

REPORT
OF
THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE
National Liberal Federation of India

HELD AT

LAHORE

On 17th and 18th March, 1945.

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FOREWARD.

The twenty-fifth, the Silver Jubilee, Session of the National Liberal Federation was held at Lahore on the 17th and 18th March, 1945. This was the first time that the Federation met in this Province.

The invitation to hold this meeting in the Punjab was extended by the Punjab Liberal League formed a year earlier, and the arrangements were undertaken by a Reception Committee specially organized for this purpose.

The Reception Committee is grateful to many persons who rendered most valuable service to the work of the committee in many ways; and we take this opportunity of recording our thanks to them, and likewise, to those whose generous contributions made our work possible. A list of persons who donated one hundred rupees or more is given below.

The meeting was disappointed that Sir Chiman Lal Sitalvad, the doyen of the Federation, was prevented from attending, at the last moment, by an accident. Pundit Hirday Nath Kunzru was away to America and Raja Sir Maharaj Singh to England; and the Hon'ble Dr. Srinivasa Sastri could not undertake a long journey in the present state of health. The conference was conscious of the gap caused by their absence.

At the same time, we are glad to record that the session was fully representative and the meetings were successfully held.

The choice of the President was particularly happy one. Rao Bahadur Venkatarama Sastri by his courtsey and consummate ability guided the conference most suitably, and to him our grateful thanks are due.

The Proceedings of the conference are now published for the information of the members of the Liberal Party and the public at large. We commend this Report to their perusal.

LIST OF DONORS.

			Rs.
1.	Hon'ble R. B. Ram Saran Das	...	400
2.	D. B. Raja Narendra Nath	100
3.	Dr. Sir Gokal Chand Narang	...	225
4.	R. B. Dr. Mathra Das Pahwa	...	200
5.	Seth Lachhman Das	...	200
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12.	S. B. Sardar Mohan Singh	...	100
13.	D. B. Krishna Kishore	...	100
14.	Mr. P. C. Mohindra	...	100

B. L. Rallia Ram,
Vice-President,
Haradatta Sharma,
General Secretary,
Reception Committee

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE
National Liberal Federation of India,

Held at Lahore, on the 17th and 18th March, 1945.

The Silver Jubilee Session of the National Liberal Federation of India opened at a specially erected Pandal on the Roberts Road, at the site of the First National Bank Limited, Lahore, at 5 P. M., on Saturday, the 17th March, 1945. There was a representative gathering of delegates, members and visitors, prominent among those present being Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. Bart., Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Dr. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, Mrs. Dandekar, Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, Dr. G. S. Mahajani, Mr. J. R. Gharpure, Mr. S. M. Bose, R. B. Chuni Lal Ray, Mr. M. D. Altekar, Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, S. B. Sardar Ujjal Singh, R. B. Labh Chand Mehra, K. B. Sardar Habib Ullah Khan, Mr. L. X. Rego, R. B. Durga Das, Mr. K. L. Rallia Ram, R. B. Janki Das Kapur, Seth Lachhman Das, Pt. Thakur Datta Sharma, Syed Hamid Ali, Syed M. Habib, Sardar P. S. Sodhbans, Mian Mohammad Shareef, Mian Abdul Aziz, Mr. P. Samuels Lall, Bhagat Gobind Das, Principal C. L. Anand, Prof. Abdul Qayyum Malik, Mian Ayyub Ahmad Makhdumi, Mr. Eric Banerjee, R. B. Ganga Saran, Mr. S. S. Bhagat, Prof. I. D. Sharma.

The President-elect was received by Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, K. B. Sardar Habib Ullah Khan, S. B. Sardar Ujjal Singh, R. B. Labh Chand Mehra, Bhagat Gobind Das, Mr. C. L. Anand, Sardar P. S. Sodhbans, Mian Mohd. Shareef, Mian Abdul Aziz, Mr. Haradatta Sharma and others and conducted to his seat. After the President-elect, the members of the Reception Committee and the delegates had taken their seats, the proceedings commenced with singing of national songs by a group of college girls.

In the unavoidable absence due to illness, of the Hon'ble R. B. L. Ram Saran Das, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, the Senior Vice-Chairman said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it is extremely regrettable that the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das, is unable, on account of illness, to be with us this evening. The duty of reading the address of the Chairmen of the Reception Committee on his behalf and of welcoming the President and the Delegates has, therefore, fallen upon me. I shall now read to you the address of the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

ADDRESS OF THE

Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das, C.I.E.,
Chairman, Reception Committee.

"Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I offer you all a most cordial welcome to the 25th session of the National Liberal Federation of India. We feel it a great honour that Lahore has been chosen as the place for the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Federation. We wish it had been possible for us to celebrate the event in a more fitting manner. What we lack in display we more than make up in sincerity of purpose.

We meet under the shadow of a great loss which Lahore, the Punjab, and I will add, India, has suffered in the death on the 9th March of Raja Narendranath. Great in character, conduct and contribution to national service, he will be missed at every gathering in Lahore for a long, long time to come.

Many events have happened since we met last in Bombay in the Xmas week of 1943. I should like to refer to several of them on this occasion. But on account of my continued ill-health, it has not been possible for me to do full justice to the task entrusted to me. I shall, therefore, confine myself to just a few matters, in the full confidence that my omissions will be more than made up by the President-elect, Mr. T. R. Venkātarama Sastri, in his presidential address, which we are all so eager to listen.

It is a matter for sincere gratification that the Liberal Federation has lived to celebrate its Silver Jubilee. It is a tribute to the principles and personalities that inspired and sustained our organisation. We recall with pride and gratitude the founders of the Federation, the late Sir Surendranath Banerjee, Sir C. Y. Chintamani, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, among others, who were stalwart veterans of the Indian National Congress. It was a great wrench to them to tear themselves away from the Congress which they loved and served so well, but a sense of duty to the country, as they saw it, persuaded them to do so and found the Federation and gave its principles which are progressive and practical. We are the inheritors of a great tradition, the Liberal outlook, the middle-of-the-road, the golden mean. It is up to us to live up to it and pass it on to our successors, in the hope and confidence that it will gather momentum and finally prevail. Let us do our task in that spirit.

Since we met last, the war situation has greatly improved for the Allies, and complete victory seems to be a matter of weeks or months. The defeat of the Axis Powers will be welcomed in India with sincere gratification and without any reservation. It is doubtful however, if the Allies will make as great a success of the peace-effort as of the war effort. We are tossed between hope and fear for the future peace of the world and the progress of India. The revival of old imperialisms and the creation of new ones and the imperialism of the white over the coloured races of the world, threaten to create the ideal conditions for a new and more disastrous world-war. Let us hope that the bitter lessons of the past will not be altogether lost on the statesmen of the world who are soon to meet at San Francisco, and that they will fashion a peace which reconciles the victors and the vanquished, the large and the small nations, the coloured and the non-coloured peoples of the world. It is a great pity that Mahatma Gandhi has not been invited to the Conference. Whatever be the apprehensions of the Allied Powers regarding his assistance to the war-effort on account of his creed of non-violence, none can have any doubt as to his invaluable and unique contribution to the peace-effort of the nations. It is also a great pity that the Indian Delegation to the Conference consists solely of officials, who, it is common ground, do not enjoy the full confidence of the bulk of the population of India and can at best represent only British imperialism in India.

In India among the events of the year of great significance were the unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi on grounds of ill-health, and his negotiations with the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah. It is a great misfortune that the Government did not grasp the hand of fellowship offered by the Mahatma. In view of the Mahatma's categorical denial of responsibility for, and disapproval of, the violence that followed the arrest of himself and the Congress leaders, there was no justification for the continued incarceration of Congress leaders and the refusal to establish, by convention, a truly national Government in India to take charge of her war-effort and her contribution to world-peace.

