villager, but in intellectual alertness he is often inferior to the townsman. The linking up of villages with towns and other villages, through better communication facilities, for instance, will remedy the situation.

Yet another common defect of the villager is the lack of so-called 'business' habits and 'business' mentality. This, again, is due to his environment and tradition. Nature's processes with which the village agriculturist is primarily concerned do not generally need the punctuality of the man of business or commerce. The absence of insurance measures in our villages against crop failures and cattle epidemics, which are by no means uncommon, is largely attributable to the absence of education and business outlook.

The villager's outlook on the world is often narrow because of the isolation and the absence of literacy. Whether he likes it or not, the villager is being dragged into the world currents of commerce and industry and his horizon needs to be broadened by education. His constant fight with forces of Nature over which he has little control, tinges his ideas with almost fatalism. A bad season too often disproves to him the truth in the saying "As you sow so you reap." Industrial activities, on the other hand, are associated with processes which demonstrate the control of natural forces by man and this has a tendency to develop in him certain amount of self-confidence, if not of human pride.

The closer cottage industries are linked up with agriculture and agricultural products the better they would fit in with village economics. Cattle being an important adjunct of agriculture, industries like cattle breeding and production of milk and milk products at once suggest themselves. Bee-keeping, the poultry industry, fruit growing and canning and preparation of tinned and in fact foods for the benefit of the townsman would fit in well into the village.

Other suitable industries would be the partial preparation of manufactured products in the village itself as a rural industry. Cotton gineries, seed decorticators and oil presses belong to this group. Minor industries connected with products or articles available in the village of vicinity, such as coconut industry in the West Coast and fish curing in seashore villages, help to keep the villages prosperous.

Other handicrafts and domestic industries, where the needed material is imported from outside and worked in the village during the off-seasons, include weaving, dying and the manufacture of toys and trinkets.

Most village activities, on the other hand, have by their very nature to be on the small scale and their being grouped together through co-operative organisation is the only remedy. Through them even the small farmer and producer is enabled to

command facilities and advantages generally available only to large-scale units. There was apparently a great deal of the 'mutual help' and co-operative spirit in the villages of old. The spirit needs to be revived and placed on new lines consonant with the modern age.

As a class, our villages lack the conveniences and amenities of urban life. Conveniences like means for rapid transport, the Post and Telegraph, the newspaper and the ever-increasing improvements associated with the development of electricity are major blessings which it is desirable should be extended to the villages as quickly and as completely as possible. The general tendency for retired Government officials not to return to the village but settle in a nearby town is unfortunate and is indicative of the general trend.

While in certain cases perhaps the decision might be due to urban educational facilities, there is little doubt that the general unattractiveness of village life also enters into the decision. For permanent results the urge for rural improvement should be implanted in the village itself. This could be achieved only by improving the chief natural agent in such work—viz., the villager—and making it attractive for him to live and have his being in the village itself. Endeavours that are town-centred and taken to the village for temporary periods, for lectures, demonstrations or shows—however honest or energetic—have an outside flavour to the villager and do not, therefore, get permanently assimilated into village life.

To sum up, there is little doubt that the villages of old were more populated than they are to-day largely because of conditions prevalent at the time. These conditions will return however much or sincerely we may hanker after them. The town and the characteristics associated with urban life are definite products in the march of events and need to be accepted as such. Though there are drawbacks associated with urban life the town has its own good points which need extension into the village to deep rural life in tune with the changes around us. At the same time, the countryside has advantages like open spaces and absence of congestion which can never be reproduced in the town.

The town should extend to the village its greater knowledge, quicker living and the manifold amenities of the modern age. Contributions from the countryside are of equal importance. It alone can produce the raw materials of commerce and industry and thus help in the growth of towns and cities. It alone can supply adequate and wholesome food to the millions of our land whether resident in the village or town. Lastly, the countryside alone can imbue the urban business civilisation with the deeper character and larger humanities which are nurtured in the villager through his more direct and constant contact with the great forces of Nature and of life. Our duty then is clear, viz., to improve the village, the nucleus of our country life, and infect its chief agent, the villager, with a chosen culture of the visions of modern age through education and industrialisation.

## 2nd. Day—Hyderabad—3rd. January 1937

### MEDICAL & VETERINARY RESEARCH SECTION

Meetings of sections relating to Agriculture, Geology and Geography and Medical and Veterinary Research were held to-day.

Col. Oliver presided over the Medical and Veterinary Research Section. In his address, he dealt with the relation of animal nutrition to public health in India. In the course of his address, he said:

Probably the greatest and most difficult of all the problems which Governments have to face in India to-day is the problem of providing, at cost within the reach of the masses, an adequate and satisfactory supply of the protective foods of animal origin, especially milk. In spite of every effort to find effective vegetable substitutes these foods have, in recent years, been shown to be irreplaceable in human diet and owing to the rapid increase in population which is taking place, this problem is becoming daily more difficult. It is clear in fact, that the best possible use will have to be made of all the food resources which are or could economically be produced from the available land and it is here that Animal Nutrition has a great role to play in the maintenance of public health. Only by systematic and properly controlled investigation of the feeding values of locally grown foodstuffs in relation to the requirements of the lives-stock of the country, it is possible to make the best use of the great

variety of cattle foods which can satisfactorily be grown under the varying conditions of soil and climate which exist in this sub-continent. Researches seem to indicate quite clearly that the milk from cows fed almost exclusively on the dry food materials on which cows are usually fed in city dairies in India and during the dry season in many parts of India is very lacking in vitamin A. It is rational therefore to assume that the milk of cows maintained in city dairies where adequate supplies of green fodder are costly and difficult to obtain cannot usually be considered a satisfactory food, particularly for children. This is a point which I am sure deserves much greater attention than it has hitherto received from the general public.

Dr. Aykroyd and others have on the other hand recently demonstrated that striking improvement in the health and development of school children in India can rapidly be effected by the addition of small quantities of cows' milk to their diet and it is a matter of very considerable importance to human dietiticians in India that in the course of these observations it has been shown that skimmed or separated milk—or reconstituted milk made with skimmed milk-powder—are very valuable foods when taken along with adequate amounts of great leaf vegetables or fruit and adequate exposure to sunlight. Great improvement in health and physique could therefore, be effected at comparatively small cost, if the consumption could be increased of skimmed or separated milk or of milk-powder—in which all the proteins and mineral salt of whole milk are preserved, almost intact.

But though it is a truism that well-fed meat and milk of good quality are of higher biological value than similar material of lower quality it seems to me little understood in India that an adequate supply of such high quality food can only be produced by the provision of a better supply of nutritious and easily digestible foodstuffs. Fodder crops of good quality can in fact only be grown under a system of cultivation or management of grass-land which is calculated to furnish an ample supply of plant food. A system of mixed farming combined with proper management of grasslands and suitable conservation of cattle foods of good quality is thus a matter of great importance to human dietiticians as well as to the farming community. For the coarse rank grass which is grown in the wetter parts of India is so deficient in nutritive value and becomes so indigestible that it is not possible to produce high grade stock or animal products of good quality without making provision for supplementing this diet by an adequate supply of specially grown fodder crops or concentrates.

How to make the production of suitable fodder crops economically possible in a system of agriculture which must perforce be governed largely by the very limited capital resources of the Indian cultivators, is however, one of the most difficult of the problems with which the better nourishment of the people of India is unfortunately beset. In existing circumstances it is obviously difficult for poor cultivators to modify the present unsound system of agriculture, in which attention is so often almost exclusively paid to the production of cereal grains or other cash crops, but it seems clear that any improvement in the feeding of the people must depend very largely on the success which is achieved in modifying this system.

The scientists of India could turn their attention to no greater or more stimulating task than that of providing an increased supply of cattle foods of good quality all the year round and of finding ways and means of developing in Indian villages a system of balanced agriculture by which the people could be better fed and the wealth of the country increased. In this task it is clear that sympathetic Animal Husbandry, will have to play a very important part, since at present, owing to lack of precise knowledge of the food values of the food-stuffs, usually produced in India, and of their utilisation by Indian livestock, huge quantities of valuable food material are undoubtedly to a large extent wasted.

I suggest that the solution must to a very large extent lie in educating the public as to the essential importance to health of an adequate and sound supply of milk and other food-stuffs of animal origin and in providing better facilities for their production, preservation, transportation and marketing, so that village cultivators and stockowners may be able to produce more fodder crops to supplement the grazing available, more and better farmyard manure or compost and better stock; thereby increasing their income and the nutrition of the family while maintaining the fertility of their holdings and making a substantial contribution to the maintenance of public health.



### Agriculture in India

*Rao Bahadur B. Viswanath*, Imperial Agricultural Chemist and officiating Director, Imperial Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, presided over the Agricultural Section. In his address he dealt with "Science and Practice of Agriculture in India." He reviewed the progress of research in India with reference to agricultural practices in the country, and directed attention to some important problems. Indian soils and agricultural practices he said, were several centuries old and research should be concerning itself more with the details of existing practices than with the evolution of wholly new methods, whose success was to build up on the existing system a state of agricultural practices suited to the resources of the cultivator, who was always ready to take up any improvement suited to the conditions with which he was faced.

Speaking of the work on soils, Mr. *Viswanath* said that the aim was to maintain the high productivity of the soils that were already rich, to restore to normal, those soils whose productive capacity was impaired, and to increase the yield of soils which were originally poor. He referred to the scientific studies directed to the attainment of these objects, discussed the important differences between Indian and European soils, explained the lack of success, in India, in the application of many of the results and practices found suitable in those countries and stressed the necessity for a different outlook on the applied aspects of soil science particularly with reference to arid and semi-arid soils of the country.

Mr. *Viswanath* then discussed the work on manures and fertilisers during the past quarter of a century and said that the evidence clearly established the importance and suitability of organic manures to Indian soils. The theoretical possibilities of artificial fertilisers were almost limitless but their achievement on Indian soils was limited by the organic matter supply of the soil. He pointed out the necessity for husbanding our resources of organic manures and for utilising them to the fullest extent possible. He drew attention to the evil consequences of intensive cultivation and the intensive use of fertilisers without the necessary accompaniment—namely, organic matter and organic manures. Organic matter was the life of the soil and if organic manures were neglected we should be doing four things. Firstly, the fertility of the soil would not be maintained, secondly, artificial fertilisers would not be used to the fullest advantage, thirdly, the cropping power of the improved seed would be reduced and fourthly, the nutritive value of food crops would be low.

Mr. *Viswanath* finally referred to problem of food and nutrition and discussed the problem both from the point of view of quality and quantity and said that in both these directions soil conditions played a prominent part. He referred to his own work and that of *McCarrison* on the subject and said that manuring contributed to the nutritive value of the crop and in this respect organic manures were the best in endowing a crop with a high nutritive value. In regard to quantity, the *Rao Bahadur* showed by calculations that our present production of food crops was enough for the proper feeding of only two-thirds of the population and that there were considerable scope and possibilities for increasing production. This, he said, depended on the building up of the fertility of the soil and pointed out in the address the ways and means of doing it.

### Earthquakes in India

Presiding over the Section of Geology and Geography, Mr. *W. D. West*, of the Geological Survey of India, discussed the origin of earthquakes in India and outlined the means that should be adopted to fore-stall or ameliorate their worst effects.

The occurrence of earthquakes in India, said Mr. *West*, was a legacy of the great earth movements that had convulsed the northern flanks of India during Tertiary and Quarternary times, when a belt of mountains, including the Alps and the Himalayas was thrown up on the site of what had previously been an extensive sea. It is significant that earthquakes are mainly confined to areas of recent or present-day mountain formation, and there is no doubt that they originate when the rocks of the crust fracture as they are compressed to form the mountains.

In Peninsular India mountain formation has long since ceased, and the Aravalli, Vindhya and Satpura mountains are in the last stages of decay, and so free from earthquakes. But the Himalayas and the mountains of Beluchistan and Burma are of recent formation, and still throbbing in the later stages of their growth. Consequently

it is in the vicinity of these mountains that earthquakes are now occurring. The are in fact almost entirely confined to the north of a line joining Bombay to Delhi and Delhi to Calcutta, and this area may be termed the danger zone of India. It is unfortunate that it includes the most populated tracts of India. The rest of India south of this line is an area of comparative safety, in which only minor shocks occur.

India appears at present to be passing through a period of marked earthquake activity. During the past six years there have been five disastrous earthquakes, and there is no reason to suppose that this activity has yet died down. During the present century, earthquakes have been confined in the main to three centres of activity—Baluchistan, Assam and Burma—with an occasional disastrous earthquake elsewhere within the danger zone. The Assam earthquake of 1897 was probably the most severe that has occurred anywhere within historic times, though the loss of life was small. But the Kangra earthquake of 1905, the North Bihar earthquake of 1935 between them accounted for at least 80,000 lives.

This disease of earthquakes, said Mr. West, is a chronic one, but it is one that is not peculiar to India. Other countries that suffer from it, such as Japan, California, New Zealand and Italy, have taken steps to combat it, but in India practically nothing has so far been done. Mr. West made a strong appeal for the initiation of seismological research in India, similar to that conducted in Japan. In addition, he said, endeavours should be made to improve the standard of building within the earthquake belt. The value of simple earthquake-proof construction in saving both life and property had been clearly demonstrated during the Quetta earthquake, and he suggested that a simple building code should be drawn up by which new construction and town planning in the more important cities of India should be controlled. More detailed codes should be drawn up in accordance with local needs, and enforced by Provincial Governments and Local Boards.

Concluding, Mr. West said: "The cost of repairing the damage done by a great earthquake may run into many crores of rupees, while the loss of life that may occur in one night of tragedy—\$0,000 at Kangra, 25,000 at Quetta—stirs the emotion as nothing else can. But knowledge that we are accumulating may ultimately give to us a complete means of combating this evil, and of overcoming the destructive forces of Nature, it will provide yet one more example of the great benefits that may be contributed by Science to the cause of human welfare".

#### Absorption of Light by Atoms

In the Mathematics and Physics section, talking of absorption of light by atoms and molecules, Dr. S. Datta related how the main facts of absorption by atoms not only in the normal state but also by those in the excited state to thermal electrical or optical stimulus, have all been accounted for by the simple Bohr theory coupled with the modified selection rules for interorbital transitions and the Boltzmann distribution. He next dwelt on the question of what happens to the radiation when it is absorbed and indicated the various ways in which the experimental facts show the processes of dissipation of the absorbed energy. The intensity and the width of absorption lines were next discussed in the light of modern theories and attention was drawn to some questions in continuous absorption by atoms which still await solution. Difficulties relating to the divisibility of the photon energy according to conservation laws and its indivisibility in accordance with the phenomenon of discrete absorption were next discussed and a mechanism by which Compton effect could be explained without dividing the quant was suggested.

The general facts and explanations relating to absorption by various types of molecules—atomic, tonic and polarisation molecules—were next discussed, as also their main criterion and the question of determination of heat of dissociation from absorption data. The possibility of determining the fundamental vibration frequencies from continuous absorption experiments was next stressed upon. Then he referred to the phenomenon of predissociation and to colours of inorganic salts and concluded his survey by indicating some of the important contributions achieved through absorption experiments not only in pure physics but also in industrial and medical researches.

#### Helminthological Research

Dr. G. S. Thapar, President of the Zoology section, in his presidential address on the "Needs and opportunities of Helminthological Research in India" emphasized the importance of Helminthology in medicine, public health, veterinary science and agriculture. He pointed to the indifference with which this science was studied in

India, but in recent years there seemed to be a growing appreciation, both by the Government and the Universities, of its importance. The recognition of the work of professional zoologists in India in this connection seemed to be a healthy sign as the past records in other countries revealed that the solution of many fundamental problems of helminthology lay in the hands of the zoologists. There were, he said, great many difficulties in the control of helminths of domesticated animals. Limited sanitation, over-population of farm animals, due to greater utilisation of land for agriculture and human habitation, varied means of transportation and climatic factors—all helped to increase helminthic infection of the domestic animals. It was, therefore, necessary that investigations should be undertaken on an extensive scale of such problems in an agricultural country like India.

Dr. Thapar drew attention to reference found in Susruta, Charaka and Madhava Nidhana and from these he identified such worms as *Dvimukha* and *Parisarpa* as *Enterobius vermicularis* and *Microfilaria* respectively under the modern scheme of nomenclature. But very little progress seemed to have been made on the subject in ancient India and the doctrine of Ahimsa seemed to have played its part in this direction. Unfortunately, there were great difficulties in providing adequate knowledge of helminthology to students in India, as though the text-books of Zoology claimed to have been revised and brought up-to-date, they still contained old and antiquated nomenclature and classification. Further, it was desirable to avoid imparting an anthropomorphic outlook of Helminthology to the students of Zoology, as, in this, the students generally lost all interest in the subject for the rest of their career. A student should study the subject to explain the phenomenon of parasitism and for this he should collect helminths from his own dissection animals.

Dr. Thapar said that there was considerable field for investigation in the morphology of the worms, as helminth fauna of India still remained unexplored. Even the re-investigation of the described forms seemed to offer ample scope for work, as errors in diagnosis were perpetuated in the recent literature on the subjects.

Considering the pathogenic effects of helminths, Dr. Thapar made reference to the recent demonstrations of *Enterobius vermicularis*, as a cause of appendicitis in man and this had awakened interest for the study of the diseased condition more particularly in animals. The discovery of *Schistosoma spindalis* as a cause of "Nasal granuloma" of cattle, commonly known as snoring disease in India and the recent investigations on the etiology of "Barsati" of equines, showing *Habronema larvae* in the affected parts of the animal's body, were illustrations to indicate worms as cause of disease in animals. Both these animal diseases were believed to be of mycotic origin and these discoveries marked a new era in the disease investigation of animals in India.

There were, he continued, a large number of anthelmintics used for the removal of worms but a considerably large number prescribed by Hakims and Vaidis claimed specificity for particular kinds of worms. Chopra had investigated many of these indigenous drugs for their action but a majority of them still needed verification. The crude method of administration of certain plant products, like juices of *Blumea lacera* (kukronda), as local application and other-wise against the common pinworm of man by laymen offered fresh field in the study of drug administration in the natural condition, particularly for the domestic animals. The effect of yeast and vitamins on the immunity problems formed a necessary adjunct to such investigations as it would be desirable to obtain parasite resisting strains of animal population that would be better fitted in the struggle for existence.

The production of pearls in the molluscan shells, he pointed out, was said to be due to the presence of helminth larvae and for this, growth of such larvae may be encouraged. This was an aspect of helminthology that demonstrates its utility to man.

In view of such opportunities of varied nature offered by the study of Helminthology in India, and its growing significance in different spheres, emphasis must be laid on the necessity of co-operation amongst workers in different fields—medical, veterinary, public health and agriculture—so that they might be better able to combat the problems and obtain most satisfactory results. The experience of such work in other countries amply justified such a line of action in India. "Let us, therefore, stimulate interest in the study of Helminthology, so that by patient interest and diligent application we may help in the solution of the various problems connected

with helminthological research and thus establish an active school of helminthology in India”

#### Social Mind of the Individual

Mr. K. C. Mukherjee presided over the meeting of the Psychology Section to-day. The subject of his address was “The social mind of the individual.” The following is a summary of his address :—

Social relations are essentially mental. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved. There are not at first individuals and then a social unity, and there might be bricks and then a pile of them.

Some believe that collective consciousness is the highest form of psychic life, and society is the real god. Any alleged superiority of social mind can hardly as a rule be maintained. If a wave of emotional agitation sweeps through the group each may become less than himself, less critical and more suggestible. There is a considerable tendency to change one's opinion as a result of discussion, but it is experimentally observed that the females profit more by this discussion than the males. We observe practically that the number of jurors is increased to decide cases of murder while to keep the lock-out for the safety of the ship only one man, and not ten, is employed. The weight of responsibility is divided among the members of the group and weakened in proportion for each man. But for this diminution of this sense of responsibility man can hardly condemn another to death. The group or committed decision is sometimes altogether irresponsible and may only be an intellectual necessity to avoid the crushing weight of high individual responsibility.

Social consciousness follows almost a cyclic order of development. The individual is more a social outcome than the social unit. The child is not an individual when he enters into the society but he grows into an individual by social interaction. The outline of the individual gradually appears, and at every stage it shows the pattern of the social culture of which he becomes a specialisation. The social culture in the last analysis comes from the individuals themselves. So individuals should be not merely static conformists to, but creative artists of culture. A non-creative personality or a culturally passive mass is a failure, educational as well as social. So the political or legal organisation should have only secondary value as existing for the sake of cultural institution and activity.

The consciousness of the family group prepares the child's mind for and accentuates the development of wider group sentiment. The family sentiment and national sentiment are equally strong in Scotchman especially the Highlanders. The family sentiment is very keen among the Japanese who are also noted for their high national spirit. This is also true of Germany and Italy. The people of East Bengal are noted for their national outbursts, but their sentiment for joint family system is also highly remarkable. Any vital connection can hardly be established in view of the low sense of nationality possessed by primitive people in spite of intense family sentiment, but still the importance of the mental effects of the family life in relation to the foundation of national sentiment should be no less insisted on than the importance of the organisation of the family life for the material welfare of the State, and it is probably true that any barrack system of rearing up State children, if introduced, would be disastrous to the growth of national life. There is no reason to find in the family a natural menace to the development of wider social feeling. Unless narcissistically fixated and concentrated, the family sentiments aid rather than impede the development of higher social sentiment.

There is some evidence that the crossing of closely allied stocks does conduce to increase of vigour and energy of mind and body and also to the variability of the stock for the production of persons of exceptional gifts. The Chinese have a high average ability and are a relatively pure race but their culture has stagnated for want of men of exceptional capacity. So the vigour of the exclusive caste system for the maintenance of the purity of blood is not biologically sound. But the crossing of the widely different stocks is supposed to produce an inferior race. So the Eurasians of India are said to be of a comparatively poor race. But any universal characterisation of the Eurasians is risky when the unit qualities of the parental stocks are not blended and the individual of a blended stock is a mosaic of such unit character.

Semmer concludes that social or racial prejudices is based on recognition of differences, but prejudice simply because of differences does not exist. There is no

feeling of hatred between the Spaniards and Indians in spite of differences in colour, speech, habits and dresses. The difference is only an element in the total situation, sometimes it may be the symptom and not the cause of the disease. The main determinant consists in the balked impulses of the politically, economically and culturally dominated group. Differences are emphasised because they offer the readiest rationalisation for defence against real or fancied dangers. It is for the accentuation of the dynamic relation that the Hindu-Muslim tension exists. The policy to multiply such relations of a group with different groups is destructive of its vitality. When any tension occurs, the reaction may aim at the immediate extermination of the threatening force for the restoration of the inter group equilibrium, but history shows that men cannot be made to change their opinion by direct coercion. This is an instinctive mode of reaction in which the end is directly aimed at and is characteristic of the lower order of animal behaviour. Reason works through stratagem in a round-about way. The strategy that reason is to employ in liquidating the balked impulse of social prejudice should be far remote from the end and will prove efficient in proportion as it operates unconsciously of the goal. This very remoteness of the measure of social process is the cause of its great efficiency. This is somewhat of the nature of a weight the power of which, when thrown on the longer end of a lever, is multiplied in transmission. Gandhiji's satyagraha movement to stop the drinking habit of the masses fails because of its very clear and direct attack upon the end. Improvement of conditions, introduction of good music, drama, education, etc., would, however, slowly, have produced a more stable effect. So legislation often fails to effect social amelioration. In flattening a warped iron-plate strokes are to be judiciously given outside the warped part otherwise new defects be produced. Should we think that humanity can be more readily straightened than even an iron plate?

### 3rd. Day—Hyderabad—4th. January 1937

#### Racial Types in India

*Prof. B. S. Guha* delivered a lecture on the "Racial types in the population of India". He traced the racial types from pre-historic times and dealt at length with the similarities and differences in facial features, growth of hair, colour of skin and other details of the different races in India.

With the aid of magic lantern *Prof. Guha* vividly described the main racial strain in the population of India and in the light of the prevailing types, divided India into several district zones.

*Prof. Guha* said: "Outside a few isolated tracts like the Andaman Islands or the interior of New Guinea, there are few places at the present time which present a homogeneous population. India is not an exception. The ethnic composition of the Indian people consists as elsewhere of several strains which came at various periods with independent racial invasions—from the pleistocene to the recent historical times. Of the movements of the Early Man, we have no direct knowledge as to where they originated; but in the control exercised by India's topographical conditions, we have unmistakable pointers showing the probable directions, from where these drifts came. Very few artifacts as evidence of early Man's handiwork have been so far recorded from the eastern parts! but in the heart of the country itself, specially in Central and Southern India, along river beds and hill terraces, crude and polished stone implements in great abundance have been discovered. But until recently we had no stratigraphic evidence of the age and culture sequences of the Stone Age Man in India.

"Compared to Europe, however, the discoveries in India lack in one important respect. In the former along with the tools used, skeletal remains of the Early Man have been found in various places enabling us to judge not only the nature of his life but also of the physical type to which he belonged. In fact these skeletal finds have shown that there were not one but several sub-species or races associated with different cultures in different periods during the Stone Age. In this country so far, not a single skeleton has been found which can be assigned in these early times, thus leaving us in complete ignorance as to the character of his physical type, of his affinities with the Stone Age men of Asia Minor and Europe with which his culture closely allied. Indeed, with the exception of the fossil skull found at Payana which is of uncertain antiquity, the skeleton remains which may definitely be con-

sidered as providing landmarks in the racial history of India are these belonging to the Indus Civilisation between the third and the second millennium B. C., and the remains of Monks in the Dharmarajika Monastery at Taxilla which was sacked by the White Huns in the third century B. C., the innumerable ruins of the Megalithic character which are strewn all over the Central and Southern India of which in the State of Hyderabad alone there are over a million, undoubtedly treasure a wealth of skeletal materials which when discovered, would throw important light on pre-historic man in this country; but it is a standing shame to Indian scholarship that very few of these sites have been explored, and the few that have been opened were mainly by European excavators like Meadows Taylor, Brecks, Rea, Hunt, Murray and Numa Lafitte.

"The pre-historic sites so far excavated in Central and Southern India are all associated with Iron and probably of a much later time. From one of these sites only, namely that of Aditanallur in the Tinnevely district, several human skeletons were recovered,—in the rest the evidence is very scanty, not because of the paucity of the finds, because the skeletons discovered were either mislaid or not considered of sufficient value to preserve! (Sad commentary again on scholarship in this country which allowed such invaluable documents to be perished). The majority of skulls from Aditanallur as well as the one found by Meadows Taylor in the Cairns of Jewurgi were definitely of the Australoid type, but in one skull from the former, since unfortunately damaged in transit, the late Prof. Elliot Smith noticed Armenoid characteristics. In the skull from the Raigir Cairns mentioned by Dr. Hunt there is one of a decidedly brachycephalic character. These are about all the evidence we have on the racial types of Man during pre-historic times in India. They are unquestionably very meagre and defective, and deal only with a small section of India's racial history. Of the rest of the early racial drifts, we know nothing either as to the time of their advents or the precise nature of their ethnic affinities. However, such as the materials are, they nevertheless enable us to trace four of the main strains in the Indian population of the present to pre-historic times.

"The Australoid type so conspicuous in the Tinnevely district in pre-historic times is one of the major elements in the aboriginal population of this country. One thing that has emerged most prominently as a result of statistical analysis of the metric data taken by me, is the predominance of what I have called the "A" type forming in a truer sense the substratum of the non-aboriginal India population. This type can be described as of medium stature, longheaded with high cranial vault but with faintly marked supra-orbital regions and a broad short orthognathous face. The nose is prominent and long but the nostrils moderately spread out giving a low Mesorrhine index. The skin colour varies from a rich to a dark tawny brown and the eye colour is invariably black. The hair is straight with a tendency to curl and is moderately present on the face and the body. It is the dominant element in Southern and the lower stratum of the population of Upper India with the exception of the Punjab and N. W. India where its presence is not so marked.

"Of the non-Mongoloid brachycephalic race, the earliest evidence occurs in Mohenjo-daro during the Indus Period. In Harappa it occurs in much greater numbers, especially in a somewhat later period, and it is here for the first time that we find the presence of a definitely Armenoid race. Elliot Smith reported the occurrence of a similar type of skulls at Aditanallur, and in some of the crania excavated by Hunt from the cairns in Hyderabad, its presence may also be assumed. At the present moment the brachycephalic non-Mongoloid races are predominant in Guzrat, Kannada and are also the major types in the Upper Section of the population of Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nad. It is characterised by broad high head with the back parts flattened and inclined almost vertically, and not infrequently with receding forehead. The face is round and broad and the nose narrow and prominent and often arched and convex. The skin colour varies from a pale white among the Nagar Brahmins to light brown and brown among the Bengali Kayasthas and Kannadas. The hair is generally straight and very profuse on the face and body.

"Of the other long headed race we have no skeletal evidence beyond the skulls recently found in Taxilla dating back to the 3rd century B. C., but it is probable that the large brained people of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa with enormous post-auricular development and powerful body has entered into it. At the present

time it is found in the Punjab and North Western India mixed largely with a brunette type whom Eugen Fischer has called "Oriental." In Rajputana and U. P. among the upper classes it is undoubtedly the prevailing type but elsewhere it is largely mixed with the older Cromagnon race. In its purest form however it is found only among the Indo-aryan speaking peoples living in the valleys of the Hindukush mountains such as the Pathans, Kaffirs and the Khos of Chitral.

"Apart from these races, we have all along the Himalayan foothills and the greater part of Assam and Burma the presence of a larger number of Mongoloid races. The true Mongol is seen among the 'Uzbeks' and 'Tadjiks' both of whom still live outside Indian frontiers. Within the frontiers of India, the Mongoloid races are sub-divided into two types, one of medium stature but long headed and exhibiting mongoloid characteristics of the face and nose and the other as seen among the Lepchas and Barmose, is broad-headed with flat mongoloid face and nose. No clear evidence of any of these two races has so far been found in any prehistoric burials but that they have been leaving for a long time in these regions may be well imagined.

In conclusion, the lecturer said :—"I have so far described and attempted to trace the main racial strains seen in the population of India, and in the light of the prevailing types we may broadly divide India into several distinct ethnic zones—(1) consisting of N. W. India, Punjab, the upper part of Rajputana and Western U. P. ; with the eastern parts of U. P., Central India and Behar forming an intermediate zone ; (2) Bengal, parts of Orissa and the Western belt from Kathiawar to Mysore and the Tamil country into another ; (3) and a third containing Malabar, Andhra and Southern Orissa. The tribal groups, both Australoid and Mongoloid remain distinct and form separate zones of their own. Such classification will no doubt invalidate linguistic groupings, which seem still the fashion in this country, and before we finished with an 'Aryan race', we got a Dravidian, and before the Dravidian is forgotten, we are hearing of an Austro of mon-khmer race. But as I have indicated just like the Aryan speaking groups, the Dravidian equally is not a homogeneous racial type, but composed of several distinct strains which separate the Malayali from the Kanarese and the Tamil from the Telugu in the same manner as the Guzarti is separated from the Pnnjabi and the Bengali is distinct from the Behari. Thus divisions must, however, be taken only in a general sense, for the different types in a large measure overlap, and it will not be impossible to find a Punjabi who cannot be distinguished from a Malayali, a Bengali from a Rajput or a Maharathi from an Assamese and *vice versa*. The genesis which control our hereditary mechanism in mixed ethnic groups as ours, are capable of a large number of recombinations giving rise to a variety of type, and it is difficult to draw a clear cut demarcation every where, and it is only in a broad sense and not in any static, rigid manner, must this separation into distinct racial zones in India be understood.

In the *Geology* section a symposium on "The age of the Deccan Trap" was held. Mr. W. D. West of the Geological Survey of India presided.

In opening the proceedings, the President observed that this problem of the Age of the Deccan Trap formation was engaging the attention of several geologists in India and new discoveries had been made which threw important light on this question. He was glad to find that several of these workers were present to participate in the symposium.

Mr. Crookshank (G. S. I., Calcutta) who opened the discussion, said the Deccan Traps were concluded to be of *Eocene* age, both on field and palaeontological evidences, but later on, the structural relationships between the traps and underlying Bagh and Lameta beds in the Central Provinces as also the unconformity between the trap and the overlying Nummulitic Limestone at Surat were emphasised and this led to the Deccan trap being considered upper *cretaceous*. He then referred to the recent palaeontological discoveries of Dr. B. Sahni and said that all these indicated a Tertiary age. The speaker analysed the geological evidences and showed how on certain interpretation they could be made to support a Tertiary rather than a *cretaceous* age for the Deccan trap.

In concluding the proceedings, the President said that they had a most valuable discussion on an important subject and thanked the several speakers for their contributions.

# The Convocation Addresses

## The Delhi University Convocation.

Fifteenth Session—Delhi—16th April 1937

### The Pro-Chancellor's Address

The fifteenth convocation of the University of Delhi was held at Delhi on the 16th April 1937. The following is the text of the address delivered by the Pro-Chancellor, the Hon'ble Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad :—

MR VICE-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS OF THE COURT. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is a privilege and an honour to be present at this, the 15th Convocation of Delhi University. I must thank you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, for your kindly welcome to me and I can assure you of my great interest in all that concern this University.

I must also congratulate you on your address in which you have so lucidly and with such evident sincerity described the work and activity of the University during the past year. You have pointed out with courage and conviction the various problems which are still to be solved, before the ideal of a Federal University—an ideal which has been enunciated in the addresses of several of your predecessors—become a reality.

You have pointed out the question of finance is ever before your constituent colleges and until the spectre of financial embarrassments disappears, the removal of the colleges to the new delightful site is likely to be delayed. I can assure you the Government will examine with great care the report of the financial implication consequent on the removal to the new site. More than this, alas, I cannot say, for Government to-day has its embarrassments. At time such as this one longs for an Indian Lord Nuffield, whose recent benefaction of £1,500,000 or over two crores of rupees to Oxford University has enabled that University to endow and develop one of its activities. The Great English Universities were founded, not by grants of public money, not even, except to a limited extent, by kings and queens from their private purses, but mainly by the liberality of individuals. We Indians are certainly no less charitable and no less patriotic. I do not see why what has been done in the past and still continues to be done by private persons in England should not have its counterpart in India.

The year has been one not of rapid advance and development, but rather of deliberation and consideration. A great experiment is in progress—the creation of an institution which will be unique in India—a Federal University. Its creation is no simple matter, for innumerable difficulties and problems arise, the solution of which evokes others equally clamant. It is, therefore, no matter for surprise that progress is slow. Even the mere passage of time brings with it new ideas and a changed philosophy of education which may lead to striking changes in school or university organisation. Education can not be static. It must reflect the changing ideas of society and adjust itself to the material, cultural and spiritual environment in which that society has its existence. You, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, have expressed in your address the growing dissatisfaction with the present educational system and the products of our universities. If this be true, what are the remedies? The reference you made, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, in your address last year, to the urgent necessity of strengthening the pre-university foundations of knowledge, is receiving further examination. The Government of India obtained expert advice on this and related questions and that advice will be made available for consideration by your University. Though the sole purpose of a Secondary School should not be preparation for the Matriculation Examination, yet no university can afford to be indifferent to the form and content of pre-university study and thereby to the



standard of attainment which it is entitled to demand as a requisite for higher study.

I note with satisfaction, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, that in other directions considerable progress towards the attainment of the ideal of a Federal University has been effected. Sir Abdur Rahman, whose recent elevation to the Bench of the Madras High Court has caused great satisfaction to his numerous friends, in his Convocation Address of 1934 drew attention to the need for the enactment of federal laws embodying the relations of the colleges to the university and defining the rights and functions of each. Two Statutes of a comprehensive character have been formulated and so help to prepare a strong legal foundation. But, as you have so pertinently observed, much more than the enactment of laws is still necessary before the conversion of Delhi University into a Federal University is assured.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, since we last met in Convocation, we have lost one of our most eminent Pro-Chancellors, the late Main Sir Fazal-i-Husain. Indians will ever remember with gratitude his signal service to the cause of education and especially to this University.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I should now like, with your permission, to offer my congratulations to the new graduates and with humility to address myself to them for a few moments. For some of you, I trust, there is in store a brilliant career in some sphere of activity which will provide high opportunities of service to those less fortunate. Others may secure a humbler post. But to all of you I would say that, no matter what your position may be, you have it in you to contribute to the formation of public opinion and to influence the thought and outlook of those with whom you associate.

I know that you are filled with a burning desire to serve your country, to see it advance rapidly in wealth and culture, so that it may again hold its head up among the nations of the world. To your patriotism you join the ardour and enthusiasm of youth—you make light of the perils in the path—for your life so far has been spent in the cloistered seclusion of a University and apart from the dread spectre of examinations, you have been saved the anxieties and perplexities of later life. It is a mere platitude to say that the history of human progress has not been one of continuous advance—there have been many vicissitudes, many setbacks, much avoidable conflict and undeserved suffering. How often has it not happened that some false step, some miscalculation, some misjudgment of the trend of events have thrown nations back for years and even centuries? The goal has receded when it seemed to be so near—the work of years has been shattered in a moment. Such has been the tragic history of many a people. At no time in our recent history has there been greater need than at present for calm and deliberate judgment of affairs, at no time has ardent emotion and impulsive feeling had greater perils than to-day. I do not wish to belittle the value or the dynamic force of enthusiasm, of audacity, of the bold pursuit of unselfish ideals. But I do wish from the bottom of my heart that you, my young countrymen, will in the difficult times that lie ahead of you, not lose sight of what is practicable and of what is attainable at a given moment and in a given set of circumstances, however much your imagination may be fired by the vision of a lofty and distant goal and however impatient you may be to reach it. You, in your ardour, may perhaps move too fast or too dangerously for those whom you wish to lead. If I utter this word of caution, if I suggest that zeal be tempered with calculated judgment, it is because I feel that the need of calm and cold reasoning is insistent at the present critical juncture of our history. It has often been our misfortune that we have rejected some compromise, some second best and the opportunity for taking a step forward has been lost. To court danger for a cause which we believe is no doubt praiseworthy, but to risk disaster and to plunge headlong without heed of consequence may not be always wise. Pray do not treat with disdain the calm and discerning mind which hesitates to venture forth, unless it sees a reasonable hope of victory. Nor need you in dealing with great public issues be the prisoner of precise definition and formalism. A too logical mind is often a handicap in the give and take of politics.

I will not detain you any longer. My best wishes go with you in the tasks that await you. To many of us, when nearing the end of the journey, memory brings many qualms of wasted opportunities and frustrated hopes. When your time for retrospect comes, may you have no such vain regrets and may you have the satisfaction of feeling that you always did the right thing at the right moment.

### The Vice-Chancellor's Address

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Rai Bahadur Ram Kishore*, the Vice-Chancellor :

MR. PRO-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS OF THE COURT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is my first duty and indeed the most pleasant to extend to you all a sincere welcome to this the most important function of the University's academic year, and particularly to you, Sir, who in spite of onerous official duties and numerous other engagements have found time to grace this occasion with your inspiring presence.

It is customary for the Vice-Chancellor to review in the Convocation address the work and activities of the University during the preceding year. Although we have had a busy time during a considerable part of the year preparing the way to the development of the University into one of a federal type, very little, I am afraid, has yet been accomplished. The federal scheme has not yet taken its final shape, as we have been waiting for the decision of the Government of India on the extent of the financial assistance which may be available to the University and the Colleges for carrying out the plans which have been under consideration for the last three years. The Government of India have, for this purpose, appointed a Committee to examine and report on the present assets of the Colleges available for capital expenditure and the most economical method of effecting their transference to the new site, also to recommend the principles which should regulate and control the claims of the University and the Colleges to grants for capital expenditure on the new scheme, and compensatory maintenance grants to cover the loss of revenue occasioned by the decrease in the number of examinees and of students due to the shortening of the degree course. The Committee, I understand, have been collecting relevant information from the University and Colleges and will, I expect, commence their work as soon as the materials are ready. The financial aspect of the scheme, although a very important one, is not, however the only question under consideration. The new scheme of University education is linked up with the question of reconstruction of the entire system of school education in the secondary stage. The Government of India have, therefore, invited two experts, distinguished educationists of long and varied experience in England, to give their considered opinion on the scheme of reconstruction. They have been studying the educational and social conditions of this country since the beginning of the last cold weather. The result of their labours will be available, we hope, in the near future.

Another Committee appointed by the Government of India have examined the extent to and the manner in which the scheme of reconstruction of secondary education, including a variety of other related questions, can be given effect to in the Centrally Administered Areas including Delhi. When the recommendations of this Committee and of the experts become available the Government of India will, it is understood, formulate their own conclusions.

In my Convocation address last year, I referred to the enactment of a special body of federal laws regulating and controlling the activities of the Colleges in relation to the University. Two Statutes defining the relations between the University and the Colleges and providing among other things, for the recognition and proper management of the Colleges were passed by the Court of the University at their last annual meeting held in April 1936. They have, in due course, received the assent of the Governor-General in Council and the University has now on its statute-book a body of federal laws which will supply the constitutional and legal foundation of the scheme. But we are still at the stage of deliberation, and have not been able to achieve any practical result. The essential feature of the federal scheme is a large academic life, made possible by acceptance by the Constituent Colleges of a common educational ideal and by their co-operation in an endeavour to raise the standard of teaching and research and thus to create what may truly be called a university atmosphere. Although steps have already been taken to introduce and encourage the spirit of co-operation among the Colleges participating in university teaching, yet to make it fully effective, the Colleges should be in close proximity to one another and to the University and not separated, as they are at present, by long distances, made still more inconvenient by lack of proper transport facilities. The transference of the Colleges to the sites earmarked for them in the extensive grounds of the Old Viceregal Estate which the Government of India have already placed at the disposal of the University and the Constituent Colleges, is, as is generally admitted, the condition precedent on which the success of the

scheme largely depends. We are hoping therefore that it will be possible for the Colleges, with the necessary financial assistance from the Government, to move, without further delay, to the new area which is so admirably suited to the type of University contemplated.

We have not forgotten the invaluable services rendered by my esteemed friend Sir George Anderson to the University by defining the lines on which its future development, as he conceived it should take place, and later by his ceaseless endeavour to make it possible for the University and the Colleges to advance, in spite of numerous obstacles, towards the realization of the federal ideal. We miss him here today; but his good-will and sympathy are still with us and will remain with us. I am sure, to help us in carrying out our future plans in formulating which he played such an important part. Nor have we forgotten the labours of my learned predecessor, Dr. Sir Abdur Rahman, who has now been appointed, to our great gratification, to be a permanent Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Madras. It was in his regime that the question of a federal university was first mooted and it was largely due to his wise counsel and tactful guidance that the University has been able to achieve, in that direction, the measure of success that stands now to its credit. The names of these two worthy men will ever remain associated with the history of the University whatever its future may be.