The better course seems to be that the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 should immediately be put into operation, for want of a better and agreed constitution as a trial. It is in some ways better than the present arrangement; it is already on the statute book; every effort to remedy it of its admitted and serious defects has failed and only left the situation worse. Once the federal Government is set up,

it will in due course after the war appoint a constituent assembly to frame a better and more acceptable constitution for India.

There are many other topics of current interest that I would like to touch upon if my health had permitted. But I must pass over them. I must however make one exception. The position of Indians in South Africa has been a running sore; it has recently suffered an aggravation. The Indian case has been admirably defended by Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, till recently the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa, by the Indian Delegation to the Commonwealth Relations Conference in London and by Dr. Khare of the Government of India in India. The position of Indians in South Africa epitomises a world-problem of the relations between coloured and non-coloured races and will have to be solved on global basis.

And now, friends, I should not wish to stand any longer between you and the President. I will conclude by once again welcoming you all most heartily to the Lahore session of the Liberal Federation and its Silver Jubilee. Forgive us for our shortcomings in making you fully comfortable. With these words I once again thank you all for the trouble and interest you have taken in our deliberations and making the conference a success."

The Chairman then called upon Sir Cowasjee Jehangir to move the election of the President.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir said:

"Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure of proposing that Mr. Venkatarama Sastri be the President of the 25th annual session of our Conference. Mr. Sastri is not unknown to us. He was our President in 1935. It is needless to say that he is very well known in the south of India and I am sure his work and worth have filtered to the Punjab and if you have not had the privilege of hearing him, you will do so today and that will make up for all that I can say to introduce you to Mr. Venkatarama Sastri.

Mr. Venkatarama Sastri was the Advocate-General in Madras. He then became a Member of the Executive Council, I believe it was for six hours. (Laughter). If Government was the poorer for the loss, the public life of Madras was a gainer. (Hear, hear). Ever since then, Mr. Venkatarama Sastri is well known all over India for his wise and sober opinions and politically he has led, at least, public opinion in his great province of Madras. He now comes north, let us hope to make us all a little wiser which I am sure he will do during the next two days of our deliberations. I have great pleasure in proposing Mr. Venkatarama Sastri as the next President of our Conference. (Applause).

In seconding the resolution R. B. Lala Labh Chand Mehra said: I have great pleasure in seconding the proposal of our distinguished countryman, Sir Cowasji Jehangir. Mr. Sastri is an old and distinguished leader and I hope he will give the lead that we need. I am sure that under his able guidance this session will be a success. His coming from such a great distance at the cost of his convenience shows his zeal for the cause. I do not wish to stand between him and you. I commend the resolution for your acceptance." (Applause).

Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram: Ladies and gentlemen, I need not put the resolution to vote because I am sure by your applause you have wholeheartedly approved the proposal made by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. (Applause) I now invite Mr. Venkatarama Sastri kindly to take the chair.

Mr. Venkatarama Sastri then occupied the Presidential Chair amidst applause and read the following address.

Address of the President.

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am deeply sensible of the honour that you have conferred on me by inviting me to preside over your deliberations this year. And you have my sincere thanks. This is not the first time that the Indian National Liberal

Federation has chosen to honour me. I have once before presided over your deliberations. That was at Nagpur in 1935, the year of the Government of India Act and of the Golden Jubilee of the Indian National Congress. Today we sit in our twenty-fifth-session; this is the year of our Silver Jubilee. In one sense, the first thirty-five years of the Indian National Congress that preceded the life of the Federation belonged as much to us as the Congress. If I may say so without offence to our brethren of the Congress, we here assembled today represent more nearly the authentic voice and tradition of the Congress that began its career in the year 1885, sixty years ago. Nor is it a reflection on the Congress to say so, as the Congress itself would claim to have brought into the old Congress a new way of life and method of action. Although we have often expressed our differences from the Congress, I have never before decried their work according to their chosen ways for the service of the motherland. At the session at which I last presided, greeting the Indian National Congress on the attainment of fifty years of life and work, I said as follows:—

“While we are meeting here, there take place all over India widespread rejoicings at the attainment by the Indian National Congress of the fiftieth year of its life. Most of us once belonged to it and can genuinely share in the memories of its early history. What if we have recently parted from it unable to approve of certain new activities and developments? Great endeavours, great trials, great successes marked the thirty-five years during which all that was patriotic, all that was employed in the service of the nation, was gathered under the one banner of the Indian National Congress. We may justly claim that the work accomplished, while we were still undivided, was in the highest degree essential to the building up of the nation, to the consolidation of scattered effort, to the emergence of clear ideals and noble aspirations. Since we separated and began to pursue our own methods, differing from those of the latter-day Congress, the two organisations have, no doubt, diverged widely. But behind these differences, is there not a unity of aspiration and a deep affinity of aim? They and we alike are pledged to the winning of India’s right to shape her own destiny and to her establishment as a free and self-respecting nation among free and self-respecting nations. We are colleagues in effort and brethren in service and we gladly extend to them our hearty felicitations and good wishes in the full trust that, moving along different paths where we must and treading the same paths together when we may, shall one day achieve the freedom and the glory of our common motherland.”

I cite the whole of it to-day for all that it says, for all that it implies and for all that was then out of our ken and now falls to be said.

This is the Silver Jubilee year of the Indian National Liberal Federation. It makes us turn back in retrospect. Many are the great names to whom our minds turn, Dadabhai Nowroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr. G. K. Gokhale, Mr. W. C. Bonnerji, Sir Surendranath Bannerji, Mr. A. M. Bose, Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Sir C. Y. Chintamani and others, among those no longer living; Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, among those still happily with us. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar who belonged to us now say that they have left us. They may say what they like, but they cannot cast off what is woven in the very texture of their minds. Speaking for myself I can any day entrust the framing of a federal constitution in the hands of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru as representative of the Liberal Federation. But more than all else my mind turns to the friend, philosopher and guide of our school of thought, M. G. Ranade. He comes into my mind when puzzled by the tangled skein of our present day conflicts and seemingly insoluble problems. There is a saying: Do not be elated in success nor unduly depressed in defeat. Both branches of this saying seem to me to be illustrated in all their aspects in these ten years of conflict and bungling in the public and political life of India. The immediate use of the maxim is that, dark and gloomy as things seem, there is no reason to be unduly depressed by it.

Ten short but eventful years are gone. How changed is the present situation. The situation then was far, far better than now. It has, since, distinctly deteriorated. We are in the grip of a deadlock from which it almost seems as if there was no way of escape, and a sense of frustration has overtaken us. If there was ever need for unity it was during these recent years. We have instead reached during these years a degree of disagreement and disunity, unknown at any time before in

our country's history. The leaders of the most powerful single party,—the Congress—are held under detention in gaols and can now make no contribution to any solution for the present situation. The Mahatma represents the Congress in his own peculiar way, both in and out of it, or neither in nor out of it, whichever way we may put it; but he can do nothing at this juncture, without consulting the members of the Working Committee of the Congress. The Muslim League and its leaders stand out for a separate sovereign State or States and will not listen to any argument about it and will not look at any proposal that does not concede it. The Hindu Mahasabha on the other hand, cannot bear to contemplate a division of India and cannot discuss any scheme based on it. No agreement as between all the parties is possible,—no agreement upon a constitution that will set the country on the road to freedom.

The war that is still going on, and we hope, coming to an end this year so far at least as Europe is concerned, has shown that small nations have no security, and that without the combined and pooled resources of many countries, great and small, and without their united and strenuous efforts, it would be very difficult to resist the might of a great foe, well equipped day by day with newer engines of destruction, made possible by the development of modern science, engines that would have been incredible five years ago. Our men have incidentally had the opportunity to take part in this war and measure themselves as against others in the process. They have earned credit and approbation, and their service and sacrifice have been acknowledged. If our people and their leaders had been made to feel that they are fighting for the achievement of their own freedom as much as for the preservation of the freedom of others, the contribution would have been many times more than it has been, and would have, at the same time, carried us further forward. And the relationship between the Government and the people would not have been what it is to-day and there would have been no sense of frustration. But the Government are content with what help they have received and are receiving, and they see no reason to go beyond the declaration of August 1940 and the Cripps Offer of 1942 which has been stated still to hold. The declaration of 1940 is read by Mr. Jinnah as a promise that no steps will be taken by the Government without his consent, and both here and in England, it has received the name "Jinnah's veto." Every effort to reach an understanding between rival parties has failed. A solution for the deadlock is being explored by the Sapru Committee. How that will end and what success will attend that effort is in the lap of the gods.

Let me, with your leave, briefly glance at the events during the last ten years that have landed us in this situation. As a result of persistent demands for the status and form of government which the other Dominions of the Commonwealth enjoy, and after eight long years of deliberation including three Round Table Conferences in three successive years, the British Government enacted the Government of India Act, 1935. With its numerous safeguards conceived largely in British interests, it is no wonder that it evoked no satisfaction in the minds of the Indians. In my address in 1935, I examined the deficiencies and shortcomings of the Act, but commended the working of the Act—no Act can be defeated by boycott of the Councils—without at the same time abating any effort to get the Act modified in India's interests. The Congress was at first reluctant but soon decided to stand for election and was returned with varyingly large majorities in seven out of eleven Provinces. After a six months' parley over the exercise of Governor's reserve powers, they accepted office in the latter part of 1937 and held office for two years or thereabouts. Within three months of acceptance of office, every Congress Province passed a resolution rejecting the federal provisions of the Government of India Act. The Government postponed putting those provisions into operation, especially as the Princes had in the meanwhile cooled down in their enthusiasm for the federation. I suppose the Political Department was never in favour of the Princes going into the federation. While the Congress was in office, their administration on the whole earned

credit for efficiency and won the approbation of the Government of India and even of Parliament who recognised that it was not beyond the capacity of Indians to run democratic institutions on Parliamentary lines.

I am not unaware that the actions of the Congress in the course of their administration were not always above criticism. I have had, on occasions, myself to oppose their measures and criticise their actions in strong terms. Want of previous experience in the art of administration, impatience in the pursuit of their laudable objects, an assured belief in their good intentions and rightness of their methods, lack of due consideration for the opinions of others, and in the face of differences, absence of any active effort to persuade or conciliate, or to accommodate or adjust, were in the main their weaknesses. Whatever other charges may be laid against them, they cannot be charged with communalism. And, to my mind, the extreme charge of tyranny and oppression of the Muslims lacked justification. I take it that it expressed not so much a charge founded on facts as a sense of deep dissatisfaction with affairs due to a combination of circumstances for which the Congress cannot be held responsible. And the period of their ministry was too short to justify any permanent characterisation of the attitude of the Congress in the field of politics. But that neglect of the Congress coincided with a period of defeat and a feeling of vexation and resentment in the minds of the Muslims. The claim of the Congress to represent all India, including the Muslims and the attempt directly to approach the Muslim masses were considered by Mr. Jinnah to be a challenge to the Muslim League and to his own leadership and as an attempt to undermine their influence with the Muslims.

When the war was declared by the Viceroy in September, 1939, without any consultation with the Congress Governments or the Congress leaders, the Congress felt that the honour of the country was touched and resigned office. They contrasted the treatment of the Dominions with the treatment of themselves. While a Dominion had even to be suffered to remain neutral, Indian representatives were not even formally consulted.

Before we pass on to the narrative of events during the war, let me indicate the origin and growth of Muslim claim to a division of India.

When the Government of India Act was passed, the idea of dividing the country had not arisen in the minds of the Muslims. One statement of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the great Urdu poet, in 1930, urging the unification of the four Provinces in North-West India was supposed to have adumbrated a division of the country between the Muslims and the Hindus. That has been denied by some and explained by others as not bearing the construction put upon it. I have seen in the pages of *The Statesman and the Nation* two letters of Mr. Edward Thompson stating on the authority of Sir Muhammad Iqbal himself that the idea had not his approval. In the next year, 1931, it was stated authoritatively on behalf of the Muslims that a division was not his meaning, but if it was, it had not their approval or acceptance. In 1933 the Cambridge pamphlet of Chowdhary Rahmat Ali deprecated the recognition of India as a country and objected to the very word 'India' in the name of the All-India Muslim League. The partition of India as between the Muslims and the Hindus was his scheme. But the Muslim witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee brushed it aside as a student's idea, not even seriously considered by any responsible person. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan characterised it as "chimerical and unpractical." So that, till we came to the Government of India Act, 1935, this idea had no support in any responsible Muslim quarter. The argument against so serious and disastrous a step had received no consideration in all its bearings at the hands of those who now treat it as a claim from which there is no going back. The first clear and decisive formulation of the claim was in 1940 in this very city. Books for and against the scheme have since been written by many writers.

The Hindu Mahasabha meanwhile opposed the Muslim demands, insisted on the indivisibility of India and required the transfer of power subject to all reasonable safeguards for minorities.

As already stated, the Congress resigned as a protest against the Viceroy's declaration of war without previous consultation with them and refused co-operation unless the independence of India was declared forthwith and a new constitution was framed by the Indians themselves in a constituent assembly elected by the Indians. In 1940, as a provisional measure until the constitution was framed, they asked for the formation of a National Government at the centre, commanding the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and securing the co-operation of the Provinces. The British Government met this by the "August Offer". They repeated their promise of full Dominion Status for India and conceded that the Indians were entitled to frame their own constitution. But while Britain was engaged in a life and death struggle, the setting up of a new constitution would not be undertaken. After the war, with the least possible delay, they would invite the assembly of representative constituent body. In the meantime they would assist any Indian efforts to reach a friendly agreement. The Congress rejected the offer. Mr. Jinnah maintained that nothing should be done without the prior assent of the Muslim League. The Indians distrusted the British intentions, in which they saw the old policy of divide and rule. Thus the controversy went on for a year.

The fortunes of war in the east and the fall of Singapore led the British Government to send out Sir Stafford Cripps with an offer, which has since been known by his name. Sir Stafford came with a draft declaration which had the consent of the British Cabinet. That declaration was intended to set out in precise terms the steps which the British Government proposed "shall be taken for the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India." They proposed to create a "new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion." An elected body was to be set up in India immediately upon the cessation of hostilities to frame a new constitution. The Indian States were also to participate in the constitution-making body. It contained a clause empowering any Province that was not prepared to accept the new constitution to maintain its present constitutional position, such non-acceding Provinces to have the same status as the Indian Union. Until the constitution can be framed the British Government must retain control of defence.

The offer was rejected by all parties but on different grounds. In so far as it furnished the means of dividing India and envisaged the creation of more than one Union, it was condemned and condemned rightly. The Right Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Right Hon'ble Jayakar and the Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri and many others objected to the non-accession proposals and declared that the creation of more than one Union will be disastrous to the lasting interests of the country and its integrity and security. The proposals as a whole were not accepted by any of the parties in India, and Sir Stafford Cripps returned disappointed.

The Working Committee of the Congress adopted the "Quit India" resolution. The Government met this with arrest and detention of Congressmen. The detention of the leaders other than Mahatma Gandhi continues, though many of the rank and file have been and are being slowly released.

What should we do? It is my considered opinion that we must definitely set our face against the demand of Pakistan. The world trend is now to unite countries in a common effort for the good of the world. It would be the height of folly and unwisdom to think of dividing a country now united. To create separate Sovereign States in India is to weaken the whole country.