Turning now to the academic activities of the University and the Colleges, I should mention a few features of the work done which, though modest, is by no means negligible. In the Faculty of Arts where instruction is imparted chiefly, if not entirely, by the Colleges, the teaching staff has been strengthened and improved so that better educational facilities may now be provided. In the Faculty of Science where the University itself is responsible for teaching the Laboratories are now adequately equipped and practical work in them has been greatly facilitated by the recent installation of a gas plant. The staff has been strengthened by the appointment of an additional teacher in the Department of Chemistry. In the Faculty of Law which is, like the Faculty of Science, under the direct control of the University efficiency and the standard of instruction have been raised by extending the duration of the course from two to three years. Our Law students will now receive not only a more intensive instruction in different branches of the subject but also a more effective training in its practical application.

The progress in women's education has been remarkable in recent years. When the University was founded in 1923 there was hardly a woman student in any of the Colleges. Two years later, when the Indraprastha Girls' College was recognised by the University, there were less than half a dozen students on the rolls of that College. There are, today, about 150 women students in the University, of whom about 100 are receiving instruction in Indraprastha Girls' College, and the rest in men's colleges. The rapidly increasing demand for higher education among women students has encouraged Indraprastha College to extend its educational activities and to seek recognition as a degree college of the University. It has improved its staff by the appointment of highly qualified teachers, collected funds for the purchase of a suitable building for its permanent home and has, in other ways, endeavoured for the betterment of its academic and financial position. I do hope that the college will achieve complete success and soon take its proper place among the degree colleges of the University, fully participating in its academic life.

The research work done by our teachers and their original contribution to knowledge have by no means been inconspicuous. As many as fifteen original papers have been contributed during the year by the teachers in the Department of Mathematics to Indian and foreign Mathematical Journals; there are six to the credit of the Departments of History and Economics, and five to the Departments of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The works of three Readers of the University deserve special mention: *The Supernatural in English Romantic Poetry* by Dr. S. Dutt, *Indebtedness and other economic problems of the Christian Shoe-makers in the city of Delhi* by Mr. K. C. Nag and the valuable research work done by Dr. D. S. Kothari which has won for him a gold medal from the University of Allahabad.

I have tried to follow with some interest the present trend of thought in other Indian Universities on educational reform. There is no doubt a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs, but there is hardly any unanimity as to the remedy suggested. Indeed, in a country like India with such diverse interests, ideas, and conditions of life, it is not reasonable to expect a complete

consensus of opinion. Conflict of opinion, as you all know, is often due to the difference of emphasis laid on the parts of a complete discourse, and not to any contradiction inherent therein. We seldom see both sides of a picture at the same time. Much of the misunderstanding is responsible for the unhappy opposition to proposals and situations. I will take, as an illustration, one aspect of the proposed educational reform. While, on the one hand, an opinion is gradually gaining ground in this country that University education should be open only to the fit and the deserving—to those who are well-equipped and are likely to benefit by it, we have, on the other, an insistent demand for a more liberal provision of facilities for higher education. We have, placed before us, a formidable array of statistics bringing out the ratio between the population of each European and American country and the number of undergraduates its Universities cater for. So far as these statistical figures go, I am convinced that considering the vast population of this country, the number of young men and young women receiving instruction in the Indian Universities is not 'alarmingly' large. I am also convinced by the argument that the general awakening of the masses due to the present democratic reaction on society has increased the demand for higher education; and, above all, I am convinced that for the appalling ignorance in the country and the hopeless darkness that enshrouds the minds of millions of our people, there cannot be too much light. But I am not convinced that the true purpose of University education will be served by increasing its quantity at the expense of its quality. Nor am I convinced that social life will be necessarily enriched by a rapid expansion of the present system of University education in this country. A comparison of the number of undergraduates in relation to the population of different countries may be an instructive study: but the application of abstract principles to the actual facts of life may often be misleading. The social conditions in Western countries are not the same as prevail in India. I am not confining myself to economic factors, important as they are, but should like you to consider other conditions as well which have an intimate relation to the present problem. The average intellectual levels of the countries under comparison—the degrees of the general diffusion of primary and secondary education in their population, should not be lost sight of, if correct conclusions are to be drawn. Expansion of University education without a corresponding broadening and strengthening of the school foundations is likely to produce the same disastrous result as may be expected from a top-heavy structure built on foundations which, not being truly laid, are not solid and firm enough to support its weight.

I do not know a patriotic Indian who does not desire to see an increasing number of highly educated young men and young women in this country, with a broad outlook on life and alive to the responsibilities of the position they may occupy, who may be relied on in a crisis, and whose well-trained and vigorous minds would fit them to be leaders of men. But let us now answer dispassionately a simple question: Are our Universities turning out such men and women? The answer is disheartening. I do not want to be harsh to our graduates. They have struggled against adverse circumstances over which they have to control, and have not yielded to them, they have their merits, and many of them have excellent qualities to their credit. What I have said and the doubts I have expressed have come out of a heart not unsympathetic, but sad with disappointment. Has the University been fair to her graduates particularly to those of her alumni who, having failed, have never come to the surface? What have they received from their Alma Mater after years of wasted youth and hard economic struggle?

It is interesting and perhaps profitable to see ourselves as others see us, and it is for this reason that I should like to refer to the opinion of a public man of great pre-eminence, who, although a man of high education and wide and varied experience of men and affairs, is not a professional educationist. The Hon'ble Sir Phiroz C. Sethna, on whose probity of judgment and shrewd common sense we can all rely, described the anomalous position of the graduates of Indian Universities, while addressing the Convocation of Annamalai University a few months ago. The Convocations, he said, herald the passing out of the portals of the respective Universities every year of a large number of young men and women. The questions that naturally suggest themselves are: whither do they go and what do they do? Do these thousands enrich the life-blood of the nation or impoverish it? Do they elevate the society they enter into or depress it? The answers to these thought-provoking questions are not difficult to find. For, as we are all painfully

aware, into the arena, where society struggles with life's varied problems, these people grope for an entrance, but many of them, while groping, lose their bearings. Circumstanced as we are to-day, we are unable to relieve their sufferings by any external aid. The result is that most of them eat their hearts out and suffer as the orphans of the storms. In the vortex of life, our society, already overburdened with the grinding poverty of the masses and with the dead-weight of innumerable limitations, social and political, tows them as best it can, tossing them on the sea of a planless existence. None would venture to assert that this country is not indeed to-day of educated men and women. Rather the contrary. Our social, political and economic problems of the day cry aloud for thoughtful leadership and well-directed efforts such as can be expected only from trained men and women. Why then this mal-adjustment? A phenomenon that is distracting those of us who are in public life is the presence in our midst of a large body of trained youths, following a planless existence, whilst the vast mass of our countrymen are in dire need of enlightened aid of such educated men and women.

I have quoted Sir Phiroze Sethna at some length, as on such an important issue as the present educated unemployment, he very ably presents to us the employers' point of view. He complains not so much of the "mass production of graduates" (a phrase which has found favour with some of our most vehement as well as wisest critics), as of the poor quality of their mental equipment. What he calls a "maladjustment" has been caused not by over-production, but by the non-production of the required type. It is true that there is not enough employment for educated young men; but it is equally true that there are not enough men of the right character and training for employment in positions of trust and responsibility.

The proposed educational reconstruction which I tried to envisage in my address last year is a great experiment calculated to remove, to some extent at least, the anomaly of the present situation. It has, among its chief merits, the thought and attention bestowed on primary and secondary education. If it materializes, as I hope and believe it will, thousands of our boys and girls will be diverted, at an earlier age, from a futile pursuit of a will-o-the-wisp—a University education for which they are not fit—to more useful channels of vocational training which will enable them to find profitable occupation in the humbler, but not less respectable spheres of life. The Universities will be called upon to admit to the advantages of higher education a similar but a more deserving number of young men and women ready and qualified to receive and profit by what such education has to offer them. Personal contact being thus possible between the teachers and the taught, the universities will succeed, it is hoped, in training the mind and shaping the character of their alumni to such standards of worth and efficiency as are not to be expected in the present circumstances. Indeed the personal element is the most valuable in the education of young men and women and its rarity in Indian Universities to-day has opened them to the criticism suggested by the now popular phrase: 'mass production of graduates'.

I have heard people speak with fervour of the ancient and medieval Universities of India. They regret that the peace and happiness of these seats of learning and the intimate personal relations they fostered are not to be found in their modern counterparts. The Universities of to-day are, except in a few cases, too unwieldy for any intimacy of personal contact, and instruction in them has lost that human quality which distinguished teaching in ancient Universities by the subtle personal influence of the teacher on the character of the pupil. We deplore every day this mechanization of instruction in modern Universities which are now regarded by some as educational factories. It is due partly to industrial and commercial ideas which have recently permitted society and partly to the unfortunate aloofness, in most cases, of teachers to whom education is only a profession. What else can be expected of them when they are required to deal with a regular succession of an overwhelming number of under-graduates every year?

The conditions of life that prevailed in ancient and medieval India have changed; and we have to-day on our society an impact of industrial civilisation which tends gradually to reduce all human values to commercial utility. We miss the innocence and unsophisticated simplicity of childhood which characterised the simpler form of society in ancient India and also the joy of life which came not from material possessions, but from a healthy and vigorous mind, with an infinite capacity for enjoying and imbibing the beauties of Nature and the graces of life. But, alas! it is not possible for us to retrace our steps to the pristine civilization, as it is impossible for us to go back to our childhood which we have outgrown.

The Universities are great social institutions and they reflect in a manner the

peculiar social atmosphere by which they are surrounded. We find thus in our modern Universities both the strength and the weakness of an industrial civilization. They have devoted more time and attention to the cultivation of sciences with that practical interest which is concerned more with the production of useful result than with mere theoretical knowledge, they have helped to harness the forces of nature for the service of man; they have encouraged the study of the unexplored depth of the human mind, its desires and aspirations, and the history of human institution for a better understanding of the human relations and the human destiny on which true citizenship is based, they have broken down the aristocracy of knowledge and the barriers of class privileges, so that the good things of the world may be equally available to all. But the modern insistence on the production of visible results and the emphasis on the utilitarian conception of the human good have their dangers as well as their advantages. The advantages we all admit, but the advocates of scientific and technical education in their enthusiasm for practical work, are apt to ignore the dangers of a life essentially utilitarian in its outlook. It would be a poor service to society if the University withdrew entirely their thought and activities from the purely cultural aspect of life—those spiritual qualities which, although they may not impress us with their visible magnitude, are yet not less real than the achievements of science. I hope industrialism will not bring with it philistinism into our Universities and that in order to keep our body alive we shall not kill our soul.

I should now turn to the graduates of the year, the young men and women who a few minutes ago, were admitted to the degrees of this University, and say a few words to them before we part. I congratulate you on the success you have achieved and hope that this will lead to greater successes in life. The wisdom and experience of great minds that have been handed down to you through the books you have read have, I expect, unfolded to you, to some extent at least, the mysteries of life. You are not, therefore, unprepared altogether for the wider world which you are soon going to enter. The world is often pictured as an arena where ceaseless struggle keeps the combatants engaged. Let not the battle of life frighten you, for fear saps the strength of youth. Go forward with courage and hope and face with a stout heart the grim facts of life that may offer you resistance. It is easy to follow the line of least resistance—to drift with the current, waiting for opportunities which may take a long time to come. But youth takes the line of the greatest resistance—not to be over-come by it but to over-come it. I should like you to remember the wise words of Solomon: "the glory of a young man is his strength". Realize your inner strength—the strength of your conviction that fortune favours the brave and of your faith that "the labourer is worth his hire". Let the strength of youth make you patient and hopeful, resolute in mind and fervent in spirit, forbearing and tolerant of the weakness of others. The strength of which I am speaking will raise you from the pettiness of daily trifles to the height of noble aspiration and lead you from the futility of doubts and fears to the dignity of labour and the joy of achievement. I can give you no better advice than to be true to your youthful spirit which finds expression in a will "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

## The Calcutta University Convocation

### The Chancellor's Address

The following is the text of the address delivered by His Excellency *Sir John Anderson* at the annual Convocation of the University of Calcutta on the 17th February 1937:—

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is not my intention to speak at length or to stand between you and the distinguished visitor who this year is delivering the Convocation address.

There are however a few words I should like to say on this last occasion when I shall address you in Convocation as Chancellor of the University. First let me express my congratulations to those who now have received degrees and awards, and my best wishes to the University as a whole for its continued progress and prosperity.

During the years that I have held this high office—for the Chancellorship of a University is a high office—it has not been open to me to develop that degree of intimate and personal relationship with its academic activities, and with those who direct such activities in detail, that more leisureed time might have made possible. I have however through the medium of the Vice-Chancellor endeavoured to keep in touch with developments of importance in the policy of the University, both academic and fiscal, and I have followed with special interest those measures which seemed to me calculated to have the greatest effect on the lives and character of its alumni. Though the office of Chancellor goes automatically to the Governor of Bengal I may fairly say that I have never regarded the Chancellorship as a mere appendage to the Governorship of Bengal—but on the other hand, enjoying as Chancellor the advantage of exceptionally easy access to the Governor, I have always been in a position to lay before the latter as the head of the administration what I have conceived to be the legitimate views of the University.

Looking forward across the very brief span that now separates us from responsible government in Bengal when the Governor himself will normally be relieved of any responsibility for the policy of the State as regards the University, I cannot but think he may still have opportunities for service in the discharge of the office of Chancellor.

I have no desire now to dilate upon this theme or indeed to encroach at all upon matters that may fall within the sphere of party politics—but aware as I constantly am of the profound—I may justly say revolutionary—changes that are upon us in the principles of government in this province I cannot help asking myself in what direction this University can make the greatest contribution to the national life of Bengal; I am tempted to answer as follows—by striving to raise the general level of quality among those who come under its influence and by including a true conception of constructive leadership. I have used the word quality deliberately because in these days quality is not a characteristic always associated with mass production. To combine the two demands the continuous application of high standards—both in the selection of raw material and in the rejection or remodelling at every stage of components that fail to come up to specification.

I make bold to state as a historical truth that the advancement of a people by their own efforts depends in the main upon two things—first the average standard of quality attained by the people themselves and secondly their inherent capacity to throw up from time to time as circumstances may require leaders of the requisite calibre.

For more than a century and a half it has been a constant feature in the life of this Province that its development has been conditioned by reaction to outside influences. Extraneous influences have sometimes inspired, sometimes restrained, sometimes provoked; and in turn leaders among the people of Bengal have appeared sometimes as enthusiastic propagators, interpreters or adaptors of Western ideas, sometimes as ardent reformers chafing at the slow progress of change, and at other times as rebels against the whole conception of external authority in any form: but always or nearly always reaction to or against external influence has been the stimulus and the focus of interest. In all that concerns most closely the daily lives of the people of Bengal that stimulus is going to be withdrawn—that focus of interest is going to disappear. No doubt there will be a tendency to keep the stimulus alive, to search and scrutinize the activities of future governments for some trace of the hidden hand of external authority; but such tendencies will not bring any nearer to solution the problems of health, education and economic well-being for which a remedy will be demanded by the people from governments responsible to themselves. The things that matter are no longer to be had from a third party as a boon to be sought or a concession to be wrested: they are to be devised and constructed by those among the people who aspire to leadership. The days of leadership against something are passing and the call will be for leadership to something. I venture to say that if the Universities cannot produce men to answer that call they will fail to fulfil their function in the national life.

It is the function of a leader as I understand it to try and bring out the best among his people and not to hesitate to correct their weaknesses—for every nation and every community has its weaknesses if instead leaders of the people try to follow the easier course—to appeal to weaknesses or to encourage tendencies that they know to be adverse to sound development then the result will be no progress but decline and disaster.

I have put these thoughts forward because it has been long in my mind to do so and I can think of no better place to speak them out frankly than in the precincts of this University.

To elaborate them would render me suspect of attempting to deliver a convocation address of my own, and I assure you that having myself suggested the delivery of that address by a distinguished visitor I have no intention of usurping his place.

Let me now stand aside and leave you to hear one who in the world of letters long ago discarded the easy path and in face of criticism and opposition sought out and developed the latent strength and beauty of the Bengali language. I have been told on good authority that some thirty years ago whom the suggestion, ultimately given effect to at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee in 1913, was first mooted, that the degree of Doctor of Literature should be conferred on Rabindranath objections were raised on the ground that he was not a Bengali scholar. But his creative leadership in the world of letters has won its own recognition and to-day we are to listen for the first time to a Convocation address in Bengali by one who has earned the right to rank as a leader among the creators of the modern language of Bengal.

#### Dr. Rabindranath's Convocation Address

In his convocation address in Bengali Dr. *Rabindra Nath Tagore* said :—

When I was invited to address the students at this Convocation of Calcutta University, the infirmity of my worn-out body stood in the way, but the special significance of to-day's function, ever-riding all difficulties, has irresistibly drawn me to accept the proud privilege offered to me. For this is the first time that the Premier University of Bengal has given the seat of honour to the Bengali language in the ceremony of its bestowal of academic distinctions, hitherto marred by the ill-omen of the vacancy left by its empty place.

One of the most poignant signs of the days of a people's adversity is, that even truisms require to be aggressively proclaimed. Wherefore it has been necessary through long years to labour the point that learning loses its vitamins if strained through a foreign language.

In no country in the world, except India, is to be seen this divorce of the language of instruction from the language of the pupil. A hundred years have not elapsed since Japan took its initiation into Western culture. At the outset she had to take recourse to text books written in foreign languages, but from the very first, her objective had been to arrive at the stage of ranging freely over the subjects of study in the language of the country. It was because Japan had recognised the need of such studies, not as an ornament for a select section of her citizens, but for giving power and culture to all of them, that she deemed it to be of prime importance to make them universally available to her people. And in this effort of Japan to gain proficiency in the Western arts and sciences, which were to give her the means of self-defence against the predatory cupidity of foreign powers, to qualify her to take an honoured place in the comity of nations, no trouble or expense was spared, least of all was there the miserly folly of keeping such learning out of easy reach, within the confines of a foreign language.

We had allowed ourselves too complaisantly to become reconciled to be thus slighted by the dispensers of our fate, to acquiesce in this bolting of the masses of our people, consoled by the scanty helps of learning parsimoniously served to the few occupying the front seats, called "educating the people of India". We had lost the courage even to imagine a broader system of education venturing beyond the bounds of such triviality, just as the Bedouin cannot dream that Providence will ever allow him to share in the expansive fruitfulness outside the few scattered oasis of his desert home-land.

The difference between the uneducated and the educated sections of our countrymen is exactly like that between the Sahara and the tiny oases that dot its vast expanse,—both in quantity and quality. For this reason, though we are under one political domination, we are not governed by the same mentality. Of



late, in Japan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey everywhere amongst Eastern peoples, measures have been taken to get rid of this internal source of division leading to faculty of national aspiration.—everywhere, save in this unfortunate land.

We know of parasitic creatures in the animal world, which live and die in utter dependence on their hosts. They are able to eke out a bare living, but are forever crippled in the development of their limbs and organs. Such has been the case with our modern University education. It has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that, though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has obtained at the cost of all-round development.—so much so, that it has even ceased to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Accustomed to live by borrowing, it has come to measure attainment by largeness of debt; it has signed a bond of servitude to the thinkers of other lands. Those who receive such education cannot produce what they consume. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, their academic success depends on their ability to repeat by rote, and their own faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled. It goes without saying that the only way of revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject-matter of education through one's own language, just as, in order to incorporate food-stuffs into the body, they have to be chewed with one's own teeth and saturated with one's own digestive juices.

Of course, it will not do to forget that the English language cannot lose a place of honour in Indian Universities, not merely because of its practical usefulness as a means of livelihood but because it is the vehicle of the Western science which to-day has earned the respect of all the world. To repudiate it out of a sense of false patriotism would only be to curtail our own opportunities. This science is not only important in the field of world economics and politics as a means of self-preservation, but its influence is of immense value for freeing the mind from the inertia of stolidity. The mind which refuses to admit its message, which is unable to accept its implications, needs must be content with a narrow, dark and feeble life. From whatever horizon the light of knowledge may radiate, it is only a cloaked, barbaric mind that rejects it because of its unfamiliarity. All races and peoples are equally entitled to avail themselves of Truth in any of its manifestations, for this is a right inherent in humanity itself.

Men are inevitably separate in regard to their share of political or economic wealth, but in the case of bestowal of the largesse of mind, all men who come to receive, have everywhere and always been accounted equal,—the giver being rewarded by the generosity of his giving, the receiver glorying in his own competence to take. In all countries, the doors of the storehouse of material wealth are strongly guarded, while the University gates are ever wide open. The Goddess of Riches is careful, because her accumulations are limited by quantity, they are lost when spent; and the Goddess of Learning is lavish, because her wealth does not depend on accumulation, but grows as it over-flows.