I may state broadly the points that require consideration by those who have plumped for Pakistan, it seems to me, without full consideration of the many difficulties in the way.

Division of India, if it comes about, will be the abandonment of all our hopes for her greatness as an Asiatic Power who, in junction with

China, will be a bulwark of peace in Asia and so of world peace. That in itself is a serious loss.

The geographical features of the country had marked it for a great role and it has been the dream not only of the ancient Aryans of the very soil on which we meet, but it inspired successive rulers of the country to try to establish suzerainty over all the known kingdoms of the time and it has inspired great rulers like Asoka, the Guptas and more recently Akbar to attempt to bring all India under one rule.

Britain's effort in the same direction has at last succeeded largely by reason of the scientific discoveries which have annihilated distances and made different parts of India neighbours one of another.

During the last one hundred and fifty years, this country has been slowly welded into one State and what was an ancient dream has been successfully converted into reality. We now start an idea of division, not more than ten years old, without fully examining its political, economic, financial and strategical implications. The difficulties which have to be overcome are many and too serious to be lightly passed over. The claim for separation will prove detrimental not only to the whole country but also to the Muslims themselves.

Pakistan is no solution for the problem of minorities. The creation of separate Sovereign States does not really get rid of the minority problem altogether. There will be a large proportion of non-Muslims in the Muslim areas so separated and comparatively a small proportion of Muslims in the Hindu areas. Definite and satisfactory safeguards for the non-Muslims in the Muslim areas are offered. If such an offer is just and fair to minorities of over forty per cent in those Provinces, would it be impossible to devise safeguards for the protection of the essential cultural features of all groups including the Muslims within a United India?

What, again, of the expense of defence which each independent State will have to maintain? And would the defence organised by the separate States be adequate in the event of aggression? Will the four States in the North-west agree to join and belong to one State? Will the Punjab agree to look after their financial needs and requirements? Will the non-Muslim areas in the Punjab desire to remain in an independent Muslim State or claim to form a separate State of their own? If separate independent States are formed and they have their own armies, will joint action invariably result when emergencies arise? May they not be turned against each other in a fratricidal war?

The Muslim League appeals to the principle of self-determination. This principle is a much misunderstood one. It is a principle which, in the nineteenth century, was appealed to as an integrating force for bringing about the creation of single coherent nation-states, such as Germany and Italy, out of a mass of smaller, snarling units. If a group of people are already included in a State along with other groups, they cannot seek to get away from it in the name of self-determination. It is a case of secession from an existing State to which that principle does not apply and should not be applied. Its recognition in this sphere would lead to sheer anarchy. It has been recognised that it is impossible to grant independence to a section of the population unless they had a territory capable of sustaining the economic and political frame-work of a nation.

Writers have deplored that in the twentieth century, self-determination has become a disintegrating force, which, uncontrolled, will lead to very serious consequences for the peace of the world and for the welfare of the nations. Here is what Walter Lippmann says:

"Wilson made the mistake of identifying himself with the principle of self-determination. Forgetting Abraham Lincoln, forgetting the greatest constitutional issue in the history of the United States, he never paused to define the difference between self-determination and the right of secession. To make the principle of self-determination supreme law of international life is to invite sheer anarchy. For the principle has been and can be used to promote the dismemberment of every organised State. None knew this better than Adolph Hitler himself. The principle of self-determina-

tion was his chief instrument for enlarging the Reich.....At its worst, it rejects the ideal of a State within which diverse peoples find justice and liberty under equal laws and become a commonwealth. Self-determination, which has nothing to do with self-government but has been confused with it, is barbarous and reactionary. By sanctioning secession, it invites majorities to be intransigent and irreconcilable".

The idea of self-determination which did appeal at one time is now seen as requiring control by the conception of duties. The group owes a duty to those others who form part of the State. What they claim for themselves they must concede to others; and self-determination in such a case is nothing but anarchy.

In order to support their claim to self-determination, the Muslims urge that they are a separate nation. That claim cannot be seriously maintained. Men of all creeds including Muslims have lived in this country for centuries. The Muslims have lived alongside of the Hindus for eight hundred years and more. Very largely they are the descendants of converts from Hinduism. Separate nationhood is a discovery of recent years. That discovery is to attract the phrase of national self-determination in support of their claim. Describing others as sub-nations is to deny self-determination to them. That converts change their nationality by conversion or that those who profess the religion of the rulers at one time should found a claim on that fact has only to be stated to be dismissed.

Successive Viceroys have set their face against division. Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell have stressed the dangers which will beset the country from a division of India. Even Mr. Emery, after saying that notwithstanding differences in religions and culture, there is an underlying unity, both geographical and racial in India, remarks that—

"There is the political unity which she has enjoyed from time to time in her history, and which we have confirmed in far stronger fashion than any of our predecessors in a unity of administration, of law, of economic development and of communications. I would say indeed that if some sort of Indian unity had not existed it would have to be invented."

Even among Muslims there is a large and influential section against the division of India.

Modern problems have only stressed further this need for unity. These problems lie mainly in the economic field and here the differences, if any, are not between men professing different religions, but between the rich and the poor, the landlord and the ryot, the capitalist and the labourer, the producer and the consumer. In any future political organisation, it is along these lines that parties are likely to be sharply divided. The economic prosperity and welfare of the people of India can be promoted effectively only by pooling their resources together. This has been proved abundantly in the course of this war when it was found essential for the Central Government to take charge of the whole of India's food problem. Even the Indian States who tended to stress their Treaty Rights have now begun to realise that Treaty Rights must give way to that grim necessity of providing food to their starving subjects.

These considerations are not by any means exhaustive of all that may be urged against a scheme of division of India, which has been named Pakistan problem for its value as a slogan. Writers who are not in favour of a division of India say that the slogan has achieved its purpose, and it is time that Mr. Jinnah turned to real politics. Slogans are like ancient curses, not always recallable. When they are sent out on their mission, they acquire a momentum of their own and do their worst and not always stop with the achievement of the work intended. Whether Mr. Jinnah who has so far made the concession of Pakistan a condition of any discussion, constitutional or other, can now bring himself to put aside Pakistan and discuss the terms of a federal constitution is more than any one can say. It might be a vain hope. Still, I see no harm in saying that Mr. Jinnah who has demonstrated his power to hold up must now demonstrate his power to solve the Indian problem. If it is in the power of any one to

persuade him, it must be in the power of his colleagues and fellow-religionists. The problem of Indian unity was posed first in this Province and it must here receive its final solution.

So far I have not touched on what the Government should do at this juncture. The Government must declare immediately that India shall have the status of a Dominion at the end of the war. Her millions have fought in the battlefield for the cause of the United Nations. Cripps' offer contained that declaration, and the answers of Sir Stafford to the questions put to him made clear that the status of India shall be the same as that of the other Dominions, and that India shall have the same right either to remain within the Commonwealth or to go out of it. That declaration must be made forthwith and implemented so far as may be, by the British Government. While they are devising measures for the reconstruction of Italy, Poland and Greece, they can have no legitimate excuse for postponing the freedom of India. The intricacy of the problems in the countries mentioned above did not bar them from taking steps even when the war was on. And the Indian problem presents no features more difficult to resolve than the problems that they are solving now elsewhere.

I should say that the Governor-General should have released the political prisoners and the Congress detenus long ago. During times of war, the Government may have to be clothed with extraordinary powers in the interests of public security. I will concede that in the interest of public security, the liberty of the individual may have to be curtailed. But that very concession means that it is only so long as the public security demands detention, it can be justified. As soon as it is reasonably clear that public security no longer demands their detention, the detenus ought to be released. Neither the public peace nor the safety of the State any longer requires the detention of these persons, and the continuance of their detention is wholly unjustified. They should be immediately released. Even for a solution of the present deadlock, mutual consultations between the members of the Working Committee of the Congress are necessary and their continuance in goal and the refusal of the Government to allow mutual consultations between them only added to the difficulties in the way of finding a solution.