I venture to think that it is a matter of special pride for Bengal that she did delay in claiming her share of European culture, by contact with which she has hastened the growth and enrichment of her own language and literature, and which by its very influence enabled her to overcome the initial weakness of a teledency to imitation. In the first stages, those who were reputed to be learned, exclusively used the English language in speech and writing, for through it their new wealth of thought and feeling had been chiefly gained: nevertheless those of them who were literary men soon came to perceive that while they could work by the candle-light of a foreign language, they could not awaken to true self-expression except in the morning light of their own language. We have two outstanding examples of this, in Michael Dutt and Bankim Chatterjee.

Michael's acquaintance with English language and literature was as wide as his love for them was deep, and he had moreover wandered into the realm of Greek and Latin classics and had tasted of the nectar. So his genius naturally first sought to express itself in English, that it did not take him long to realise that the heavy loss of interest entailed by reliance on borrowed material, left but little of residual value, whereupon he made his first salutation to his mother tongue with a poem, in the language of which there was nothing of the faltering hesitations of a neophyte. True, its outward form followed a foreign model, but its conceits and imageries were of the indigenous Krittibas pattern, with which hospitality was shown to the genius of Milton and Homer. There is no ingloriousness in offering such hospitality, rather, that both betoken wealth and helps to augment it.

What Michael did for Bengali poetry, Bankimchandra did for Bengali prose,—he cleared the way for its advance. Bankim was one of the foremost of the first batch of students of Calcutta University, and it need hardly be added that his mind had thrived and grown on English learning. His first literary enterprise was a story in English under the influence of English fiction, only to make him discover, soon enough, the futility of such attempts. The very culture he had imbibed, because it had been assimilated, drew him to seek its fulfilment in his own language. As, when the water-fall from the distant mountain top pursues its way through the populous valley, it makes fruitful the fields alongside by causing the seeds within them to grow, so Bankim utilised the foreign stream of thought to fertilise the mental soil of his country through his own mother tongue.

Before the time of Bankimchandra, the educated section of our countrymen had come to the conclusion that their own enjoyment of beauty and quest of truth could only be carried on in the fields of European literature while the Bengali language, with its comparative poverty, was fit only to act as nurse to those of little learning. But, Bankim's endeavour in his Bangadarshan was to make available the power of full-fledged English lore, by giving it Bengali form. It was in the genius of these heralds of the new age, the fruits of European culture, with all the possibilities of their future ripening, were first manifest, not as exotics demanding a price but as a crop raised in the country, adding to its wealth. What if the seeds came from foreign parts, did they not fall and sprout on our own soil? That which can grow and flourish in the country no longer remains foreign, in many a flower and fruit of our land are there evidences of this truth.

The significance of the new knowledge learnt through the English language has found its way into every Bengali home, having taken on a Bengali body in our own literature. We now hopefully await its arrival, on the same intimate terms, within the portals of this University. And I am here to-day to bring a message of joy and pride from our countrymen, to give voice to their hope that this University of Bengal will find its true glory in gaining intimacy with the people of its province through their natural language.

But for this, I had not the wherewithal to pay the price of my entry here. The short period of my early schooling was spent on the lowest floor of our educational tower. Later in my first youth, I ventured shrinkingly, at the behest of my elders, to enter for a day the First-Year class of the Presidency College, as a casual student. That day was never followed by a second. There must have been something excessively incongruous in my looks and demeanour with that of the regular students, for I was greeted with a gust of suppressed laughter which made me acutely feel the misfit. The next day I failed to muster up the courage to face a repetition of this ordeal, nor did I dare to imagine that I would ever again be called upon to cross the threshold of the University, to take a seat beside its qualified inmates. By virtue, however, of the merit acquired by the service of my mother-tongue, such undreamt of privilege has at length fallen to my lot.

We cannot but admit that the present age is dominated by the civilisation of Europe. This age has presented a background of strenuous endeavour to all the world, on which thoughts and deeds of men are appearing in ever-new variety of form and are spreading as a unifying influence over the whole of the civilised world. It would not have been possible for the science and literature, history, economics and politics, the technique of research and of the testing of truth, born on the soil of Europe, thus to permeate the world, had they not stood the test of experimental application, had the mind of Europe not won universal recognition by reason of the honesty and earnestness of its striving, impelling all the newly awakened countries to adopt the same studies, the same methods, the same attitude of mind.

Now almost every where schools and colleges and universities are looked upon as means of irrigating the mas mind and sowing it with the seeds of the new knowledge. I have seen for myself a country that has displayed an amazing power of removing the stupendous obstacle of illiteracy, massed up during ages of neglect, within a short space of time, with the result that its down-trodden proletariat, reduced to the verge of the extinction of their humanity within the dumb darkness of lack of self expression, now stand forth in the forefront of go-ahead nations by the exercise of their liberated powers.

But all this while, our universities,—poorly equipped, scantily respected, lacking encouragement,—have been plying monotonously like little ferry boats carrying their handful of students over the meagre subjects set for their examinations. These

universities of ours have touched no more than the outermost fringe of the great mass mind, and even that contact is of the lightest, bereft as it is of all vitality in passing through its foreign covering. Wherefore, far behind the other Eastern nations in which the call to awake has been heard, lags India in regard to self-respect awakened in the light of self-knowledge.

On behalf of writers in Bengali, and for myself, I would claim that we have been engaged in the work of implanting modern culture in the heart of my country. This spontaneous activity of ours has long been ignored by our University, which never invited its co-operation for it used to look down on our work as something different in kind from its own.

The gulf between the two was first bridged by Sir Asutosh when he made bold to bestow a doctorate on this humble writer in Bengali. Great was the daring required to do this, for the exclusiveness of the artificial aristocracy of English learning had become a deep-rooted tradition. But valiant Sir Asutosh felt no qualms in delivering such blow against this aristocratic pride entrenched in a foreign language. He first sent this friendly greeting to his mother-tongue from the top of the University tower and then followed it up, with cautious skill by carving a channel below, through which the Bengali language could flow into its precincts. That channel has now been widened by his worthy son and successor, for which our present Vice-Chancellor deserves the blessings of his mother land.

For me, a writer in the vernacular, unpurified by the university rites of initiation, Sir Asutosh first broke one of its unwritten laws; and one more knot of their bonds has now been cut by his son in inviting me, that same academic outcaste, to address you in our own language. This shows that a veritable change of climate has come over our educational world in Bengal and the dry branch that had withered at the wintry touch of Western influence is now festively putting forth fresh foliage.

Elsewhere in India, another university has recently been seen to make the attempt to use as its medium of instruction the language, if not of the people as a whole, at least of considerable section of them, and its authorities have already achieved a marvellous success. This unexpected fulfilment of such hitherto unheard of idea, is doubtless for them a thing to glory in. But the present ambition of Calcutta University has for its large objective the whole of its countrymen. Though some of the limbs of our Bengali-speaking province have been cut asunder by the hatchet of its rulers, this gesture of our University still amounts to proclaiming its recognition of the language of 50 millions as its own. By thus honouring its own country this University stands honoured. And to the memory of the great Sir Asutosh who heralded the advent of this auspicious day, I offer on behalf of us all our respectful salutation.

I am aware that latterly a bitter protest has gone forth from the Eastern world against the claim to greatness of European civilisation and culture. It is doubtless advancing at a great rate in the accumulation of material wealth, but the greatness of man is not in his outward possessions. The greed, rapacity and political trickery that emanate from the Western powers ruthlessly to trample under foot the rights of weaker countries, have never before in the history of man, been seen in such fearsome shape. Man has never been able in the past to give his unbridled passions such monstrous proportions, such skillful, undefeatable efficiency. That has become possible for the West to-day because of its command of science.

When in the beginning or middle of the Nineteenth Century we made our first acquaintance with European civilisation, our joy and admiration freely went out to it in the belief that it had come into the world animated with a genuine respect for man as man; we felt certain that truth, devotion, justice and goodwill towards men were its essential characteristics; we thought that it had taken on itself the duty of freeing mankind from every kind of external and internal bondage. But, as the years went by, within the short span of our own lifetime, we have seen this love of humanity, this sense of justice, growing feebler and feebler, till at last there is left no civilised Court of Appeal where the plaint of the persecuted against the powerful oppressor has any chance of being heard on the ground of righteousness.

The one famous sponsors of this civilisation are now devoting all their intellect and wealth to produce in human engines of destruction to rend and maim one another. Such mutual mistrust, such mortal terror, between man and man, no other age has ever witnessed. The firmament above man's work-a-day world, from which comes his light, through which is heard his call to liberation, is now murky with the dust raised by continual conflict, thick with the germs of mortal death.

The grand old civilisations of old, of which we have still preserved the memory, chiefly strove with all their powers to keep this higher region clear and undefiled, its pure light unobstructed. Such endeavour is now-a-days scoffed at by the modern unbelievers in eternal Truth and right. Such objective is deemed utterly unworthy of the uppermost exploiting nations who plume themselves on being predestined by nature cruelly to overwhelm the earth with their domination. The whole Western continent trembles under the mad wardance of their civilisation, now intoxicated with insatiable greed. With what faces, then, am I to expatiate on the merits of the culture in which the expedient is thus divorced from the good, of the civilisation which is thus staggering, bemused towards its own destruction ?

But in the history and literature of this same civilisation, have we not, one day, seen its true love for Man ? What if it is now mocking its own higher self ?—I cannot dismiss the signs of its greatness of heart that we have seen, as an illusory mirage ; I will not say that the brilliance of its rise was false, and that it is the darkness of its debasement which is true. Civilisation has, on many an occasion, taken false steps, proved untrue to itself, repudiated its own supreme gift to humanity. We have beheld the same unfortunate lapses in our own country, as well as outside it. In every chapter of history the glory of humanity has had its fall. But whenever some invaluable truth has found expression in any shape or form, it has won the allegiance of mankind, even when standing on the rubbish heaps of its decayed outward magnificence.

Europe has provided the world with the gifts of a great culture—had it not the power to do so, it would never have attained its supremacy. It has given the example of dauntless courage, ungrudging self-sacrifice, it has shown tireless energy in the acquisition and spread of knowledge, in the making of institutions for human welfare. Even in these days of its self-abasement, there are still before us its true representatives who are ready to suffer punishment in their fearless protest against its iniquities in their chivalrous championship of its victims. They may be defeated again and again, for the time, yet in them is to be seen the true ideal of their civilization. The inspiration that holds them steadfast to their best instincts, through all the outrage and degeneracy around them,—that inspiration is the truth dwelling in the heart of Western civilisation. It is from that we have to learn, not from the disastrous self-degradation of the modern Western nations.

To you, young students, who are assembled here to-day prepared to go forth through the gate of this University to conquer the world before you, I offer my cordial congratulations. It is you who will bear the seed of a great promise towards its fulfilment.

The sea of humanity around you is tumultuous with high waves of contending passions. It is as if the Gods and Titans are once again churning it to raise humanity from the depths of the departing age to the shore of the next. This time, also, the churning rope is a serpent, the serpent of greed, which is vomiting forth its poison. But as yet, we see no sign of all-beneficent, death-conquering Shiva coming to rescue humanity by absorbing this poison.

We in India are on the shore of this terribly turbulent sea of Time. It has not been given to us directly to take our share in piloting the world through its buffeting. But the drag of the maelstrom is upon us from without, and within, also, the advancing waves of chaos are beating right and left. Well-nigh insoluble problems rise to confront our country, one after another. Communal separatism and dissension are taking menacing shape, polluting the very source of our well-being. The solution of these problems may not be easy, but if not found, we shall descend lower and lower into the abyss.

There was a time when culture, fellow-feeling and prosperity reigned in our villages. Go to them now and you will see the fang marks of the reptile of dissolution that bestrides them. Pestilential maladies born of poverty, of physical and mental starvation, are eating away their vitality. It is for us ourselves to think out where the remedy lies—but not by means of ignorant imaginings, nor by dint of tearful outburst. Defeated you may be but you must vow that defeat shall not come by your deserting the helm in fright, or because you foolishly deem it glorious to commit suicide by jumping into the raging waves.

We are too readily inclined to be sentimental. We cannot arrive at the determination to pursue our endeavour with steady dispassion. Take up your country's burden manfully, in the light of your own intelligence freed from the vagueness of

unrealities, facing and knowing the folly, the ugliness, the imperfections that beset you for what they really are, exaggerating them according to your particular bias. Where in fact our fate is every day insulting us, depriving us, hampering us at every turn—there to delude ourselves with home-made claims to superiority, is one of the worst symptoms of our feebleness of character.

If you would truly set to work you must begin by realising that the seeds of our downfall are within us, deeply imbedded in our character, our society, our habits, our unreasoning prejudices. Whenever I see our people seeking to throw the responsibility for our evil lot on some outside circumstance, to lay the blame for our ill-success solely on the enmity of some alien party, to remain content with shouting their plaints into the unresponsive void, my heart cries out, as did old King Dhritarashtra : "Then do I despair of victory !"

The day has come for us to sally forth against our internal enemies, to deliver a massed attack on the age old follies that are the real roots of our misfortune. We must raise our own powers out of the slough of *tawasic* inertness into which they have fallen, and we hope to make honourable peace with the power of our opponents ; otherwise any truce that we may patch up will be one in which we are bound hand and foot in the chains of beggary and indebtedness. We can only rouse the best in others by means of the best in ourselves and in this best will lie the welfare of both. Full of holes are the vessels into which are cast the reluctant dolos granted to the prayers of the weak ; of quicksand is the foundation on which rest the favours so obtained.

Let honour come to me from Thee.  
Through a call to some desperate task  
In the price of poignant sufferings,  
Lull me not into languid dreams,  
Shake me out of this cringing in the dust,  
Out of the fetters that shackles our mind,  
Make futile our destiny,  
Out of the unreason that bends our dignity down  
Under the indiscriminate feet of dictators,  
Shatter this age-long shame of ours  
And raise our head  
In to the boundless  
In to the generous light,  
In to the air of freedom.

## The Osmania University Convocation

The Osmania University Convocation was held at Hyderabad ( Deccan ) on the 11th. February 1937. Sir *Shak Salisman*, in the course of his Convocation address, observed :

"Urdu language shall ever remain deeply indebted to the munificence and generosity of His Exalted Highness who has conferred permanent benefit on it by founding this great institution." From the national point of view, he said, it would be an ideal thing if there could be one single language and one script for the whole of India ; but such an ideal was not capable of attainment within a few centuries. There was unfortunately considerable controversy in India on account of different scripts in use. That bewildering variety was the greatest impediment in the way of the unification of Indian languages. But it was not beyond the range of possibility that at some distant future there might be unanimity in adopting Roman characters as common script for all Indian vernaculars. Were it possible to bring about such a compromise, all difficulties in the way of a single script for the whole of India would be completely removed, even a common language could develop in a few generations by ordinary evolutionary process. He added : "Indeed, when the whole world comes to realise better the needs of mankind for a common language and greater convenience of a common script, there may perhaps be some international agreement under the auspices of

the League of Nations for adopting a new system of phonetic characters based exclusively on scientific analysis of sounds, accurate representation somewhat on lines of shorthand system."

Referring to the differences between various communities in India, Sir Shah said that divergence seemed to be accentuated because we live in a caste and community ridden country where, from very childhood, outlook is narrow and not broad. In reality, the struggle is more economic than political or religious and it lies with Indian Universities to ameliorate conditions and bridge the gulf as far as possible. University centres where youths of all communities are thrown together in a common atmosphere should inculcate the spirit of mutual tolerance and friendly co-operation and create common national feeling.

Dealing with the functions of a University, Sir Shah Sulaiman said: "A University must be a fountain head of knowledge, from which the thirst for truth can be quenched, and a source from which the light of learning must radiate. It has to be an institution both for the acquisition of knowledge and for its diffusion and distribution. And it ought to fulfil the two-fold purpose of being a training ground for the development of intellect and reason, and also a cultural institution for the perfection of more refined feelings. The worth of a University will be judged not by the number of departments it has opened, but by the contribution it makes to the advancement of human knowledge. The Universities are vying with one another in producing graduates, regardless of efficiency."

"The immediate need of the hour," he continued, "is neither any rapid multiplication of Universities, coupled with a sudden increase in the number of scholars attending such institutions, nor any drastic restriction on admissions. What is wanted is a re-orientation of the Academic policy. Every University has not the good fortune of the Osmania University in getting a plentiful supply of funds due to the generosity of its benevolent patron. It is, therefore, useless to expect that in the face of the growing need of the other public departments, State aid would be more and more generous. With the paucity of funds, the only effective method for national institutions to meet the crisis seems to be to grade down the salaries of the teaching staff and grade up the fees charged from scholars so as to make the two commensurable with one another, as in the case of British Universities, which have the experience of centuries behind them."

"One way of bringing about such a result would be to re-arrange the scale of University fees charged. Every student who passes an entrance examination in the first division should be admitted into the higher class free of University fees altogether, and also helped with scholarships. The existing fees may be retained for students passing in the second division; and to increase the University revenues, about double the amount of the fees may be fixed for those who come with a poor third. Such a graduated scale of fees, without closing the door to less qualified students, would put some restriction on them, and at the same time offer an additional encouragement to the better class of students. There will, on the one hand, be a saving of money for development of the departments and the improvement of the ill-equipped laboratories and libraries, and on the other hand, it will increase the revenue and put an indirect check on indiscriminate admissions. There ought to be no obstacle whatsoever in the way of the deserving, for prosecuting their studies up to the University standard. The system should be so modelled that only talented students who are likely to benefit most from University education, should continue their studies up to the higher classes, while those not gifted should leave off earlier to follow other pursuits."

"With the growth of primary and secondary education, it is but inevitable that the University education must in its turn expand as well. University education should be broad-based on a new system of secondary education which, in addition to giving students a literary and cultural education, should also qualify them for particular callings and professions, so that instead of unnecessarily prosecuting their studies further, they may early direct their energies to commercial and industrial pursuits, with a better chance of earning a decent livelihood. There need not be any demarcation between ordinary secondary schools, on the one hand, and technical schools, on the other, as both cultural and technical education can, with a proper organisation of the secondary education system be more usefully combined together."

Concluding, Sir Shah said: "My sincere and earnest appeal to you is that you should endeavour to acquire a right judgment to view the various problems facing your country with wisdom and foresight. If you take any rash and hasty steps, it

may spell disaster to your career, and perhaps to an extent not quite apprehended by you.

"No doubt, as you pass out from this University, some of you may have to face a world of keen competition and a period of long waiting before success is achieved; but do not despair of the future. Be firm and resolute, full of hope and inspired with ambition, and above all, have confidence in yourselves, and faith in your capacity. Do not forget that there are millions of people in this country in all grades of society, ranging from the high to the low and every one cannot expect equal prosperity."

## The Benares Hindu University Convocation

In his address to the Convocation of the Benares Hindu University, held at Benares on the 2nd March 1937. Sir M. Visvesvaraya laid emphasis on the development of industries. 'Industrialize or perish', he declared, 'should be our slogan in future as in the progressive west'. Sir M. Visvesvaraya said :-

In the decade ending 1931, the population of India increased by more than 10 per cent. It is expected to swell up to 400 million by 1941. The food production of the country is not keeping pace. The present average monthly income of the Indian people is estimated at about Rs. 6 per head of the population. The income of the poorer classes falls far below this figure. The trade depression since 1929 has reduced agricultural income and hardened the lot of the rural population. The standard of living is so low that, to quote an English author, the table of minimum food requirements laid down by the Minister of Health for the British unemployed would mean unheard-of luxury for the population of India'. The masses in rural areas earn on an average Rs. 2 to 3 per head per month, that is, less than 4 shillings in English money. Rural indebtedness is calculated at about Rs. 250 per family. Over 70 per cent. of this population live in huts or hovels built of mud and thatch. In the words of a prominent public leader in Bengal, the problem of a square meal every day and some kind of coarse cloth to cover nudity is the problem of problems which stares us in the face'.

Since trade depression set in in 1929 unemployment has deepened. The people in authority in this country have in a sense abolished unemployment and the horrors it would conjure up if the truth were known by refusing to keep count. Another gloomy feature in the situation is that nearly a 90 per cent. of the population still remain illiterate and therefore ill-equipped to think ahead and work for their own advancement. As a result of these disabilities added to malnutrition, the average life of the Indian is only about half the average age of the European. Dr. N. I. van der Merve, leader of the Free State Nationalists in South Africa, recently made a public statement in which he said : .....Our natives in South Africa are undoubtedly much better off than 90 per cent. of the population of India... The people live mainly in mud huts in which the most elementary health rules are unknown... India is still an unhappy country and over its vast population hangs the menacing cloud of poverty, misery and ignorance'. All these statements seem reliable. But making allowance for possible unconscious exaggeration, if even 75 per cent. of what is stated is true, it will be agreed that the situation is intolerable, and a radical, a drastic reform is immediately called for.

In view of mass poverty and unemployment, our first thought should be for the poor, and any ameliorative measures taken should be to raise their standard of living and arrest their further degradation. Life's necessities, that is, the goods and services needed to maintain a normal existence, fall under six heads, namely, food, clothing, housing, education, expenses on social functions, and recreation, amusements, etc., to occupy leisure. We have with us an ignorant, ill-nourished and underfed population. With an income of Rs. 2 to 3 per head per month, the living conditions of the majority of our peasant and wage-earning classes cannot but be regarded as precarious in the extreme. In the case of the poor, education is practically neglected. The future citizens of this realm are growing up in dense ignorance and their expenses on marriages, funerals, etc...are excessive and ruinous. I have discussed the

income question with intelligent farmers in villages in several parts of the country and with university professors, economists and leading business men in some of the cities and districts both in Central and Southern India. The result may be summarised like this.

Taking one hundred families in a district, it may be assumed that 2 per cent. of them are well-to-do, each family earning on an average Rs. 150 per month, 18 families belong to the middle class, both upper and lower, with an average income of Rs. 75, and 80 families are of the poorer classes who earn Rs. 20 in cities and towns, and Rs. 10 in villages, or an average of Rs. 11 per head of the entire poorer population. These figures give an average monthly income of Rs. 25 per family, or Rs. 60 per head per annum, for the whole country. For bare existence this income should be at least doubled, and this doubling will not come about without a plan and an organised big-scale effort. To secure this, fundamental, nay, revolutionary changes are necessary in the administrative and social policies of the country.

The immediate aim should be to double the income of the poor. This done, the income of the two upper classes will automatically increase by at least 50 per cent. The main remedies to this end lie in increasing production and service, as will be presently explained; in raising the literacy and skill of the people; and in launching a country-wide scheme of credit facilities to finance farming operations and rural business generally. Under modern conditions the standard of living of the people and the remedies for unemployment are becoming more and more the concern of the State in progressive countries. This should become a prominent feature in this country also.

The area under cultivation in British India is not more than one acre per head of the total population. The yearly income from produce at current prices cannot be very different from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 per acre. There is little scope for any substantial growth of income from this source. Industries and trade are the real want. These common truths should become widely known. The Universities should take a hand in propaganda work to open the eyes of the people to the need of this great change in their outlook. At the same time correct healthy ideals should be impressed upon the common people by means of mass education and by propaganda for citizenship training.

The real source of prosperity of any community is the quantity of goods produced and the value of services rendered by its people. The production will be from agriculture or industries, and the service, in trade, transport, communications and other occupations and professions. The prosperity of the country as a whole, and indirectly of the individual citizen, will depend upon the value of goods and services produced by the entire population.

For a century past, particularly in the Dominion of Canada, 'the number of workers required to produce food has been steadily declining from something like 75 per cent to about 17 per cent at the present time. In the economy of Sweden, we know that in recent years the number of persons who gain their livelihood from agriculture has markedly and steadily diminished, while a continuously increasing section of the population has come to be occupied in industry, trade and traffic. This is the general tendency in every country for the past 50 years as evidenced by the example of Soviet Russia, Germany and Japan. India is often spoken of as an agricultural country, but it is not made clear to the people that their safety lies in placing more reliance on industries and services than on agriculture. The encouragement of industries is an elementary policy in progressive countries but its operation is deplorably neglected here.

The basis of a sound programme for securing a higher standard of living is a steadily rising total production of goods and services. The standard of living in a city, town or village and the purchasing power of its population will be conditioned by its production and service. It is necessary that statistics of production and service should be maintained, as far as it is possible to obtain them, for every residential area, (village, town or city) and the production and consumption in each area estimated and checked from time to time to see whether the area is getting richer or poorer.

For increasing production in industrial countries, the prime factors employed are machinery, organization and capital. The situation in this country also calls for extensive developments under the same three heads. Measures to this end should be adopted both by the Government and by public men and business leaders. Organization should include co-operative enterprise of every kind and particularly joint-stock



companies and propaganda. Farms, factories and shops should be created and extended according to local needs, and farming operations industrialized as far as possible.

Of all the developments urgently needed in this country, the extension of industries and industrial life claims the foremost place. Every country that has grown rich and prosperous has done so with the help of its industries. For more comforts and conveniences, the only prospect is through industry. This conviction has been burnt into me since I visited Japan some forty years ago and in subsequent fairly extensive visits to industrial countries.

Heavy industries at the present time are of the greatest value for rapid economic development of this country. They form the backbone of a healthy national economy and the balance-wheel of all large business. There are some fifteen industries of this class which are important, for example, iron and steel, automobiles and aircraft, ship-building, power and electrical machinery, other industrial machinery and chemical industries. Public attention should be concentrated on these. Now that the provinces are soon to become autonomous, each large province might take up one or two of these heavy industries and make it its special responsibility to foster them. If provincial Governments took prompt action, all the principal heavy industries known in any part of the world and for which there are facilities and scope in this country, could be established in three to five years' time. Such a development might be promoted from public loans by the provincial Governments wherever it could not be financed otherwise. This will not throw any heavy burden on any single provincial Government, and it would be extremely popular with the new provincial legislatures. Heavy industries are indispensable for manufacturing machinery of defence. Within the past few days we have heard that in Soviet Russia they have created a separate Commissariat or Ministry for Defence, Industry. No nation in these days can neglect heavy industry except at its peril.

Medium-scale industries can be started by business leaders with Government co-operation and help. Minor and cottage industries of every class need special encouragement from Government and from every local authority in city, town or village. Large sums of capital would be needed which should be provided by the many ways in which credit facilities are organized and made available in Western countries. Till people are able to invest large sums from savings, Government credit should come to their rescue for this class of development. Several countries including America have built up their industries in this way by loans obtained from Great Britain. Tariff protection should be available to industries to the fullest extent desired by the representatives of the people in the Central and Provincial Legislatures. To sum up, 'Industrialise or perish' should be our slogan in future as in the progressive West.

In inviting me to deliver this address, the vice-chancellor desired that I should give my suggestions for a revised system of university education, in order to make education more practical to equip the alumni with directing ability and to increase productive power in the country. We have not to go very deep into the subject to indicate our immediate needs in this respect. Our main aim should be to make the product of the university an efficient worker and a successful producer.

The chief defect in the present system is, as experience has shown, the absence of adequate technical and practical training in the curricula of studies whether in university, secondary or primary grades. Professor John Dewey of the United States of America has said that 'in an industrial society the school should be a miniature workshop and a miniature community; it should teach through practice, and through trial and error, the arts and discipline necessary for economic and social order.' Under the present system education is not in close contact with life. School and society live entirely apart. The education given is too general for this solution of practical problems or as an introduction to practical life.

Every university should have colleges of technology for mechanical and electrical engineering and allied sciences, a college of agriculture and a college commerce. Research should be carried on at these institutions and a liaison officer attached to each college to maintain association between the colleges and their research laboratories, and the industries and businesses for which these colleges exist. In secondary education every matriculate should be made to pass an examination in handicraft or industry. Linked with the elementary school system, there should be vocational schools to provide training in the elements of agriculture, commerce, handicrafts, carpentry, engineering, smithy and other trades for the boys, and cookery, dress-making,

nursing and house-wifery for girls. Probably 60 per cent of the boys in rural areas would require agricultural training.

Coming to universal mass education, it may be stated that in a population of 772 millions, at least 40 millions, or 15 per cent., should be at school. In the United States of America the proposition is 23.7, and in Japan 19. But in British India, at present, only about 5 per cent. are attending educational institutions. The proportion of female scholars is hopelessly meagre, being only 2 per cent. The literate population of the country is about 15.6 per cent. males and 2.8 per cent females, and the general literacy for both males and females is 9.4 per cent. This proportion should be over 80 in any well-ordered country. The percentages in the United States of America, Canada, Great Britain and Germany are respectively 95.7, 94.9, 92.5, and 99.7. It is important to liquidate illiteracy in about 15 years' time.

The statement that the poverty of the people does not enable them to pay for elementary education is erroneous. Nine-tenths of our population live in villages. Education should come next only to food and clothing in the poor man's economy. And if each village now without a school is given a small grant, say, of Rs. 100 and asked to educate its young folk by its own efforts, it will readily do so. There are enough literate men with leisure to give a part of their time to this work for a small consideration, if the importance of the measure is brought to home to the village population. I speak from practical experience gained from an experiment made under my own eye in this direction about two decades ago.

As in the case of industries so in respect of education, money should be found by loans if necessary. Money was so found in the past for the same purpose in the development budgets of Japan.

The subject of defence ought to take a place next only to education and industries in any nation-building programme. India's seaboard being open, adequate preparations should be made for its defence. Rapid training of Indian youths to qualify them for all the three arms of defence forces—the army, navy and air forces—is a move which brooks no delay. If you are alert and capable, you will be listened to and in the words of a great American if you make yourself sheep the wolves will come and eat you.' You may have arts, industries, technical skill, prosperous cities, efficient transport services, big reservoirs and canals, but without physical efficiency for protecting them, you are liable to fall an easy prey to brute forces.

As with technical and practical education, military training should be linked with educational institutions of three grades. I have been often asked by English friends how India will defend itself in an emergency, if difficulties arose to future wars. This is a point to which all well-wishers of the country should give serious attention. To develop self-confidence and fighting spirit in the people and to increase their self-respect, military education is a *sine qua non*. In the villages of Japan, there are committees for preparing and training the citizen army and supplying recruits to the regular army. Recently it was reported in the public press that persons trained in universities and schools in that country were going to act as a liaison agency between the army and the people. We have enough man-power in this country to do likewise.

The standing army costs the country about Rs. 50 crores at present. Much of this expenditure can be reduced, if the restrictions in the Arms Act are judiciously removed and a citizen army created. Every man capable of wielding arms should be trained in the modern methods of warfare as is done in Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan. And it should not be forgotten that the expenditure on armaments will undergo material reduction if heavy industries come to be established in the province to the extent suggested.

I have dealt with six main heads or problems which come uppermost under nation-building. There are many others, but these six are fundamental. If in any scheme of national advance the problems associated with these six heads are handled with vigour and with a right sense of responsibility, the rest will automatically fall into line. When a small advance in economic prosperity is secured for the masses by the measures indicated, it will of itself supply the wherewithal for promoting nation-building and welfare work of every other kind.

The only cure for unemployment is a higher standard of living, especially for the poor and the only sure way to bring this about is by increasing work, by increasing the goods and services produced. The system of work should be properly organised and the workers disciplined as in the West. There should be

fewer and fewer idlers, part-time workers should work full time and occupations should be created for every one willing to work.

Among the many ways suggested to us by foreign experience there are three large-scale measures which, in my view, will be of immediate value in this connection :

(1) Citizenship training, (2) Planned development in villages, (3) Planned development in cities and towns.

There should be universal mass education for young persons and unlearned adults. Literary training now given in educational institutions should be supplemented by practical training, in some of the many ways in which it is possible to do it. Separate vocational and trade schools, workshops and experimental and demonstration stations should be thickly scattered over the land. The population in every village should be instructed to learn to maintain records of goods and services produced during the year. I have seen an admirable system of how this should be done in the model villages of Japan which is worthy of imitation. In cities and towns, whether the residents collectively are growing rich or poor could be ascertained by similar methods, by valuing statistically such activities as lend themselves to measurement in industry, trade, transport, banking, etc. Such a test has been suggested for the city of London. The main object of all these measures should be to increase the skill and working power of the citizen and to augment the total value of goods and services produced in any district or any other given area from year to year.

In view of the uncertain world political situation, nation-building for defence also calls for special attention. England is at present taking steps to give physical training to her population and to build up new and more powerful armaments. She will need help from this country. One of the clauses in the instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General in connection with the recent Government of India Act is that the Defence of India will be more and more the concern of the Indians themselves." The British Government have thus given a hint to our people that they would do well to equip themselves gradually for self-defence. Our own self-government, when it comes, will be an empty show unless the country is adequately equipped for self-defence.

Only large-scale plans and disciplined action will lead to success in nation-wide activities. Men with patriotic fervour should be invited to lead in order to secure the degree of discipline and regimentation necessary for a directed economy. The country has abundant human material for this purpose.

In totalitarian states under dictators in Germany, in Italy, in Soviet Russia, people's lives are regulated by various restrictions with the object of consolidating and augmenting national power and raising the standards of income and comfort of the nation as a whole. People have submitted themselves to curtailment of liberties for the sake of their collective security and economic advantage. In India too we have had unitary control of a kind but it has been one which has offered us restrictions in plenty, amenities only with a sparing hand.

The people should be free to plan as they will, produce what they want, increase efficiency in directions in which they feel they are deficient and mobilise the country's resources in materials and man-power for all their rightful tasks.

In European countries, two great measures have been adopted since the close of the War mainly for economic safety, namely, (1) a National Economic Council and (2) a Development Plan. The plan adopted is usually a Five-Year Plan, and its working under the control of the Economic Council is regulated by the changing conditions of international politics and trade. These two measures, or some others having a like purpose, are urgently needed in India. If their operations is placed under the control of trusted leaders, they will prove of incalculable value for increasing the volume of national production and service.

Several provinces, such as Madras, Bengal and Bombay have made a beginning in welfare and rural uplift work. The Madras Government has started district economic councils. If the object is to provide a steadily rising total production of goods and services and reduce unemployment and under-employment among the rural population, these measures cannot but be regarded as too insignificant and scrappy to have any marked effect within the life time of the present generation. The district councils should be enlarged and extended and placed under the control of a Provincial Council or Commission composed of trusted leaders.

The least that the Government of this country can do is to chalk out a reasoned Development Plan—a three-year or five-year plan—and appoint a representative Development Commission to give it effect. In a recent publication I have given details as to how this could be done. I should like to repeat here that no appreciable results, nothing great, can be achieved without a large scale organization.

I have given prominence to nation-building activities not only because we are at the threshold of a new constitution, but also because without creating a new outlook for our people and without operating on a comprehensive plan and programme of reconstruction, the present dangerous mass poverty and ignorance in this country can never be cured. Since the War, extensive reforms, reconstruction and rehabilitation have gone on in Western countries.

I have tried to present a true picture of what we in India need in this respect. The picture may be imperfect in many respects, but no statesman, or economist can discharge his duties to this country without visualising such a picture, without placing before himself a clear perspective view of the country's real needs and of some at least of the many measures and methods by which such needs are being met in progressive countries.

Extensive revision and reconstruction of our national life are necessary; *politically* because India has been a dependency hitherto and vast numbers of people have been without the power of self-help and self-improvement; in the *economic* sphere because, mass poverty exists here to a degree unknown to Western countries; and *socially* because, the Indian mass mind has to be liberated from the stupefying spell of many ancient traditions and narrow prejudices.

I would ask you all young men and young women fresh from the University to keep these nation-building problems constantly before your mind's eye in whatever region or department of the country's life your lot may be cast. To the graduates particularly who are leaving this University to-day to take their chances in the wider world outside, I would say a few of you will no doubt devote your lives to some great object for the country's good as your venerable Vice-Chancellor has done. And to all of you, I trust, one of the principal ambitions in life will be to give every encouragement and support in your power to the achievements, the efficiency, the good name and the glory of your people and country.

Since nation-building affects the security of your own homes and living, thoughts on this subject are likely to haunt you all through life. Old conditions are changing; old moralities are crumbling. Our dream world in this country has always been a world of contemplation and holidays. Life here was regarded as in a transition stage on its way to a better world. Poverty was praised. Remember that such sentiments arouse derision in the practical progressive people of the West. It is due to such attitude and traditions that with a population of about one-fifth of the world, we possess less than one-eighteenth of the wealth. I have heard India and China spoken of as the two economic slums of the world. In the West, both for success and happiness reliance has long come to be placed on work—organized, disciplined work—rather than on contemplation. To get the most of oneself is becoming the rule of the world at large, and pauperism however begotten is regarded as fatal to national progress.

Contact with our British rulers has done much to take us out of the old rut, but what advance we have made, has been accomplished by imitation and example and not through either the direct initiative of the people themselves or any purposeful policy on the part of the Government to develop a modern order.

For any general rise in the country's prosperity place reliance on production and service organized on a basis of mutual trust and cooperation among our country men. For your own success, place reliance on your capacity, character, and power of will, all of which qualities can be progressively strengthened, if you choose, by a life-long process of self-improvement. Your vision added to your courage and determination is the measure of your power. The master word is work. Work steadily to build up your worth and power, keep conscience in rectitude, and

'Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,  
The God's and truth's.

## The Aligarh University Convocation

The Annual Convocation of the Aligarh University was held on the 7th. March 1937. A very large and distinguished gathering including Sir Frank Noyce, Nawab Sir Ahmad Said Khan, Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Nawab Sakar Yar Jung, Nawab-zada Liaquat Ali Khan and Nawab Ubaidur Rahman Khan attended the function.

Mr. A. *Halim*, pro-Vice-Chancellor, surveying the working of the year expressed satisfaction on all round progress.

Dr. *Ziaddin*, Vice-Chancellor gave away the degree to successful students and then read his Convocation address. In the course of his address he said :—

'Many reforms are needed in our education system, but there are two subjects which I cannot help noticing. The first is the question of secondary education which is the back bone of the whole educational system of a country inasmuch as it supplies teachers to primary schools and trains students for higher institutions. But unfortunately this education is much neglected in this country; and its complete reorganisation and overhauling is the crying need of the day, especially in view of the increasing unemployment of our educated young men.

Continuing, Dr. *Ziaddin* said: 'It is gratifying to see that a special committee has been appointed by the United Provinces Government to examine the matter and the Central Advisory Board of Education of the Government of India have also taken up this question. Both these bodies have discussed it with the two experts appointed by the Government of India viz., Messrs. Abbott and Wood. The weakest point in our education problem is the system of examinations. Researches are now being carried on in every country to improve the system, but we in India have not yet realized even the necessity of reform.'

Expressing his felicitations to *H. E. H. the Maharaja of Hyderabad*, the Chancellor of the University, Dr. *Ziaddin* said that this university had ever been bound by the closest ties of relationship to the rulers and the people of Hyderabad and these ties had been further cemented by his acceptance of the office of the Chancellorship of the University.

Concluding his address, Dr. *Zia-ud-Din Ahmad* exhorted the students who got their new degrees to rise to the occasion and march forward towards the new world that lay before them. There is always room for merit and ability, and every student he hoped, would demonstrate their ability in making their way up to the highest level of life's achievement.

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## The Gurukul University Convocation

The Convocation of the Gurukul University was held at Hardwar on the 27th. March 1937. After referring to the ideals and achievements of the University, Mr. S. *Satyawarty*, in the course of his Convocation Address, dwelt on the importance of the study of Science and said :—

'I have long been associated with University life and University work in my part of the country in various capacities. I am deeply and continuously interested in University education. But, of course, these Universities are entirely different from yours. But whatever differences may be, there is no doubt whatever that the spread of right education on sound lines is the imperative need in our country. For the tragic fact remains that, although our country is in point of history the longest educated in the World, still it is the least educated in point of numbers to-day. Further, I believe that full democratic Swaraj is based on the footing of educated, intelligent and discriminating electorates. The spread of true education from the lowest to the highest standard is thus the concern of all those who love this country and seek to serve her.

"While these modern Universities have undoubtedly done a great deal in creating a large number of men and women, patriotic, disinterested, able and self-sacrificing who have devoted and are devoting their lives to the service and the freedom of the Motherland, there is no doubt whatever that, on the whole, that education has not been productive of permanent benefit to this country. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise, because the foundations of this education were laid by Lord Macaulay in his famous minute. With a few changes here and there, these foundations, remain more or less what they were. It is right and proper that we should know something of these foundations, in order that we may repair the mistakes of the past. I give one quotation below to show the nature of these foundations :

"The question now before us is simply whether, when it is our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science we shall teach systems which by universal confession whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse and whether, when we can patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier,—astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school—history abounding in kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long and geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter."

"It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England."

No wonder that starting on this basis our education has, on the whole denationalised us, has produced merely an army of clerks, who lack initiative and independence and has not served the higher purpose of true education. It was, therefore, right and proper that the Gurukul Seminary should have been established by the Arya Sabha in 1912 in the Punjab. From a small elementary school it has grown up into a full fledged University. Yours is a residential educational institution right up to the highest College classes. Your courses of instruction last over 14 years, with an additional period of two years for getting your Doctorate Degree. Mostly humanities are taught here special importance being placed on the study of Sanskrit. You also study here the Vedas, Indian Philosophy, Sanskrit, Literature, English, History, Economics, Western Philosophy, Sanskrit, Literature, English, History, Economics, Western Philosophy, Comparative Study of Religions and Chemistry. You have also done well in so shaping your curricula that, at the end of the eighth or tenth year a boy may well go to Engineering or Legal studies.

Your curricula aim at bringing about the cultural regeneration of India. Your ambition is to turn out scholars, who will be the leaders of thought and of action in the country. You have already sent out good men, who have made their mark in the field of national service. To me it is a peculiar pleasure to be here on this day, because this seat of learning is intimately associated with that great man, the great saint and that great patriot, the late Swami Bhadrachand. Your ideal site on the banks of the great Ganges is a source of perennial attraction to all, and the expenses of schooling in your University are adopted to the needs of your country. Above all yours is an independent University, pursuing purely Indian ideals and seeking to produce Indian patriots and Indian gentlemen. I congratulate you on your work and wish you well in the future.

The great characteristic of your University on which I should like to congratulate you particularly is the ideal of Brahmacharya, which you practise. Brahmacharya is peculiarly associated in our country with the period of study. It is not a mere physical state, it is also a mental state, and to the extent to which you produce trained Brahmacharis, who, at the end of that period of training here will enter the Grasastha life, you are building secure foundations of Hindu and Indian life.