If the Muslims, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha and the other parties in the country are unable to agree upon any satisfactory solution, the recommendations of the Sapru Committee will, I hope, furnish the basis for a constitution of a United India. As already stated, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has strongly urged that the integrity of India should not be broken. Subject to that one condition, ample safeguards might be provided for protecting the culture, religion and language of the Muslims. The Government in power cannot divest themselves legitimately of their responsibility of finding a peaceful solution. Sir Muhammed Zafrulla Khan made a valuable suggestion when he said that if within one year after the war the political parties in India do not arrive at an agreed solution, the British Government must devise a machinery for resolving the present deadlock themselves. In the recent Dumbarton Oaks Conference, a formula was evolved for the solution of international conflicts by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other peaceful means, to be chosen by the parties to the conflict. Failing that, the conflict will be referred to the Security Council. Though this formula deals only with international conflicts, its principles may be applied for resolving the Indian deadlock.

The Native States are intimately bound up with British India. The peoples of British India and the Indian States are linked together in a number of ways. The economic position of the States is bound up with that of British India. The interdependence was brought to the fore when famine in Travancore and Cochin had to be averted by the distribution of food from British India. In the Round Table Conference the States agreed to come into the federation. Subsequently their enthusiasm cooled

down. In the new constitution they must be brought in and made part of the federation.

The time has come now when the States should have representative governments, and the peoples of the States should be given their due share in a popular government. In the Federal Legislature, not only the rulers of the States but also the subjects of the States should be represented.

It has been acknowledged on all hands that the economic position of India requires considerable improvement. The general poverty of the masses and the low standard of their life are well-known. The war has enabled us to see in how many directions the improvement of the country requires to be made. We have known of the great strides which England has made in several spheres of life. The industrialisation of the country is a matter of primary importance. The improvement of its agriculture demands no less attention. There have been many plans drawn up or in the process of being drawn up. I will not attempt to assess their exact value. The plans involve expenditure in astronomical figures; how they can be worked out is a matter for the experts to consider. But all agree that without a national government it will be impossible to put into effect any large-scale plan of economic policy. Here again the conclusion is forced on us that for the industrialisation of India, for the relief of poverty, disease and unemployment among the masses and for many other large-scale programmes like sanitation, transport, etc., it is necessary that there should be a united India pooling her intelligence and her resources in one concerted attempt to raise the standard of life of her people.

In the economic sphere, the picture is gloomy. The war has involved the masses in untold suffering and left them without the elementary needs of life. The tragedy of the Bengal famine is only an extreme manifestation of the general distress prevailing in the country. Food consumption in Britain and in U.S.A. stood at a high level, Britain maintaining her essential standard and U.S.A. even improving upon it. Though free from the direct ravages of war, India did not maintain the production of essential goods and the result was food famine, cloth famine, and famine of every kind. India will be a striking contrast to Australia and Canada, if we compare their economic development. The rate of development of other than war industries is pitifully small in India, and estimated at ten to fifteen per cent.

Trade and industry have suffered under controls not properly framed nor efficiently administered, and black markets have flourished. Prices have been fixed in ignorance of basic facts and without adequate appreciation of local costs of production. Goods required for domestic consumption were allowed to be exported. Imports of raw material, plant and machinery were not facilitated. Inadequate facilities were given for the development of essential industries.

The preparation for reconversion to peace economy and reconstruction is disappointing. Sir Ardeshir Dalal, the member for Planning, is just taking it on hand. The Government have promised large-scale industrialisation after the war and have constituted industrial panels and are making arrangements for technical training etc. But the immediate needs of reconversion of Indian economy have not been adequately met. The tax burden on industry has been crushing and the cost of rehabilitating industrial plant and machinery will be heavy, but tax allowances for the purpose are meagre. In Britain and U.S.A. productive capacity is even now turned over to peace production, so that their industries may be ready to capture the export markets of the world. But in India the output of domestic industry is appropriated for war purposes, while imports are allowed to meet the civilian needs. This will have most injurious effects on domestic industries. While the foreign manufacturer is enabled, even while the war is on, to establish valuable contacts in the Indian markets, the domestic manufacturer, in the name of war effort, is

made to lose contact with the consumers in his own country. In the result, he will, after the war, have to face the established competition of foreign producers.

On another aspect of reconversion also, present policy needs change. The productive effort of the country has to be stepped up considerably even now, if the arrears of the last five years have to be made up; but the Government postpone every scheme of development to the post-war period. They do not realise that immediate addition to the capital equipment of the country will help the war effort against Japan, besides serving India's own peace needs.

The post-war plans of India are so dependent on our sterling balances and yet this question has not been seriously taken up for negotiation. At the end of March, 1945, the sterling balances with the Reserve Bank of India are expected to be of the order of over one thousand millions sterling. Britain may ultimately repay her debts to India, but that will not serve our needs. Our external finance will be sorely needed immediately after the war for buying capital goods, but it is to be feared that just then Britain will not be able to pay. We have been told that the balances will not be available within five to ten years after the war. This is not a position that India can accept. Arrangement must be made for India's planning needs. If Britain is not able to supply herself, she must allow India to convert her credits into other currencies. The policy behind the Bretton Woods scheme excluding India's sterling assets from multilateral currency circuit is wrong. Britain should set apart some portion of the dollar credit she is getting from the U. S. A. for India's immediate use.

The war has almost come to an end and India's reconversion and reconstruction requirements demand that all her current dollar earnings are reserved for immediate purchase of plant and Machinery from U. S. A. Comparatively small amounts are provided out of the so-called Dollar Fund for the years 1944-45 and 1945-46. The time has now come for India withdrawing from the Dollar pool as the dollar position of the Empire has considerably eased according to Government's own admission, and there should be no objection to this.

Another important aspect of post-war planning relates to the commercial safeguards in the Government of India Act. In the last twenty years there has been an alarming influx of foreign companies into India, competing with and killing India's enterprises. Under the provisions referred to, any British concern can operate in India unhindered and can enjoy all fiscal and other privileges. I considered these clauses in my last address and the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri characterised these clauses as blackmail. One section of the Act provides for a convention. In any future constitution, there will be no protection for British interests in India. It will be left for negotiations with the future Government of India. That was made clear by Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Amery among others. It is gratifying that the Government of India have taken it up and a convention will be arrived at whereby Indian interests will be safeguarded in industrial planning, without leaving it over until the final constitutional settlement has been reached. It may be hoped that Britain will recognise India's economic aspirations and stand by her pledges. The Government of India have behind them the unanimous opinion of the people and must take a firm line. The sincerity of Britain's promise to help India's economic developments and her willingness to part with power would be tested by her action in this matter. Her assent to the abrogation of these unfair provisions of the Government of India Act will be one step in assuring this country that she is willing to part with political power.

The plight of Indians in the Colonies, and especially in South Africa, deserves our active sympathy and help. Their ancestors were

specially taken to develop the colony. They settled there and most Indians of this generation were born in that country, and to them India is a strange land. They have not become a part of South Africa with rights of citizenship. When they become entitled to rights of citizenship like any South African, our interest in their political welfare may cease. Till then it must remain part of our national concern. There must be an empire citizenship. It is a tragic irony that while the U. S. A. is willing to admit Indians on a quota system and give them rights of citizenship, South Africa should deny that right to the Indians settled there. The Government of India should take such steps as might be necessary to protect them, and the British Government should see to it that this grave injustice is remedied and further embitterment averted.