Moreover, yours is a true Gurukula. The English word 'hostel' is a poor translation for that word. You teachers and students, not only live together, but live as members of a common joint family. The advantage of that life for true education cannot be over estimated. I have already referred to your situation on the banks of the Ganges. I hope familiarity has not bred contempt in your minds. To the Hindus all over India especially in South India, the Ganges stands for all that is

pure, noble and exalting in our country. To spend some of the most impressionable periods of your lives on the banks of the Ganges and in these beautiful surroundings is a proud privilege, for which you must be highly thankful and of which you must take full advantage.

"The medium of instruction in the University is Hindusthani, as it ought to be. I am one of those, who though ignorant of Hindusthani, profoundly believe that Hindusthani should become the lingua franca of India, as early as possible. I hope your students will go out as missionaries of the gospel also throughout the country. As an humble student of Sanskrit, I congratulate you and your University on the great importance they attach to Sanskrit studies. Sanskrit is to Indian culture, much more than what Greek and Latin are to European culture. Sanskrit is not a dead language; it is a living language even to-day. I remember with happiness my last visit to your Gurukula, when I had the privilege of listening to your debate in Sanskrit. Your attempt to make Sanskrit once more the spoken language of scholars deserve all encouragement. When I speak of Sanskrit, it is not merely out of blind love, but I believe that to every modern Indian scholar Sanskrit is essential if he is to live in this country as a real native. Our Vedas, our classics, our epics, are all enshrined in Sanskrit. Ignorance of Sanskrit denies us our heritage; knowledge of Sanskrit gives us a rich literary heritage, which, if I may adopt a simile, is a beautiful garden with fragrant, beautiful and perennial flowers, in whose paths, we can wander for years, deriving pleasure, instruction and exaltation, and never getting weary. Of Sanskrit literature, I can say with some knowledge, that as of all great works of art, its greatest characteristic is the characteristic of true beauty, that it assumes a new form every minute. Moreover, Sanskrit is a common bond of culture of all Hindus, and should be the common bond of culture of all Indians from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Kamrup to Karachi.

"I have been deeply struck by the simplicity of your life, the gospel of self help constantly practised here, and insistences on conformity, which you practise. Simplicity is a peculiarly Hindu and Indian virtue, which we are slowly getting rid of. It is time that we went back to it. Modern education in every University has rapidly made of men and women almost helpless. It is right and proper, therefore, that you should be trained, and train ourselves in the art of self-help, which will add to your self-respect and dignity. I am one of those who without being superstitious, believe that conformity is a great individual and national virtue. I am deeply impressed by your daily routine of life here, including the Homa and Sandhya Vandhana. Mere modern ratiocination may argue that these things are unnecessary, but there are many things beyond the reach of argument, and I am one of those, who believe that in such ceremonies there is something to be gained for the individual, the society and the nation.

I see you have a scheme for opening an Industrial College, to be named 'Shranddhananda Shilp Vidyalaya', and are awaiting to start it, when necessary funds have been collected. I sincerely hope and trust that the funds will be forthcoming and you will soon open the Industrial College.

"I notice that in the early classes also you are giving some practical and vocational training to the boys. If I may do so, I should like to commend to your authority the need for giving more importance to the hand and the eye of the younger boys. I would also plead for more importance being given to the study of Modern History, Politics and Economics and of Modern Science. It is right that your boys must be appraised with all the modern problems. The eternal varieties are the same. But still modern human life is so complex and problems are becoming so difficult of solution, that I think the education of your boys will be complete only when they get a grounding in Science, as also in modern Economics and Politics.

Time was fifty years ago when we all were grateful to the pioneers of modern Science, who went on conquering one peak after another of unknown regions of knowledge, and the sheer exaltation of fresh knowledge went to our head. But, today, while man has invented Science, he has brought forth a Frankenstein's Monster, which seeks to destroy the creator. Science is leading humanity to destruction. The use of poison gas, aeroplanes, bombing, to destroy one another by the various so called civilised nations is the despair of the lovers of humanity.

But, I believe that we, in India, are producing and will soon produce a race of scientists, who will harness science to humanity. In that greater work your Gurukula can play a great part. It should be your privilege to show the way to modern scientists, to subordinate knowledge to the higher aims of humanity, and not to prostitute it for the destruction of humanity.

I have noticed, with exceptions, that there is an amount of inferiority complex in the modern Hindu and modern Indian mind. You must get rid of that inferiority complex. We have nothing to be ashamed of, or apologetic about, with regard to our past. Even in our present state, we have nothing to be ashamed of. Any other race or nation, misgoverned, impoverished, as we have been for a century and half, will have ceased to exist. But, thank God, thanks to our Vedic culture, to our ancient heritage and to our ideals we still live. More than that, there is a promise in the horizon of a life of freedom for this great and beloved country of ours. Therefore, you must create and seek to maintain a new self-respect and dignity in modern Indian humanity. Your University has given you that education, and you must make full use of it.

Last but not least, Europe, America and Japan are madly rushing forward towards another cataclysmic war, which will end humanity and civilisation, as known to Western Europe. I see no alternative to this but the acceptance of the Hindu doctrine of "Peace of Earth and Goodwill to all men".

That can only come after the attainment of freedom by our country, at the preaching of that gospel by us. You must, therefore, co-operate in the great task, which awaits all of us, the attaining of the freedom of our Motherland. That freedom is to be attained, not merely by politicians but also by scholars, by social service workers, by teachers, indeed by all Indians in whatever capacity they may be engaged. We have to work harmoniously for that great ideal. I invite all the graduates of this University to co-operate in this great nation-building work.

There is a school of thought in our country, as in others, who believe that modern economic civilisation is the paradise of humanity. I strongly dissent. The theory of the multiplication of wants is not precious one. Time was, when some European countries believed that China, India and other Eastern countries would like to remain as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and that they could dump their manufactured goods on them. A new economic nationalism is, however, springing up, and each country wants to be self-sufficient. The tragic failure of the recent World Economic Conference is a point. We, in India, have to preach and practise a new doctrine for our economic well-being. I do not believe in the indefinite multiplication of wants. We are nearly 35 crores of people.

If we can but raise the standard of the average Indian to even one anna more per head per day, we shall have created a demand which will absorb the products of all our large and small industries for many many decades to come.

We have to build up our large industries, but more, our small industries. We have to re-build our villages, and if we can do something by way of adding some more to the precarious income of the average villager, we shall have very nearly solved the economic problem of India. I invite you to think of this great vital problem, and do something to help their solution on sound lines.

In conclusion Mr. *Satyamurthi* said :—

We want more and more of educated and thinking men and women, who will help us in solving the great problems that need solution at the hands of our countrymen. You should particularly inculcate in our men and women communal cleanliness, honesty in all spheres of life, and readiness to sacrifice for great ideals. You must recapture the great courage of our ancient heroes, physical and moral. You must learn yourselves to be absolutely non-communal. A great Hindu must be a greater Indian. Every morning in your University you pray "May what we read guard us together, feed us together, evolve our capacities together, win us glory and help to avoid hate and envy". There may be no greater ideal before a modern Indian of nationalism, of comradeship, and of service for the Motherland.

## S. N. D. T. Women's University Convocation

*Dr. R. P. Paranjpye*, Vice-chancellor of the Lucknow University delivering the Convocation Address of the Shreemati Nathibhai Damodar Thackersay Indian Womens' University held at Bombay on the 27th June 1937, observed :—

"What is the use of a long and expensive education if it does not make you fitter to cope with the everchanging conditions of our world? If your education



has not enlarged your human sympathies, broadened your minds, and widened the sphere of your interests, it cannot be said to have achieved its purpose but simply created more learned fools."

He said that all interested in the educational progress of the country could learn some lessons from the history of the growth of this University, the earnestness and devotion of its founder, Prof. D. K. Karve, the public spirit of its chief donor, the late Sir Vithaldas Thakersey and the recognition which earnest and devoted work surely receives from the general public.

Speaking about the speciality of the University in having Vernacular as the medium of instruction and examination Dr. Paranjpye said: "Whatever may be the political future of our country, and we all hope that there will be no limits to our political progress, we cannot forget that India is one among the nations of the world, and that for a long time at least English is bound to remain as our medium of communication with other nations and peoples."

Continuing he said: "I have often felt that women have shown a truer instinct in our political struggle than we men. Even though they are few in number the women in our public life have not shown themselves so narrow and communally-minded as men have and nothing was so cheering to all true nationalists as the deliberate opinion of all women's organisations against separate communal electorates which are absolutely opposed to all notions of true nationhood.

"To the graduates who are receiving their degrees to-day," he said, "I would like to address a few words. They are the pioneers of a new movement in our national life. The success or failure of the new educational experiment conducted by this University will be determined by the way they conduct themselves in the wide world of life. They are expected to play their roles of wife, mother, daughter and sister like other women but they must play them better because of their education. They are expected to preserve all that is good in our past, shed all the evil excrescences and imbibe all that is new but useful in the other civilisation with which we have come into contact. Have high ideals, try to carry them out in your life but have the charity to sympathise with the weakness of others."

Referring to the education of the University Dr. Paranjpye said: "If the education is imbibed in its true spirit it should implant in you a love of liberty, not only for yourself but also for others, liberty of thought, speech and action so far as it does not impinge on the similar liberty of others. That education should teach you to form your own independent judgment and not make you slaves of others whether in mind or body. It should teach you to cast off superstition even though hallowed by the passage of centuries. It should make you ever ready to revise your old ideas in the light of changing circumstances. It should enable you to understand that nothing in the world is standing still but that everything is marching onward to form new combinations."

Concluding Dr. Paranjpye said: "I cannot do better than exhort you to learn the real lesson of life of your founder Mr. Karve. Compromise in non-essentials but firmness in essentials and steadiness to ideals is what you should learn from him. You have had the great privilege, as I have had all my life, of coming under the influence, direct or indirect, of this great saint of modern India. Other institutions may have had founders with more highly resounding names, but no alumnus—or rather alumna—of this University need envy anybody else, for she can say with pardonable pride that she had been the pupil of an institution that owes its existence to the tireless energy, indomitable courage and devoted work of Dhondo Keshav Karve."

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## The A. I. Muslim Students' Conference

The All-India Muslim Students' Conference, which was postponed last-month, was held at Lucknow on the 17th. January 1937 in the Gangaprasad Memorial Hall, under the presidentship of Mr. *Mushir Husain Kidwai*, member of the Council of State, with a view to considering the advisability of the formation of an All-India Muslim Students' Federation. Police were present on the occasion. The meeting was attended by a number of delegates representing the various

Universities, the majority of which appeared to be opposed to the idea of formation of a new organisation.

Some confusion was caused when the President announced that only two representatives of each institution represented and five each from Nadwa and Farangimahal could vote on the resolutions. After ruling out the objections to this proposal, the President adjourned the session till after the lunch interval.

The opposition group remained in the hall passing the time in composing poems (Mushaira) and making speeches. At the scheduled time, some of them including a member of the Executive Committee, went to fetch the President, but the latter said that he could not attend owing to indisposition. Thereafter Mr. Farhatulla was elected President and the meeting was held. The resolution regarding the formation of a Muslim Students' Federation was rejected by a huge majority.

The meeting requested Muslim students to join the All-India Students' Federation in greater numbers. After passing a resolution thanking the President, this meeting dispersed.

The conveners, after obtaining the permission of the original President, immediately after held a meeting under the presidentship of Iftikar Hussain and decided to form an All-India Muslim Students' League to hold its first session at Calcutta. The oppositionists did not attend this meeting and the hall presented a deserted appearance.

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## The Bombay Presidency Students' Conference

The Bombay Presidency Students' Conference opened at Bombay on the 2nd, January 1937 Mr. *Soumyendra Nath Tagore* presiding. About 150 delegates attended.

In the course of his address Mr. Tagore characterised Fascism and Nazism as a most barbarous and abominable type of national chauvinism. He expressed the opinion that there was no contradiction between struggle for socialism and struggle for independence.

Referring to the difficulties of students, he deplored the costliness of education and the apathy of the Government, who were hardly interested in finding jobs for students who left school. He said that the Sapru Report was no panacea for the alleviation of unemployment among educated classes. The whole system of education was very vicious. It was anti-national, anti-democratic and unscientific. He appealed to students to study each and every problem facing the country. An abstract profession of love of the Motherland without the necessary clear understanding of the country's problem was nothing but futile sentimentalism.

He further said: "At this critical turning point of the history of the world and of India when unprecedented social, political and cultural reaction in the form of Fascist obscurantism threatens to submerge human society under the deluge of bloody destruction, the students of India in fraternal solidarity with the International Student Movement must plunge into the vortex of the fight for stemming and defeating the Fascist imperialist reaction."

Mr. Tagore condemned Fascism, Imperialism and Capitalism as a danger to humanity and made a plea for a united front against these evils and sought students' participation in it. Mr. Tagore opined that the real solution of the unemployment problem was possible only when production and distribution of the necessities of life were organised and a planned economy was effected and means of production owned by the society and not by individuals. The new Constitution and the Sapru Report were all condemned in turn by Mr. Tagore who asserted that the students should not be non-political.

Mr. *K. T. Chandy*, Chairman of the Reception Committee said that it was often said by interested parties that the students' movement could have no abiding purpose, that at best it could offer a platform for wild talks and that worst it would degenerate into sedition-mongering and riotous rabble. Even a casual glance at the students' movement in India and abroad would convince an impartial observer that students have played an important, noble and heroic part in shaping the nation's destinies.

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# The International Parliament of Religions

( Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Celebration )

Calcutta—1st March to 8th March 1937

Savants from different parts of the globe, professing different religious faiths and representing the cultural heritage of diverse races, met together at the Parliament of Religions that commenced its session on the 1st March 1937 at the Calcutta Town Hall under the distinguished presidency of the world-renowned philosopher, Dr. Sir *Brajendra Nath Seal*.

This International Congress of Faiths had been organised by the Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Celebration Committee in connection with the Centenary of the birth of the Saint of Dakshineswar.

The historic hall which was artistically decorated for the occasion, was filled to capacity by a distinguished assemblage of delegates and visitors who had journeyed from remote parts of the world to pay their tribute of respect and admiration to the prophet who was the "consummation of two thousands years of spiritual life of three hundred millions people",—a great symphony "composed of the thousand voices and thousand faiths of mankind."

The proceedings appropriately began with the singing of a Vedic hymn (in original Sanskrit, set to music by Mrs. Sarala Devi Chaudhurani) by girls in chorus, standing round a beflowered portrait of Sri Ramkrishna.

## Messages

Following the opening song, Mr. Bijoy Krishna Bose read some of the numerous messages received from far and near including those from Mahatma Gandhi, Lord Zetland and His Excellency the Governor of Bengal.

In his message wired from Wardah, Mahatma Gandhi said, "Wish Parliament success. Wish it could do some constructive work."

Lord Zetland in his message recalled his association with the Ram Krishna Mission during his sojourn in Bengal and desired to convey his cordial wishes for a very successful gathering of the representatives of the various religious creeds at the Parliament of Religions. "It would have given me great pleasure," His Lordship said, "to be present if it were possible so that I might meet once again my many friends who would be there. But since, that is not possible, I shall at least be with you in spirit."

In his message His Excellency the Governor of Bengal said, "It is with much interest that I have learnt of the holding of the Parliament in honour of the centenary of Sri Ram Krishna, and I trust that the discussions of the delegates may further the causes which Ram Krishna had at heart, religious harmony, social toleration and inter-racial concord."

Sir *Monmota Nath Mukherjee*, Chairman of the Reception Committee in extending a cordial welcome to the delegates and visitors, said, "It is only meet and proper that, on the occasion of the birth centenary of this glorious apostle of 'Harmony of Religions', worthy representatives of various religions should have assembled here with the noble object of establishing a closer relationship of amity and goodwill among the different faiths and churches of the world."

In proposing Sir *Brajendra Nath Seal* to the chair, Sir B. L. Mitter pointed out that Dr. Seal's name was so well-known that very few words were necessary to introduce him to this gathering. He would however only mention a matter of peculiar significance. This year's Parliament of Religions had been convened under the auspices of the Centenary Committee. Dr. Seal had personal contact with the sage of Dakshineswar and he was an intimate friend of Sri Ramkrishna's most distinguished disciple, Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Seal could well be claimed as "Wise man of the East" and they felt confident that under his guidance the deliberations of the Parliament would be conducted on a high spiritual level.

Seconding the proposal Mr. *Harendra Nath Dutt* said it was in the fitness of things that Sir *Brajendra Nath Seal*, the Doyen of Indian philosophers, who had

made the whole range of knowledge his own and who had hovered freely among all the great religions of the world, should be asked to preside at this momentous gathering.

Rising amidst a great ovation from the assembly, Dr. Seal regretted his inability to personally deliver the address. "It is very unfortunate", he said, "that I have recently fallen ill and can hardly stand up. I would therefore request one of my friends to read out my address." Dr. Seal's presidential address was then read by one of his pupils, full text of which appears below.

Following the presidential address, delegates from different parts of the world conveyed their cordial greetings and best wishes for the success of the Parliament on behalf of their respective countries.

Sir Francis Younghusband in conveying hearty greetings to the Parliament on behalf of the Society for promoting the study of Religions League of Nations Union and Pall Text Society, London presented a volume containing the minutes of proceedings of the last session of the World Congress of Faiths held in London last summer. "I can hardly say", he said, "the delight with which I personally come here once more to the land of my birth and with what great interest I am looking forward to the proceedings of your great Congress for I had many years past had the profoundest admiration for that great saint the centenary of whose birth you are celebrating now".

The Prime Minister to the Tashi Lama Tibet, (*Ngak. Chhen Rinpoche*) said that it had given him great pleasure to be present at this World Congress of Faiths. He brought good wishes to the Congress from all the Buddhists of Tibet under the seat of the holy *Tashi Lama*. "I heartily wish the Congress all success in its universal cause in bringing peace, good-will and happiness to mankind. I offer my blessings to the world Congress on this auspicious occasion of the centenary celebration of *Ramkrishna*, one of the greatest spiritual geniuses of India.

Mme. Prof. Helene de Wilmangrabowska (Kradow University, Poland), Dr. H Geotz (Kern Institution Leyden, Holland), Prof Tan Yuan-Shun (Sino-Indian Culture Society and National Central Research Institute, Nankin, China), Miss Helen Mary Boulnois, Johannesburg, South Africa), Mr. Yusuf Ahmad Bagdadi (Bagdad, Iraq), Mr. Sheikh Muhammad (Cairo) Swami Parmananda (Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass, U. S. A., Dr. Peter Bokie (Cincinnati, Ohio, U. S. A.), Maung Aye Maung (on behalf of the Buddhists of Burma), Mr. J. A. Joseph (Bombay) on behalf of the Jewish community, Mr. D. N. Wadia (Superintendent Geological Survey of India) on behalf of the Parsi community, Prof. Tulshidas Kar on behalf of the Theosophical Society, Calcutta, Swami Nirvandananda on behalf of the Ramkrishna Math, Belur, Devapriya Vallisinha on behalf of the Mahabodhi Society, Calcutta, Sardar Jamiat Singh on behalf of the Sikhs and another delegate on behalf of the Jain community, Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar (International Federation of the Societies and Institutes of Sociology, Paris and Geneva) offered their cordial greetings to the Parliament.

Conveying greetings to the Parliament on behalf of the Muslims of Bengal, Dr. R. Ahmed said: "I bring to this Assembly greetings from the followers of Islam in Bengal. Islam has always prided itself on its spirit of toleration and brotherhood. It is fitting that on the occasion of the centenary celebration of that prophet of religious harmony the followers of all different religions should meet together. Teachings of Ramkrishna have distinctly affected the lives of Muslims of Bengal in various ways. The holding of this Parliament of Religions will cement the friendship between the followers of different religions. Devout Muslims realise that the fundamentals of all religions are one though they may be clothed in various garbs. It is in keeping with the spirit of the times that this Parliament is being held when the world is groping for a synthesis of all religions and cultures.

Swami Abhedananda, who took the chair after Dr. Seal had retired as he was feeling unwell, said: "In the name of Sri Ramkrishna, in the name of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda, in the name of Ramkrishna Mission and the Ramkrishna Order, I welcome all the delegates who have come from far and near and offer my cordial greetings to them. Ramkrishna has been the consummation of all the prophets, seers and incarnation of divinity that came before his advent. I hope this Parliament of Religions will sound the death-knell of all communal strife and struggle."

#### The Welcome Address

In his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Parliament of Religions, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee said:—"More than two years ago when

the scheme for celebrating the British Centenary of Paramahansa Sri Sri Ramkrishna Deva was first drawn up, it was considered the most essential part of the programme to convene a Parliament of the Religions of the world. This, as you all know, is quite in consonance with the spirit of the message of the great saint who was the "consummation of two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people"—a great symphony "composed of the thousand voices and thousand faths of mankind."

When in 1893 a Parliament of Religions was convened at Chicago, its object among other things were: (1) to promote and deepen the spirit of human brotherhood among religious men of diverse faiths, through friendly conference and mutual good understanding, while not seeking to foster the temper of indifferentism, and not striving to achieve any formal and outward unity, (2) to inquire what light each religion has afforded, or may afford, to the other religions of the world, and (3) to bring the nations of the earth into a more friendly fellowship, in the hope of securing permanent international peace.