Recruitment in the services just now has an alarming aspect and needs our close attention. It is regrettable that the process of Indianisation in the services has not been accelerated. The recruitment in the officers' cadre in the army is still disappointing. The Foreign and Political Departments are still largely kept a close preserve of the British. A large number of Europeans who have been recruited in the key services during the last six years lead Indians to suspect that a foundation is being laid for decades of domination. No change in the composition of the services till a new constitution is agreed to is spurious and untenable as an explanation. Hear the statement of Mr. Moon who had recently to resign from the Indian Civil Service in the Province :

"Whether India elects to remain a willing partner in the British Commonwealth or whether she turns away in anger, there will be little room left for Englishmen as administrators or as political advisers. Technical and Scientific experts, specialists of all kinds, will be needed in plenty. But it is improbable that India will desire or require any more non-specialist officers such as are found in the Indian Civil Service and Indian Police. Even those who are already there, if they are without faith in or affection for the people of India,—and there are many such,—would be best removed. For they will do no good to England or to India."

A final word before I close. The international world acts on the maxim, "each for himself and the devil take the hind-most." Adventurous European nations unfavoured of Nature set out in quest of fortune and founded empires. Imperialism is no longer consistent with democracy. It has been proclaimed time and again that the war aim of the Allies is to make the world safe for democracy. It may be that the need for change of Imperial notions is being recognised by the leading thinkers of the world. But habits formed die hard. France and Holland are still thinking of gaining lost ground in Asia and resuming their sway. Britain will regain Burma, but will not make any promise of self-government. The excuse of internal differences too deep for self-rule is not available in the case of Burma. It is not that the world cannot settle down, each on its own,—Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland show the way for honest and efficient lives. As Mr. Sumner Welles puts it :

"I believe that these new forces of Nationalism can successfully be canalised into peaceful and constructive channels, only if the powers of the world in a future international organisation are willing to adopt the basic principle that no nation possesses the inherent and unlimited right to dominate alien peoples."

There will be no peace so long as imperialism lasts,

As for Britain's attitude to the future of India, words promise, but action denies. Words uttered in adversity are forgotten on the turn of the wheel of fortune. Conduct seems to reinforce the assertion 'what we have, we hold'. But some leaders of thought in England have deplored this attitude and have urged the need for giving independence to India. An independent India will be an asset even in the present war against Japan.

Everything plainly indicates the need for unity and united effort of all parties in India. None but the wilfully blind can fail to see it. There is an ancient exhortation in the most ancient book of this, or any land, belonging to the very soil on which we stand to-day, by one of those ancient seers who were prophets, priests, patriots and politicians, all in one. It must be unfamiliar to most in its own vastly changed birth-place. But I venture to intone it, fully conscious of the temerity of what I do. I pray you to be patient while I do it, and I will redeem the rashness by translating it to you in the strange, but now more familiar language in which I address you."

"San gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam
Sam vo manamsi janatam
Deva bhagam yatha purve
Sanjanana upasate
Samanam mantrah samitih samani
Samanam manah saha cittam esham
Samanam mantram abhi mantraye vah
Samanena vo havisha juhomi
Samani vah akutih
Samana hrdayani vah
Samanam astu vo manah
Yatha vah susahasati."

These are the last three verses of the Rig Veda.

Here is the translation by F. H. Wilson :

"Meet together, talk together,
May your hearts apprehend alike
Even as the ancient gods
Concurring accepted their portion (of the sacrifice).
Common be the prayer of these, common be their acquirement,
Common be their purpose, associated be their thoughts,
I repeat for you a common prayer,
I offer for you a common oblation.
Common be your intention,
Common be the wishes of your hearts.
Common be your thoughts.
So that there may be complete union among you."

This deserves to be the common prayer of the land and deserves to be translated into all its languages. Its fervour and its lifting rhythm and music can be reproduced by an Iqbal for the Muslims in their admirable language so expressive of majesty and power".

[Proceedings of the Session]

Chairman:—Ladies and gentlemen. I move the first resolution on the agenda which is as follows:—

"The National Liberal Federation of India has learnt with deep sorrow the sad news of the death of Dewan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath who was an outstanding personality in the public life of the Punjab for over a generation and generous friend and supporter of the Liberal cause. In him India has lost a public man of rare gift and charm who had rendered valuable services to the country.

The Federation also placed on record its great sense of loss at the sad deaths of Dr. Rajeshwar Ball, R. B. Bhagwati Saran Singh and Dr. S. P. Sanyal who were all prominent members of the Federation and its Council and rendered valuable services to the Liberal Party and to the country.

The Federation conveys its heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families of the deceased in their sad bereavement.

The resolution was unanimously carried

Chairman:—The next resolution which I am putting from the Chair is:—

"The National Liberal Federation of India expresses its great satisfaction at the success of the Allied arms on all the fronts and at the splendid contribution made to it by the Indian forces by their acknowledged valour and heroism in the various

theatres of war and hopes that complete victory will soon crown their efforts."

The resolution was unanimously carried.

Maulana Syed Habib :—Mr. President and comrades. The resolution that I am required to move reads thus :—

"The Federation de l'ores the continuance of the political deadlock in India and regrets that the Government of India have not yet released all the members of the Congress Working Committee and the other Congress leaders so as to enable them to make their contribution to the satisfactory solution of the Indian problem."

Friends, when after a number of years—whatever the limit—India has ceased to be a part of the British Empire and the subjugation is ended and the historian writes that a handful of people from six thousand miles came and governed forty crores of people, he will be dubbed as a fiction writer instead of a history writer. Great as has been the achievements of the British in governing us physically their greatest glory and our greatest shame lies in the fact that we have not been able to evolve to this day a lingua-franca of our own. In interprovincial gatherings we think, write and speak in English. You will excuse me, friends, if I elect to address you in Hindustani (*Maulana Syed Habib then spoke in Hindustani*) When the War started, Great Britain, which is in possession of India, announced on behalf of India, for its own sake, that India was in the War. I can say from the platform of this Federation that nobody in India wanted to side with the two powers, namely, Germany and Japan. It was, therefore, the right of India when there were legislatures functioning, to declare war on behalf of India after this matter was considered in all the provincial legislatures and in the Central Legislative Assembly. If that course were adopted, there would have been great, moral, economic and physical effort and there would have been whole-hearted support of India for the prosecution of the war. The responsibility for the ravages caused by this war are due to Great Britain which has not given any chance to India for a complete war effort. If Great Britain had allowed the Congress to fight, then the result would have been quite different. For this reason the Congress, as a matter of protest, asked its ministries in various provinces to resign and rule under Section 93 of the Government of India Act 1935 started in the provinces. From that time till the present moment the government are ruling by means of ordinances and controls. Not only India but the whole world has cried out, even those powers who are allies of Great Britain, such as America, and asked the Britishers to finish with such a rule. It is a fact that after great sacrifices it is now being realised that victory would have been easier if India had been allowed the chance to join of its own accord and had been allowed to pull its full weight in the prosecution of the war. By means of this resolution it is sought that this political deadlock should end once for all. The British authorities say that this would happen only when the Congress says that they take back their resolution of August 1942. The question is, who should take back that resolution? We, you or the Congress people outside should take it? No. The only body which can do so is the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. It is rather strange to expect withdrawal of the resolution from the members of the Congress Working Committee while they are in jail, while they are not allowed to meet anybody. Today the name of India is connected with Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi has allowed the Congress to form its own ministry in the North West Frontier Province. He has declared that he does not want Civil Disobedience and he has more than once, by his actions and by his words, made it perfectly clear that he does not want any trouble to start in India. If those in power in New Delhi are honest, they should realise that the Congress policy is being framed on the lines on which they—the authorities—want it and therefore, those in power should move a step forward and release the leaders. To say to the Congress that their sympathies were with the enemy countries is such a dirty thing that it should not be uttered by any self-respecting person. The Congress does not want the possession of India either by Great Britain or anybody else. If I am against Pakistan