The purpose of the Parliament of Religions which was intended to be called in connection with the Centenary Celebrations, though much humbler, nevertheless embraced within its scope most of the aforesaid objects. Beneath the seeming diversities of different faiths there is a common plan and purpose—an underlying unity in search of which the whole of humanity, consciously or unconsciously, has been moving from time immemorial. The necessity for providing a forum where exponents of all religious faiths of the world would be able to expound their own ideas and ideals without any spirit of intolerance, where they would be able to exchange their views on man's life and its goal and on problems furthering national amity, international fellowship and universal peace, can hardly be overestimated. Though each religion is great in its own way, comparison among religions with view to establishing the superiority of one over the others, is unprofitable. There are many important truths that various religions teach in common, many that one has given to another, many again which in different religions have assumed different forms, sometimes apparently incongruous but not really so. Mutual exchange of views broadens the entire religious outlook and fosters a spirit of tolerance, the need for which is so often keenly felt. What is wanted in a true votary of any particular religion is intensity of belief together with a catholicity of outlook and non-aggressiveness. Sri Ramkrishna has said:

"Religion, however, is one. It has been so from all times, it shall be so for ever."  
"The Lord is one, though He hath many names." And—

"Yea, every belief, every religion, every system of faith and worship is but a path that leadeth unto Him."

It was thought that a Parliament of Religions was a necessary concomitant of the celebrations, a *'sine qua non'*, without which no celebration of the Centenary would be perfect or complete. And there could be no more suitable place for the celebration of the Centenary than this where have assembled the representatives of the different religions of the world. Rightly has Swami Vivekananda said: "Aye, long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects had been mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here, in sight of this city, was living a man whose whole life was a Parliament of Religions as it should be."

The great Saint of Dakshineswar made himself conspicuous in the world's history of religions endeavour by actually practising different religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity and realizing the grand truths embedded in them all. He was the first spiritual seer in the world who, standing on the bedrock of his own realizations, declared emphatically and unequivocally the great truth that the different religions are like so many paths leading to the same goal of God-realization. This was what Sri Ramkrishna lived to realize and proclaim to the sect-ridden world. It is, therefore, only meet that, on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of this glorious apostle of Harmony of Religions, worthy representatives of various religions should have assembled here with the noble object of establishing a closer relationship of amity and goodwill among the different faiths and churches of the world.

The idea of the Parliament was formed, but we did not know how it would materialize. Our resources were limited and some of the difficulties that we saw seemed at the moment insurmountable. But there is a much higher and mightier power than that of man. We issued invitations to the most eminent persons all over the world—scholars, philosophers, indologists and religious heads. The world responded. From the response that we received, we found that we were to proceed. We did proceed, always anticipating with eager expectation the day when the Par-

liament of Religions would meet in this great City. And as time rolled on and the day came nearer and nearer, our eagerness was ever on the increase. That much longed-for day, that golden hour has arrived, you have come, and on behalf of the Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Committee I bid you a most cordial welcome."

#### The Presidential Address

Presiding at the Parliament of Religions Dr. Sir *Brajendra Nath Seal* said :—

The Parliament of Religions that is commencing to-day is one of the items, perhaps the last item in the programme of year-long celebrations in connection with the centenary of the birth, or as others would have it, the advent into this world of Paramahansa Ramkrishna.

More than 25 years ago I recall having written at Sister Nivedita's request a paper entitled "An early stage of Vivekananda's mental development." I concluded that paper with an account of a visit I had paid to Vivekananda's master, Sri Ramkrishna. That was a stormy evening and it was accompanied by thunder and lightning, and this suited well my mental commotion which was created in me by that visit. This afternoon in the calm and dispassion of the evening of my life I deem it a privilege to be able to share along with the thousands who are present in this hall in person or in spirit the centenary celebration of one who in his sojourn on earth was above time and above space.

This Parliament of Religions has evoked cordial responses from far and near. The participants who are present in person are going to deal with the problems of religion, life, moral welfare, spirituality and social progress from varied points of view. The teachings of Ramkrishna constitute the topic of some of the papers to be presented before this assembly. I shall confine myself to recording just a few reminiscences of mine in regard to the great saint as well as placing in the philosophical and historical perspectives his special contributions to the realm of human thought and action.

In his early boyhood Ramkrishna took part in popular shows and exhibitions, e.g., *Krishnalila* and *Gajan* songs. He would play the part of Krishna or Siva in these popular shows. On the death of his elder brother, he became priest at the *Kali Bari* (temple of Kali) of *Dakshineswar* near Calcutta. He wanted to see Kali, the Divine Mother, and threatened to stab himself to death if Kali would not deign to appear. He was half-mad and at last he had, as he thought, a vision of Kali.

He then began to practice austerities. He took on himself a vow to abjure lust and gold (*Kama* and *Kanchana*). Taking gold in one hand and mud in the other, he would mutter, 'Gold is mud and mud is gold.' In the same way he conquered all cravings of the flesh and in the end he revered every woman as mother.

A youthful and beautiful woman initiated him into Tantric practices (*Sadhana*). Lying on her lap he meditated on Kali. She was a *Brahmacharinī*, using wine and flesh in the rituals of worship. He worshipped her as a naked goddess. All sensual cravings were thus seared and burnt up in him.

He sought to experience each religion in its entirety in *Sadhana* or spiritual discipline. Now he would be a Moslem *Fakir*, with appropriate rituals, attitudes and garb, and now a Christian neophyte, stricken with a sense of sin and crying for salvation. There was nothing of mere pose or mere imagination in all this. In the same way *Vaishnava Sankirtan* and music were added to his religious exercises.

Among early personal influences on Ramkrishna it to be noted that of Saint *Dayananda Saraswati*, founder of the *Arya Samaj*. *Dayananda* took his stand on the Vedas as teaching the one Universal Religion and fought all idolatry in a militant mood, but his influence on Ramkrishna could not be lasting or deep. Ramkrishna's genuineness led him to revolt against Hindu practices; he would repudiate caste and even serve the "Methar" which could hardly have been pleasing to the orthodox Vedic brotherhood. He felt himself drawn to *Topapuri* and other saints and these manifold experiences prepared him for his mission in life. It was *Topapuri* who initiated him into *Sannyasa*.

He came under the influence of the *Brahmo Samaj* also. The new Dispensation as preached by *Brahmananda Keshabchandra* gave him a keen sense of certain social evils and immoralities which had corrupted latter-day Hindu religion and religious practices.

Ramkrishna was a composite personality. In contemplating Truth from the absolute point of view (*Nirupadhi*) he negated all conditions and modes (*Upadhis*) but from the relative or conditional point of view (*Sopadhi*) he worshipped Kali, the Divine

Mother, as well as other modes and embodiments of the deity. He worshipped the one in all and the all in one and he saw no contradiction but only a fuller reality in this. So also he reconciled Sakar and Nirakar Upasana. For him there was nothing in the material form of the deity but God manifesting Himself. The antagonisms between matter and spirit did not exist for him.

What he refused to delude himself with was that he was above all conditions and all infirmities of the flesh. But in his trances (Samadhi) he developed ecstasia in its purest form, such as has been rarely witnessed in the West in the religious world since the days of Eckhart and Tauler.

Like most Hindu Saints he had an inexhaustible store of homely sayings, adages, metaphors, allegories, parables, which could bring spiritual truths home to the meanest understanding and even to the child.

*Ram Mohan Roy*, in a very real sense the father of modern India, sought the Universal Religion, the common basis of the Hindu, Moslem, Christian and other faiths. He found that each of these great religions was based on this common faith with a certain distinctive historical and cultural embodiment. It is fundamental to note that Rammohun played two roles in his own person. First he was a profound universalist and in this capacity he formulated the creed of what has been called Neo-theo-philanthropy (a new love of God and man) on positive and constructive lines. He construed the Gayatri on this basis. And strange to say this Hindu became one of the three fathers of the Unitarian creed and worship in the West.

In the second place Rammohun was a Nationalist Reformer and functioned in three different ways.

As a Hindu Reformer he gave a Unitarian redaction of the Hindu Shastras from the Vedanta and as a Moslem defender of faith he wrote the *Tufatul Mowahidin* and *Manazaratum Adiyao* which were polemical works. And finally as a Christian he gave a Unitarian version of the entire body of the scriptures, old and new, in his controversies with the Christian missionaries. Rammohun was thus in himself a universalist and three nationalists all in one.

*Maharshi Debendronath* organised the creed, rituals and Annushans in the *Adi-Brahmo-Samaj* on Hindu Upanishadic basis.

The work of formulating a Universal Religion free from Hindu or Christian theology fell to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen, who attempted this on an eclectic basis, and thus organised rituals and modes of worship. In his earlier days Keshabchandra made Christianity the central religion but in later life he was drawn more and more to Vaishnavism for emotional and religious exercises. This was selective eclecticism. He thus variegated and fulfilled religious experiences as well as concepts, rituals and worship in a way never attempted before. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Vaisnavism, not to mention other religions, each contributed its essence and substance to Keshabchandra's Religion of the New Dispensation and what was new was eclectic cult and culture.

The next step (and it was indeed a fundamental innovation) was taken by Paramahansa Ramkrishna. The Paramahansa would experience each cult and religion in its totality or as one whole experience.

Keshabchandra would emphasise the central essence of each religion and acknowledge its truth. In this sense Keshabchandra would say, "It is not that every religion contains truths but every religion is true." But as there are different religions, it follows that they convey different aspects of truth. They transcribe not a part but the whole of life, each from one fundamental standpoint. But the religions contend with one another. Each claims that its positive standpoint is the only true standpoint and all other standpoints are erroneous. But Keshabchandra differed. He viewed life from all these different standpoints eclectically. He selected from each religion what he considered its essence, both theoretical as well as practical. He formulated a collation of all these partial aspects in the Brahmo faith and more especially in the New Dispensation creed. Put more briefly, Keshabchandra's view is that every religion as represented by its central essence is true. But it does not contain the whole truth which can be viewed only from an eclectic standpoint.

The New Dispensation would select the "distinctive" central essence from each religion and make a collection, a "bouquet" of followers as it were. Here it was that Ramkrishna differed from Keshabchandra. Indeed he differed from his pre-

decessors in two essential respects. First, he maintained that the practices of each religion with its rituals and disciplines gave its essence more really and vitally than its theoretical dogmas or creeds. Secondly it was Ramakrishna's conviction that it is not by selective eclecticism but by syncretism and the whole-hearted acceptance of a religion that its full value and worth could be realised and experienced.

Ramakrishna held that selective extracts would kill the vital element in each religion. He would be a Hindu with the Hindu, a Moslem with the Moslem and a Christian with the Christian in order to experience the whole truth and efficacy of each of these religions. But he would not practise different religious disciplines or hold different creeds at one and the same time. The observances, practices and rituals of each religion are organic to it. He would tentatively accept the whole creed and ritual of the Moslem (or of the Christian Catholic) in order to experience its religious efficacy and truth. In all these there might be temptations and pitfalls but one must be as an innocent child or babe and pass unscathed through fire. It was thus that the Paramahansa passed successively through Christian and Moslem experiences. Such was the Paramahansa's Syncretism.

Ramakrishna was thus a cosmic humanist in Religion and not a mere nationalist. He gave the impulse initiative to universal human and this must be completed in our age. Humanism has now various new phases and developments. Leaving out Comte's positivistic humanism with its worship of the "grande-etre" and Bahaiism with its later offshoot "Babism", the religion of human brotherhood (bhai), we may turn to later phases such as the new concepts of religion without a God (as in Julian Huxley). This is not all. Impersonal ideals of Truth, Beauty or Goodness have sometimes replaced the old faith in a personal God. And it is not merely the religious sentiment which claims its own pabulum in our day. A passion for science, for philosophy or for scientific philosophy, a passion for art or for rasa (aesthetic sentiment) in general is the badge of modernism in our culture and seeks to displace much of the old religious sentiment.

Our present quest is for a Parliament of Religions, a quest which we seek to voice in this Assembly. But this is only a stepping stone to a Parliament of Man or a Federation of World Cultures.

Articles of faith, creed and dogmas divide man from man but we seek in religion a meeting ground of humanity. What we want is not merely universal religion in its quintessence, as Rammohun sought it in his earlier days, not merely an eclectic religion by compounding the distinctive essences, theoretical as well as practical of the different religions as Keshabchandra sought it, but experience as a whole as it has unfolded itself in the history of man. And this can be realised by us as Ramakrishna taught, by the syncretic practice of religion by being a Hindu with the Hindu, a Moslem with the Moslem and a Christian with the Christian as preparatory to the ultimate realisation of God in Man and Man in God.

Religion in a border sense is to be distinguished from the religions in the concrete. As such it is a force that organises life and life's activities. All cultures and in fact, all concepts are dominated by the idea of religion. Food, sex-relations, the family tribal life and warfare are all regulated by the religious idea. Empirical science and folk-life are grouped round the central idea of religion. And, in the course of progress, the higher religions are evolved. The Parliament of Religions is thus to be conceived as but the apex of this ascending course of religious evolution.

Religious expression, however, is not the only expression of the ultimate experience. We have also science, philosophy, or better scientific philosophy, art or the aesthetic sensibility (rasa sentiment or rasabubhuti) or mystical experience, all these being phases of humanism. And the consummation is to be found in cosmic humanism which frees mankind from its limitations of outlook by finding man in the universe and the universe in man. And we must seek it to be free not of this or that state but of the solar system and stellar systems and beyond, in one word, of the universe.

Our immediate objective to-day is a Parliament of Religions. But in my view this is only a prelude to a larger Parliament, the Parliament of man, voicing the federation of world cultures, as I have said, and what this will seek to establish is a synthetic view of life conceived not statically but dynamically as a progressive evolution of humanity.



Poet Rabindranath's Address

Poet *Rabindra Nath Tagore* paid a magnificent tribute to the memory of *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* when presiding at the session of the Parliament of Religions at the Calcutta University Institute on the 3rd. March 1937.

The vast assembly listened to the Poet's address, with rapt attention which he took twenty-five minutes to deliver. And the feelings of the audience found eloquent expression in the remarks which *Sir Francis Younghusband*, one of the most distinguished of the overseas delegates, made in the Conference in rising to offer a vote of thanks to the chair—that for this speech alone they might well consider the holding of the Parliament a success.

"I say to you", said the poet: "that if you are really lovers of Truth, then dare to seek its fulness, in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treasure up its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions. Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all, where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of man free from bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of his creed; but in that lowland of traditions where religious challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

He did not mean to advocate a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform. "The arrogant spirit of sectarianism which so often uses either active or passive, violent or subtle, methods of persecution, on the least provocation or without any, has to be reminded of the fact that religion, like poetry, is not a mere idea,—it is expression. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation: and our attitude towards the Infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending. When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all mankind, it degrades itself into a tyranny and becomes a form of imperialism. This is why we find a ruthless method of fascism in religious matters prevailing in most parts of the world, trampling flat the expansion of the spirit of man under its insensitive heels".

What the Poet pleaded for was "a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of Man's nature in its most intense and universal need and so must constantly be tested by it. Where it frustrates that need, and outrages its reason, it repudiates its own justification".

Addressing the Parliament Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore said :—

When I was asked to address this distinguished gathering I was naturally reluctant, for I do not know if I can be called religious in the current sense of the term, not claiming as my possession any particular idea of God, authorised by some time-honoured institution. If, in spite of all this, I have accepted this honour, it is only out of respect to the memory of the great saint with whose centenary the present Parliament is associated. I venerate *Paramahansa Deb* because he, in an arid age of religious nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realising it, because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of 'sadhana', and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pundits.

I have nothing new to tell you, no esoteric truth to propound to you. I am a mere poet, a lover of men and of creation. But since love gives a certain insight, I may perhaps claim to have sometimes caught the hushed voice of humanity and felt its suppressed longing for the infinite. I hope I do not belong to those who, born in a prison-house, never have the good luck to know that it is a prison, who are blissfully unaware that the costliness of their furniture and profuseness of the provisions for their comfort act as invisible walls in a castle of vanity that not only rob them of their freedom but even of the desire for it.

The degree of this freedom is measured according to our realisation of the Infinite whether in the outer world, or in the inner life. In a narrow room we may have as much space as is necessary for living and for the exercise of our muscles; the food may be more than sufficient, it may even be sumptuous; yet our inborn craving for what we may call the more, the unattained, if not altogether killed, remains unsatisfied. We are deprived of the Infinite, which is freedom of range, both in the outer world as well as in the ceaseless variety of the world of our experience.

But a more profoundly intimate perception of the Infinite lies in that intensity of our consciousness, which we can only attain when we realise ultimate value in some ideal of perfection, when in the realisation of some fact of our life we become aware of an indefinable truth that immensely transcends it. We, in our human nature, have a hunger for 'Bhuma', for immensity, for something a great deal more than what we need immediately for the purpose of life. Men all through their history have been struggling to realise this truth according to the unfolding of their idea of the boundless, and have been gradually changing their methods and plans of existence constantly meeting failures, but never owing final defeat.

We find that animals have their evolution along the line of the race. They have their individual life which ends with their death. But even in them there is a touch of the Infinite which urges them to outlive their own life in the life of the race, accepting sufferings and making sacrifices for its sake. The spirit of sacrifice in the parents is this touch of the Infinite,—the motive power which makes the race-life possible, which helps to develop those faculties in them that will enable their descendants to find better opportunity for food and shelter.

But in human beings has been further evolved a sense of the Infinite that goes far beyond the struggle for physical life which merely occupies extended space. Man has realised that a life of perfection is not merely a life of perfection, is not merely a life of extension, but one which has its selfless enjoyment of the great and the beautiful.

After we have evolved this sense of the beautiful of the good of something that we call truth,—which is deeper and larger than any lumber of facts,—we have come into an altogether different atmosphere from that wherein the animals and trees have their existence. But we have come into this higher realm only very lately.

Ages and ages have passed dominated by the life of what we call the self, which is intent upon seeking food and shelter and upon the perpetuation of the race. But there is a mysterious region waiting for its full recognition, which does not entirely acknowledge loyalty to physical claims. Its mystery constantly troubles us and we are not yet fully at ease in this region. We call it 'spiritual'. That word is vague, only because we have not yet been able to realise its meaning completely.

We are groping in the dark, not yet clear in our idea of the ultimate meaning at the centre of this world. Nevertheless, through the dim light which reaches us across the barriers of our physical existence, we seem to have a stronger faith in this spiritual life than in the physical. For even those who do not believe in the truth which we cannot define, but call by the name of spirit,—even they are obliged to behave as though they did believe it to be true, or at any rate, truer than the world which is evident to our senses. And so even they are often willing to accept death,—the termination of this physical life—for the sake of the true, the good and the beautiful. This fact expresses man's deeper urges for freedom, for liberation of itself in the realm of the limitless where he realises his relationship with the truth which relates him to the universe in a disinterested spirit of love.

When Buddha preached 'maitri'—the relationship of harmony—not only with human beings but with all creation, did he not have this truth in his mind that our treatment of the world is wrong when we solely treat it as a fact which can be known and used for our own personal needs? Did he not feel that the true meaning of creation can be understood only through love because it is an eternal expression of love which waits for its answer from our soul emancipated from the bondage of self? This emancipation cannot be negated in character, for love can never lead to negation. The perfect freedom is in a perfect harmony of relationship and not in a mere severance of bondage. Freedom has no content, and therefore no meaning where it has nothing but itself. The soul's emancipation is in the fulfilment of its relation to the central truth of everything that there is which is impossible to define because it comes at the end of all definitions.

The distinctive feature of materialism is the measurability of its outward expression, which is the same thing as the finiteness of its boundaries. And the disputes, civil and criminal, which have been raised in the history of man, have mostly been over these same boundaries. To increase one's own bounds one has necessarily to

encroach upon those of others. So because the pride of Power is the pride of Quantity, pride of the mere number of its recruits and victims, the most powerful telescope, when pointed in the direction of Power, fails to reveal the shore of peace across the sea of blood.

Such is the tragedy that so often besets our history when this love of power, which is really the love of self, domineers over the religious life of man for then the only means by which man could hope to set his spirit free itself becomes the worst enemy of that freedom. Of all fetters those that falsely assume spiritual designations are the most difficult to break and of all dungeons the most terrible are those invisible ones where men's souls are imprisoned in self-delusion bred by vanity. For, the undisguised pursuit of self has safety in its openness, like filth exposed to the sun and air. But the self-magnification with its consequent thwarting of the best in man that goes on unashamed when religion deadens into sectarianism is a perverse form of worldliness under the mask of religion; it constricts the heart into narrowness much more effectively than the cult of the world based upon material interests can ever do.

Let me try to answer the question as to what this 'Spirit' is, for the winning of which all the great religions were brought into being.

The evening sky is revealed to us in its serene aspect of beauty though we know that from the fiery whirlpools which are the stars, chaotic outbursts clash against one another in a conflict of implacable fury. But 'ishavasyam idam sarvam,'—over and through it all there is spread a mysterious spirit of harmony constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity, evolving ineffable peace and beauty out of the incoherently battling combatants perpetually struggling to elbow out their neighbours into a turmoil of dissolution.

And this great harmony, this ever-lasting Yea—this is Truth, that bridges the dark abysses of time and space, reconciles contradictions, imparts perfect balance to the unstable. This all-pervading mystery is what we call spiritual in its essence. It is the human aspect of this truth which all great personalities have made their own in their lives and have offered to their fellow-beings in the name of various religions as means of peace and goodwill,—as vehicles of beauty in behaviour, heroism in character, noble in aspiration and achievement in all great civilisations.