It is because I want that there should be the rule of Indians in India. If Afghanistan and Iran attain power and direct their attention towards India then it should be realised that there are more Muslims here who would oppose them. *(Cheers)* Under these circumstances to say that we were prepared to welcome Japan is nothing but scandalous. Japan has learnt the lesson that in the name of 'so-called freedom' the world cannot be made a slave. Extensive propaganda is being carried on in the Punjab that the political prisoners are in great comfort here. When I was in the Lahore Central Jail—I have experience of ten years' jail life, last time I was there for three years and I hope that I will be there again *(Hear, hear)*—I met there a professor who was very much tired and run down due to heat. I had my own fan which I switched on and I asked my convict cook to bring tea and toast for him. When he had it he said to me, "I thought there is great trouble in jail but I find that there is great comfort over here." I said, "Professor Sahib, why don't you also come over here?" *(Laughter)* If Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru is in jail and if he is given good things, then is it the price of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's life in jail? The comforts provided in jails to the European class thieves, dacoits and other bad characters are more costly than those provided to political prisoners. When in jail I was paid Rs. 1-4-0 per diem while the fuel alone would cost me ten annas. Our precious ones are in prisons and I press that they should be released forthwith. With these few words I place the resolution before you for being passed-

Mr. P. K. Rao :—Friends, I wish I could follow my predecessor both in the matter of language and eloquence. I confess, however, that I would not be able to do either of them and I, therefore, speak in English in support of the resolution which he has moved. In the first place, I am glad that our President has given priority to this resolution. It seems to me that without this resolution the second one regarding the political situation would not be very relevant. The release of the political prisoners is essential to any political solution in this country. You will notice that the resolution is drafted in very moderate terms. We are moderates and we always use very moderate language but we weigh our words. It is with regard to our patriotism that we are not moderates and we are as good as extremists, as anybody else, but our language is deliberately moderately worded. It does not convey to the full the feelings which we have on the subject. I do not think we can too strongly condemn the continued detention of the political prisoners in jails. Among the Liberals, opinion was unanimous at the time the Congress resolution was passed that the Congress was not prudent in passing the August 1942 resolution but even then there were people, and I count myself among them, who doubted the wisdom of Government in arresting these people wholesale and incarcerating them. It was extremely unwise of the Government to have done so. I believe there had not been sufficient justification for them to do so. It seems that their continued detention now is wholly unjustifiable. Even if there was apprehension at the time that the war-effort might be disturbed by these people, now, after so many years, when the war situation has eased, for anybody to pretend that the release of all these Congress leaders is going to disturb the peace of the country and will hamper the war-effort is nothing but moonshine. It seems to me that the real purpose of continued detention of these people is not so much to keep peace and security of the country as to humiliate these people. Because of that we resent the action of the Government, motivated, as it is by a false idea of humiliating the Congress men and breaking their morale and spirit. That is something which we shall not sympathise with. We will not like it done by anybody in the world. Later on we will come to another resolution in which we say that even the vanquished in the war should not be so treated. Humiliation and vengeance will only provoke greater bitterness. We in this country feel bitterly indeed at the way the Government had been treating these persons. I can say that their incarceration and their treatment in jails makes the blood even of Liberals to boil. There is no justification whatever except, as I said, vengeance

and the desire to crush the public-spirited persons of this country. To that we cannot be a party, and today we believe that, even if there were any justification for imprisoning them in 1942, that justification does not exist any longer, and they ought to be released immediately. Not only justice demands it but the future progress of India depends upon it. The Congress-men should be there in order to help us to solve the difficulties that we are faced with and their representatives should be present at the Peace Conference and they should take a hand in the post-war development of this country. For all these purposes we believe that the Congress people should be released at once so that they may be able to take their part in the public life of the country. (Cheers)

Mr. B. J. Ghaffar supported the resolution. 28 pages 33.
Chairman: Ladies and gentlemen, the next resolution with regard to political situation, will be moved by Mr. B.L. Rallia Ram.

Mr. B.L. Rallia Ram: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution which has been entrusted to me is an important one. It deals with the political situation and is in three parts. It is as follows:—

- “(a) While adhering to its opposition to any division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan, the Federation is of opinion that without prejudice to the different view points on controversial issues relating to the ultimate form of the future Indian Constitution, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Maha Sabha and other important political parties and interests should, during the period of the war, unite and cooperate with a view to the formation of national government both at the centre and the provinces and urges on the British Government the necessity of forming such a government at the centre and treating it on the same footing as a Dominion Government. The Federation is convinced that the formation of such government would help to clear away misunderstandings and promote mutual confidence and lead to the solution of many urgent and important domestic problems pertaining to national economy of the country.
- (b) The Federation deprecates the policy of the British Government in assuming the role of passive spectators and presses upon it the obligation actively to participate in the solution of the present political deadlock and in taking constructive steps to promote the establishment of National Government both at the centre and in the provinces composed of important political parties and interests,
- (c) The Federation urges the British Government to announce without delay that they would be prepared to implement their promises to India on the basis of an agreement between the various political parties and interests or in the absence of such agreement if necessary by themselves enacting a Dominion constitution for India within one year of the cessation of hostilities.”

As I have already pointed out, this resolution deals with several important issues. All these issues, however, are identical and form links in one and the same chain. It has therefore been considered desirable that all these issues should be dealt with by one resolution, so that we may have a complete picture. The principle underlying this resolution I may venture to say, is the basis of agreement between all the Indians. There is no difference of opinion anywhere—perhaps barring a few exceptions which prove the rule—that the time has now

come when any further postponement of Indian self-government is going to be greatly prejudicial to the future development of this country and that every hour that is passed under the present constitution is detrimental to the best interests of this nation. On that we are fundamentally agreed, whether we are Congressmen, or the members of the National Federation, or of the Hindu Maha Sabha or of the Muslim League. In fact all the parties are united in their demand that the Indian Self-Government is no longer postponed in the interest of India. If we do not get full self-government within a short time and peace were concluded and at the peace table India is represented by pseudo representatives, you know what will happen. Therefore, it is most important that at the peace conference India should be represented by its own accredited leaders and that they should find an honourable place in any and every international conference. If this does not happen, then the injury done to the interests of this country will be very grave indeed. Therefore, we must make every effort to see that our demand is conceded as early as possible.

The first part of the resolution relates to the formation of a National Government, which is immediately wanted. We can understand some people saying that we cannot forge a new constitution at the present time and that we should wait for 2 or 3 years till the war is over and till the machinery is settled by which a new constitution can be built. But the circumstances are such that we cannot wait even for a day for the formation of a National Government because the sooner we come into power, the better for our nation. The Government has told us that as soon as an agreement is reached between the various parties, they would be prepared to concede to this demand. Efforts have been made to come to agreement but they have not succeeded. I need not go into the history as to why those efforts have not come to fruition. But it is incumbent upon the nation to reconsider its position and make new efforts till success is achieved.