But when these very religions travel far from their sacred sources, they lose their original dynamic vigour, and degenerate into the arrogance of piety, into a utter emptiness crammed with irrational habits and mechanical practices; then is their spiritual inspiration befogged in the turbidity of sectarianism, then do they become the most obstinate obstruction that darkens our vision of human unity, piling up out of their accretions and refuse deadweights of unreason across our path of progress,—till at length civilised life is compelled to free its education from the stifling coils of religious creeds. Such fratricidal aberrations, in the guise of spiritual excellence, have brought upon the name of God whom they profess to glorify, uglier discredit than honest and defiant atheism could ever have done.

The reason is, because sectarianism, like some voracious parasite, feeds upon the religion whose colour it assumes, exhausting it so that it knows not when its spirit is sucked dry. It utilises the dead skin for its habitation as a strong-hold for its unholy instinct of fight, its pious vain-gloriousness, fiercely contemptuous of its neighbours' articles of faith.

Sectarian votaries of a particular religion, when taken to task for the iniquitous dealings with their brethren which so deeply injure and insult humanity, immediately try to divert attention by glibly quoting noble texts from their own scriptures which preach love, justice, righteousness, and the divinity immanent in Man—ludicrously unconscious of the fact that those constitute the most damaging inculpation of their usual attitude of mind. In taking up the guardianship of their religion they allow, on the one hand, physical materialism to invade it by falsely giving eternal value to external practices, often of primitive origin; and moral materialism on the other, by invoking sacred sanction for their forms of worship within the rigid enclosure of special privileges founded upon accident of birth, or conformity, irrespective of moral justification. Such debasement does not belong to any particular religion, but more or less to all religions, the records of whose impious activities are written in brothers' blood, and sealed with the indignities heaped upon them.

All through the course of human history it has become tragically evident that religions, whose mission is liberation of soul, have in some form or other ever been

instrumental in shaking freedom of mind and even moral rights. The desecration of truth in unworthy hands,—the truth which was meant to raise humanity morally and materially out of the dusky region of animality, is moreover followed by con-dign punishment, and thus we find that religious perversity is causing more blindness of reason and deadness of moral sensibility than any other deficiency in our education; just as, the truth represented by science, when used for ignoble traffic, threatens us with annihilation. It has been the saddest experience of man to witness such violation of the highest products of civilisation, to find the guardians of religion blessing the mailed fist of temporal power in its campaign of wholesale massacre and consolidation of slavery, and science joining hands with the same relentless power in its murderous career of exploitation.

When we come to believe that we are in possession of our God because we belong to some particular sect, it gives us a complete sense of comfort to feel that God is no longer needed except for breaking with the greater notion the skulls of people whose idea of God, fortunately or unfortunately—differs from our own in theoretical details. Having thus made provision for our God in some shadow-land of creed, we feel free to reserve all the space in the world of reality for ourselves, ridding it of the wonder of the infinite, making it as trivial as our own household furniture. Such unmitigated vulgarity only becomes possible when we have no doubt in our minds that we believe in God while our life ignores Him.

The pious man of sect is proud because he is confident of his right of possession of God. The man of devotion is meek because he is conscious of God's right of love over his life and soul. The object of our possession needs must become smaller than ourselves and, without acknowledging it in so many words, the bigoted sectarian nurses the implicit belief that God can be kept secured for himself and his fellows in a cage which is of their own make. In a similar manner the primitive races of men believe that their ceremonies have a magic influence upon their deities.

Thus every religion that begins as a liberating agency ends as a vast prison-house. Built on the renunciation of its founder, it becomes a possessive institution in the hands of its priests and claiming to be universal becomes an active centre of schism and strife. Like a sluggish stream the spirit of man is choked by rotting weeds and is divided into shallow slimy pools that are active only in releasing deadly mists of stupefaction. This mechanical spirit of tradition is essentially materialistic, it is blindly pious but not spiritual, obsessed by phantoms of unreason that haunt feeble minds with their ghastly mimicry of religion. This happens not only to mediocre individuals who hug the fetters that keep them irresponsible or craving for lurid unrealities, but to generations of insipid races that have lost all emphasis of significance in themselves, having missed their present in their ghostly past.

Great souls, like Ramkrishna Paramhansa have a 'comprehensive vision of Truth, they have the power to grasp the significance of each different form of the Reality that is one in all,—but the masses of believers are unable to reconcile the conflict of codes and commands. Their timid and shrunken imagination instead of being liberated by the vision of the infinite in religion, is held captive in bigotry and is tortured and exploited by priests and fanatics for uses hardly anticipated by those who originally received it.

Unfortunately, great teachers most often are surrounded by persons whose minds, lacking transparency of atmosphere, obscure and distort the ideas originating from the higher source. They feel a smug satisfaction when the picture of their master which they offer, shows features made somewhat in the pattern of their own personality. Consciously and unconsciously they reshape profound messages of wisdom in the mould of their own tortuous understanding, carefully modifying them into conventional platitudes in which they themselves find comfort, and which satisfy the habit-ridden mentality of their own community. Lacking the sensitiveness of mind which is necessary for the enjoyment of truth in its unadulterated purity they exaggerate it in an attempt at megalomaniac enlargement according to their own insensate standard, which is as absurdly needless for its real appraisalment as it is derogatory to the dignity of its original messengers. The history of great men, because of their very greatness, ever runs the risk of being projected on to a wrong background of memory where it gets mixed up with elements that are crudely customary and therefore inertly accepted by the multitude.

I say to you: that if you are really lovers of Truth, then dare to seek it in its fulness in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treasure up

Its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions. Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of man free from the bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of his creed; but in that lowland of traditions where religions challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

I do not mean to advocate a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform. The arrogant spirit of sectarianism which so often uses either active or passive, violent or subtle, methods of persecution, on the least provocation or without any, has to be reminded of the fact that religion, like poetry, is not a mere idea,—it is expression. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation; and our attitude towards the Infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending. When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all mankind, it degrades itself into a tyranny and becomes a form of imperialism. This is why we find a ruthless method of fascism in religious matters prevailing in most parts of the world, trampling flat the expansion of the spirit of man under its insensitive heels.

The attempt to make the one religion which is their own, dominate all time and space, comes naturally to men addicted to sectarianism. This makes it offensive to them to be told that God is generous in His distribution of love, and His means of communication with men have not been restricted to a blind lane abruptly stopping at one narrow point of history. If humanity ever happens to be overwhelmed with the universal flood of a bigoted exclusiveness, then, God will have to make provision for another Noah's Ark to save His creatures from the catastrophe of spiritual desolation.

What I plead for is a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of Man's nature in its most intense and universal need and so must constantly be tested by it. Where it frustrates that need, and outrages its reason, it repudiates its own justification.

Let me conclude with a few lines from the great mystic poet of mediæval India, Kabir, whom I regard as one of the greatest spiritual geniuses of our land:

The jewel is lost in the mud,  
and all are seeking for it,  
Some look for it in the east, and  
some in the west;  
Some in the water and some  
amongst stones.  
But the servant Kabir has  
appraised it at its true value  
and has wrapped it with care  
in a corner of the mantle of  
his own heart.

#### Sir F. Younghusband's Address

An account of what had deeply impressed him in Sri Ramkrishna's life and teachings was given by *Sir Francis Younghusband*, President, Society for promoting the Study of Religions, London, while presiding at the evening session of the Parliament of Religions at the Town Hall, Calcutta on the 4th. March 1937.

*Sir Francis Younghusband* said that he had come all the way from England because of the very deep regard which he had for many years past for the great work of Sri Ramkrishna. The reason why the speaker was first drawn to Sri Ramkrishna was because Ramkrishna more than any other man had taught the great simple principle of not merely tolerating other religions but also deeply appreciating them and penetratingly entering into them. The speaker was speaking as a Christian and what profoundly moved him was the way in which that great saint entered into the Christian religion, entered into the very simple spirit and teachings and life of Christ so that in a way they, Christians, were able to understand their own religion better for the way, in which Ramkrishna had entered into it.

The speaker reminded the audience of the story of how Sri Ramkrishna was so deeply impressed by the sight of a picture of the Madonna and the Child

that he went into a trance. While looking at that picture and thinking about it, Ramkrishna realised not only the fatherhood of God but also the Motherhood of God. Then they all knew the story, the speaker continued, of how Ramkrishna went about for some months, devoting all his time, all his concentrated attention and all his intensity of feeling into entering the spirit of Christ. Now, that deeply moved them, the Christians, because they felt that there was a Hindu, who though a Hindu of Hindus, for that period of time became a Christian of Christians. It was not only that Ramkrishna had affected the Christians, but also the Muslims, the Buddhists and others of other religions. And that was a very simple and very great principle that all religions should meet together, particularly in this critical time of the earth's history, history of the mankind, when there was such a terrible amount of disunion among men, it was exceedingly important that men of this spirit, men of religion should meet together and see in what way they could bring into the light of the world that spirit of harmony of which Ramkrishna was the apostle. What the speaker thought was very important was that they should meet together on occasions like this, as they met together in London last year at the world Congress of Faiths, and while each one carried back with him a deeper faith in his own religion, at the same time by meeting each other, by coming into spiritual contact with each other, he became a better Hindu, a better Buddhist, a better Muslim or a better Christian. In such meetings the very fundamentals of their faiths were forced upon them and each one of them was led to the highest ideal of the faith when it was realised that there was essential unity among all religions. Mankind was very greatly indebted to Ramkrishna for having spread that ideal and lived it in his own life. In carrying out that doctrine they came across one great principle which was a very simple principle too, and it was a very simple principle upon which the whole universe was governed and it was Unity in Diversity. Diversity always existed, varieties there would always be as there always have been, each one of them was different from the other as each particle of the universe was different from the other. They had to retain, each one of them, his own individuality but they must also realise that deep down was the fundamental unity, unity of all differences, of all varieties, of all diversities. They must know that it was not possible to make every one of them to think and act like one another and that by acting upon the doctrine mentioned above each one became truer to himself and truer to the divinity within him.

Concluding, the speaker said that great men like Sri Ramkrishna came to the world from time to time and they, humbler individuals, had to make the most of this great privilege of knowing their work, knowing their lives and meeting those who had met them, and they looked back upon those great men, tried to be like them, tried to enter into the spirit of their lives. But they must not stop here. They must not be always looking to the past. Their lives were made up of the past, the present and the future and while they looked back to the past as also upon the present and their great men they must also look into the future. They must realise that the future would be their own making and they must determine to make the world far better than the present one. When they looked to produce men like Ramkrishna they must look far into the future and must hope to produce even greater men than Ramkrishna.

Dr. D. R. Bhandakar, who presided on the 5th. March 1937, paid his tributes to the memory of Sri Ramkrishna and said that it was in the fitness of things that a Parliament of Religions should meet in India and in connection with the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramkrishna. What struck the speaker most about the life of this great saint of Dakhineswar was the spirit of research which he evinced throughout his life. He was a 'Sakta' among 'Saktas', a Vaishnava among Vaishnavas, a Muslim among Muslims, a Christian among Christians. He allowed himself to come also under the influence of such modern teachers as Ramanujam and Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Having thus learnt the principles of different religions the truth dawned upon his mind that ultimately all religions were one; it had been so for all times, it would be so ever.

Swami Viswananda, President, Ramkrishna Ashram, Bombay, spoke on the Unity of Religions. The need of the hour, he emphasised, was to discover the golden thread running through all the religions where they could exchange the ideals of different faiths just as they exchanged commodity in the market.

Reason and intellect were the two special attributes which a man was endowed with. But reason and intellect could lead a man to certain

heights only; a man's thirst for knowledge could not be satisfied until and unless a man had known the first Cause, the ultimate reality which was the explanation of all that was going about him, which was the source of the universe. All the great religions of the world were founded on the experience and realisation of individuals who claimed that they had known this First Cause, that they had seen God face to face. This effort to know the unknowable, to release the Reality was the very core of all religions. In this age of Empiricism and Positivism, in this age of Atheism and Agnosticism there was born a man in this country in whose name this Parliament of Religion had been convened. Sri Ramkrishna, who claimed to have seen God, to have conversed with him, to have established relationship with him. It was hard job for Sri Ramkrishna to convince a robust rationalist and full-blooded Spencerian like Vivekananda that he had seen God and conversed with him. Not content with the realisation of Samadhi, Ramkrishna wanted to know what truth there was in other religions. He was like a glutton who was never satisfied with a few dishes, he wanted to test more and more. He became a Christian, he became a Mahomedan and by practising those religions he came to the same realisation as he had found in Hindoism. It was therefore in the fitness of things that a Parliament of Religions should be convened in his name.

If they studied the different religions of the world, continued the speaker, they would find that every religion had three aspects, Philosophical, Mythological and Ritualistic. In Philosophy, in their fundamental basic principles all the religions were almost the same. But this religion in the hands of narrow-minded bigots and fanatics became an engine of oppression. It was religion that had created all that was beautiful, all that was sublime in human civilisation. It was religion again that had destroyed them. It was religion that had created love, brotherliness, even for the most distant peoples of the earth; And it was religion again that made a man behave like a ferocious brute, even with his neighbour. But those who had tasted the kernel of religion, it was they who, in this destructive world torn by hatred and dissension, showered love, sympathy and compassion and assured the world that in their philosophy, all religions were almost the same. So it was that in fundamentals, in basic principles, all religions were almost one. All the prophets and messengers of light claimed to have gone to a height where they held communion with God which Vivekananda described as a state of super-consciousness.

#### Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's Address

"I do not say that God has created man: I say that man in his urgent and emergent necessity created God and is recreating God every day. What is God, except our own individual consciousness of the Highest? What is God except the embodiment of our own need of Beauty, Truth, Wisdom and Courage?"—In these words Mrs. Sarojini Naidu addressed the Parliament of Religions at its evening session on the 6th. March 1937.

She asked the Parliament not to expect anything that had not already been said, from a person like herself who did not follow any doctrine or dogmas nor dare progress except in the step of the entire humanity.

She would plead with the Parliament to realise this that just as all the branches of a tree proceeding in diverse directions derived their strength from the same source, so also the different faiths of the world derived their strength from one source and that source was the need of humanity. "I do not say" she said, "that it came from God, I say that it comes from our need of God."

The speaker recalled how once she stood before an empty temple in Southern India and the idea dawned upon her that here was a temple where there was no image of any deity and men could create God in the image of his own soul. That was the message to the world of all the great saints and prophets of the world and that was the message of Sri Ramkrishna. For him the temple was always empty, because it was always ready for him to place his deity, no matter whether for the moment he projected himself into the soul of a Mussalman, Christian, Confucian, Zoroastrian, Sikh or a man of any other faith. He said: "Here is the temple of Humanity, and humanity must have a God. But how shall I find that God? Shall I produce Him in the image of my limited individual consciousness or shall I seek to find Him in the image of the infinite, the varied and the diverse, as He appeared to his children in the deserts of Arabia, on the mountain-tops, in the caves and forests of many lands?" Ramkrishna taught the world that the temple remained empty for man to create God and Godhood. Man became a part of the great Humanity when he re-

alised the oneness of God. Whether they said Alla-Ho-Akbar, or whether they bowed before the fire-temple of the Zoroastrian, or whether they knelt before the Cross of the Christian or made obeisance to the Granth-Sahib at the Gurdwara, they offered their salutations to the one and the same God. That was the only message that the speaker could give to the Parliament because that was the only religion that she had been taught by her father in her childhood.

**Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee's Address**

In his address to the Parliament *Sri Ramananda Chatterjee* said that when more than fifty years ago he came to Calcutta in the eighties of the last century to study in a college, the saint Sri Ramkrishna was still living and it was still possible to see him and hear his inspiring words from his own lips. But the speaker was never so blessed as to come into contact with him. So he could not say anything about him from direct personal knowledge. Nor did he think he was qualified to discourse on any theological, philosophical or scriptural subject.

The speaker would like to place before the Parliament briefly the result of self-examination caused by Sri Ramkrishna's teaching 'Jata mat tata path'. This saying of his had been variously translated, the meaning being, "as many faiths, doctrines, opinions or views so many paths to the goal of emancipation, liberation, salvation, God-vision or self-realisation." As the speaker never had the privilege to learn the exact interpretation of this teaching from him or from any of his direct disciples, he would refrain from any exposition of it.

As the Supreme Spirit was infinite, *Sri Chatterjee* continued, and His truth was infinite, it was obvious that no man could thoroughly know Him and comprehend Him. There were countless aspects of Him and His truth, and, therefore, countless approaches, too, to Him and His truth. These were contained though not exhaustively, in the scriptures of the various religions of the world and the sayings of its saints, sages, seers and prophets. The reference in Sri Ramkrishna's teaching, 'Jata mat tata path,' was to these. So the discovery of the paths implied serious study, meditation and spiritual discipline.

But if any one took the Paramahansa's words light-heartedly, as many of them unhappily were apt to do, such light-heartedness must involve great moral and spiritual danger. Many of them appeared to think that as in the opinion of the Paramahansa all religions were true it was enough for a man's salvation to be merely born a Hindu, a Jain, a Buddhist, a Zoroastrian, a Jew, a Confucian, a Taoist, a Shintoist, a Christian, a Mussalman, a Sikh, a Brahman or the Arjya Samajist or born in some other recent religious community and simply profess to be one to reach the goal of 'Moksha,' salvation or liberation. If that were so, why did even Sri Ramkrishna himself, blessed as he was from childhood with such a highly spiritual nature, with such Sadhana, put himself to such severe self-discipline? It might be said indeed that as he was born a Hindu but wanted to realise in full the truth of Christianity, Islam and some other faiths it was necessary for him to undergo the requisite self-imposed discipline. But almost all the austerities he underwent and the very difficult courses of Sadhana which he went through were meant for the perfect realisation of the ideal of Hinduism itself in which he was born. The example of Sri Ramkrishna showed that it was not enough to be born in any religious community and to pay lip homage to it. It was necessary to realise its ideal or ideals by external and internal discipline and also to realise the ideals of other religions by needful Sadhana, though for the generality of men it was not possible to do what he did. Therefore his saying, 'Jata Mata tata path,' was not meant to produce in them easy-going and smug self-satisfaction, the mother of intellectual and spiritual indolence and indifference. Whether one was a house-holder or a Sannyasi, one must undergo self-discipline. Every freak of fancy, every aberration of the intellect and every perversion of some sacred doctrine was not entitled to the dignity of the name of 'bat' in the sense of faith.

*Mrs. Sarala Devi Choudhurani* read a paper on "The esoteric science of the Aryan Rishis".

*Mr. Jean Herbert*, author, Paris (France), spoke on the message of Sri Ramkrishna in continental Europe. Vivekananda took the message of Sri Ramkrishna to Europe, but it was confined to the intellectual classes. It was Romain Rolland, one of the most generous hearts that the world had ever seen, who really started to spread the message of Sri Ramkrishna in Empire. His work on Sri Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda met with tremendous success and were translated into many languages. The great demand for his works indicated the amount of the



interest that he had been able to create among the people in Europe in Sri Ramkrishna's teachings could be seen from the fact that the French translation have received enthusiastic response from several Protestant clergymen and Roman Catholic ministers, from Psycho Societies, Principals of Universities and men of science and letter.

*Roi Bahadur Khasendra Nath Mitter* conveyed the most cordial greeting of the Calcutta University to the Parliament. The speaker felt that there was greater need for a meeting of this kind at this present moment because the speaker had found in the countries of the West where he had been recently that religion was more dead than alive and that there was no chance of infusing fresh blood into the religions which were in a decadent condition. The speaker was confident that India had a message to give the world and that message was a message of peace and goodwill not merely in name, but in reality and in substance.

Swami *Vijagananda* of Ramkrishna Ashram, Buenos Aires, Argentina (South Africa), *Ananda Kausalayama* of the Mahabodhi Society, Sarnath, Benares, Swami *Paramananda* and Prof. *Benjamin Rechad* of Mauritius also addressed the Parliament.

In a message to the Parliament, Prof. *Traian Herseni*, Institutul Social Roman, Bucharest (Romania), said:—"A Congress like yours is especially significant for our times and I should have felt greatly honoured by being able to assist in its midst. But my scientific and teaching work as well as other difficulties prevent me from participating personally in the Congress. I have to be content with simply being present in spirit among the participants of the Parliament. Please accept my sincere wishes for the success of your transactions."

In his message to the Parliament, H. E. Prof. *Dr. G. Tucci*, Rome said:—"It would indeed be a great privilege for me to be able to take part in the great congregation of faiths you have been organising and it is quite likely that on my way back from Japan where I shall pass the winter months on a lecture tour, I shall make a pilgrimage to Belur, and say a few words about the debt of humanity to the great Indian Master Sri Ramakrishna, in my humble way. Even if for some unforeseen reason I should fail to be present personally at the Congress, I shall send my address in time.

I can assure you that the message of Sri Ramakrishna is widely known and appreciated by the cultural circles in Italy, and our Institute shall spare no pains to contribute to the success of your Congress."

*Dr. E. T. Williams*, Professor (Emeritus) of Oriental Languages and Literature, University of California, U. S. A. writes:—

"Sharing fully the faith of Sri Ramakrishna that every religion is a path to God, I rejoice in the spirit that has prompted you and others to bring into one assemblage, as possible men of every race and creed, thereby making a practical demonstration of religious tolerance and promoting inter-racial and inter-national good-will."