But we go further; in the second part of the resolution we say that the Government cannot take advantage of the position of this kind and say, we have no responsibility. What the British Government has so far done is simply this: it has said, 'agree between yourselves, and if you do not agree, then remain where you are.' Well, that may be to a certain extent a logical position, but at the same time can a Government, which considers itself responsible for the welfare of India, say, "we have no responsibility." They do not hesitate to solve such problems when it suits the government. In the past, when the parties did not agree even in England, what did the Government do? Did they say to Ireland that unless agreement is arrived at between the parties there, she would not get Dominion Status? Government did not evade its responsibility, but it said that it would solve the problem for them. I fully realise that the Government is not in a position to make final solution for India, and if a solution is made by the Government, it may not be acceptable to this country and also it may not be in the best interests of the country. But the point is that government cannot simply say "we have no responsibility." I submit that Government has a responsibility and it is the duty of the Government to find out the mind of the country. To-day, they have the resources for doing so, they should go to the right people. But if they purposely go to the wrong people, then naturally they will never be able to find out what India wants. They know who the right people are, the people with great influence. So, there is no reason why they should not be able to find out a solution of this problem. We, therefore, in this resolution, in the first place, appeal to the various political parties to make a sincere effort to come to some agreement. This Federation has always been against the solution which has been offered by way of Pakistan. But in this particular resolution there is a loophole, that is, we have said, in the second place, that we are not anticipating as what will happen

in the future. When the time comes all parties should unite and cooperate on an honourable basis so that a National Government may come into existence. It is further hoped and believed that by this very process, they will come to understand each other and they will, perhaps, have a deeper understanding of the minds of each other and thus this step may pave the way for India to have a rightful place in the economic and political world which will come into being after the war.

In the third place we are asking that Government should make a declaration. Of course, the Government will say, "We have made several declarations and have said that as soon as an agreement is reached, you shall have what you want." They know that so long as the actual time does not come, the people will continue to fight for power. Once the Indians know that within a measureable time, the Indian self-Government will be a reality, then the solution will be much easier because the people will recognise that the responsibility is now to be thrown upon them. As a matter of fact, at the present time, if you go anywhere you will find that generally people do not believe that the self-Government is going to be conceded. That is after all human. Self-Government is very seldom conceded, it is always to be won.

I hope that this resolution will receive your full consent. There may be one thing to which you may not agree and it is about the use of the word 'dominion.' It means, a unit which has full-self-governing right of remaining in or remaining out of the British Empire. If it is possible to remain in, then we should remain there as an honourable partner, as an equal partner and as a partner who is in no way inferior to any other partner, we must have equal rights of contribution towards the world security, and have equal rights and place in the economic world. There are always advantages in remaining as an equal partner within the British Empire. The Liberals have always been realists and they rather like to take those steps which are possible to take and then think of pure ideals, which have no chance of being realised.

This is the advice which our President also gave us. I say that our slogan should be that we will gladly receive what is offered but we cannot be satisfied with it. We should say you are giving us this, we will take it but we want more. You are giving us one pice out of a rupee we will have one pice but we propose to claim the balance as well." This resolution therefore is realistic in that sense. We think that at the present time dominion status is not only a possibility but an absolute necessity. We shall take it. If we find that it does not give us what we expect, we will struggle for complete independence. With these words I commend this resolution for your acceptance.

PRINCIPAL C. L. ANAND : Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen : I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution which has just been moved by my friend Mr Rallia Ram. The wording of this resolution is that India should have national government during the war and dominion status within one year of the termination of hostilities, with the agreement of political parties, if practicable, and without the agreement if agreement is not possible. Sir, it was in 1917 that His Majesty's Government gave a pledge to this country for the establishment of a responsible system of government. Twenty-eight years have passed and India is still a dependency. We are often told that political parties all over the world have their slogans and have their stunts ; but it is hardly a fair position for the British Government, who are the trustees of the interests of hundreds of millions of people of this country, to resort to any slogan. Whenever this country has asked for the reforms and progress in the course of war on lines of National Government we have been asked to produce an agree-

ment. A condition precedent of that kind, however, has no support in the history of Indian constitutional reforms. The declaration giving a pledge to India of responsible government was made in 1917 and no such condition precedent of an agreed constitution was inserted in that. When the Constitution Act of 1919 was passed, and its Preamble defined the accepted policy of reforms in relation to constitutional progress in this country, no such condition of an agreed constitution was inserted in the Preamble. When the Constitution Act of 1935 was passed nothing of the kind was inserted in that great measure. The British Parliament has had occasions to pass Acts of constitutional reforms on numerous occasions in relation to this country, but there was not a single occasion when the reforms were made on the basis of the consent of the people of this country or on the basis of any agreed plan presented by the political parties of this country. This position that India should give an agreed constitution is unprecedented in the history of Indian constitutional reforms, and it merely means that the government are playing the obstructive role which is not a right position for the British Parliament to adopt after all these pledges were given to India in these declarations and the statute. Sir, before 1917 this position could have been taken up that the Indian parties should come up with an agreed solution in order to effect reforms in this country. This position cannot be taken up after the year 1917 because in 1917 the British Parliament accepted a definite policy in relation to this country, that policy being the establishment of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. Having accepted that policy and having stated later on that this responsible government means dominion status, and having repeated these pledges on so many occasions it is out of place to-day to say "come up with an agreed solution." The policy is already defined. India is to have responsible government and dominion status, and having defined that policy now they should confer responsible government and dominion status on India. Is it possible to imagine that in a vast country like India with a great magnitude of its territory and with hundreds of millions of its population, with numerous provinces and provincial governments, with nearly 600 Indian States and with such vested interests, we could evolve an agreed constitution for this country. It means that so long as this kind of demand persists it should not be considered as surprising if the critics say that the British government is not acting bone fide in the fulfilment of the pledges given to this country since 1917. After all what are these political parties whose agreement is demanded? The chief political parties are the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Do they constitute the whole political life of this country? Are there not hundreds of millions of people who are not attached to any political party in this country? Should they be ignored? Are there not millions of people in this country who are cooperating with the government in working the reforms? Are there not millions of people who are rendering services on the civil as on the military side in the prosecution of war? Are they to be ignored and are their wishes to be ignored in this country? Are they not entitled to be heard? The agreed solution is demanded only from these two great parties, the Muslim League and the Congress. I do not in any way say that they are not the chief political parties in the country. They are the chief political parties and they are best organised parties, but there are millions of people who are outside the ranks of these parties: their position could not be ignored by the British Government. It should go ahead with the scheme of reforms. I may mention that if this demand of an agreed constitution had not been put forward there would not have been that bargaining tendency among the political parties in the country which we find today. As a matter of fact this bargaining tendency and the pitching of their demands to a higher level is the practical result of this position which has been taken up by the British government that we should come up with an agreed constitution. I, therefore, consider that under this condition which has been put forward there shall be no further

advance in our constitution and that India will not have national government unless an agreed constitution comes and India will not have dominion status unless an agreed constitution is put forward, that is not a satisfactory solution of the Indian problem, and the people of the country are not satisfied with that kind of position. I have great pleasure in supporting this resolution which my friend Mr. Rallia Ram has put forward. India is entitled to claim national government during the war and dominion status within one year of the termination of hostilities, whether there is agreement between the political parties or not. (*cheers*)

Mr. M. D. Altekari:—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen: You have listened to two eloquent speeches showing why this resolution should be passed. I will not take much of your time but I will only draw your attention to the three important parts of the resolution. Our object is that there should be national government in India even during the war: we do not want to wait for the reforms till after the war. With this object in view there are three different requests made in the three parts of the resolution. In the first place we ask all parties to unite and co-operate with a view to establishing national government in this country. In the second part we ask the British Government not to be passive spectators to what is going on here but be active helpers in the cause of this country. In the third section we ask the British Government to announce without delay that they would be prepared to implement their promises to India on the basis of an agreement between the various political parties and interests or in the absence of such agreement if necessary by themselves enacting a Dominion constitution for India within one year of the cessation of hostilities.

Just now my friend Principal Anand has referred to the demand for an agreed solution. I think it was an evil day for this country when any of us agreed to the proposal of an agreed solution. Agreed solutions are impossible when there is a powerful third party to disturb them now and then. Consequently this demand on the part of that powerful party for an agreed solution is surprising if not insulting. Suppose the British Government declare tomorrow—we do not wish they should declare—that within one year of the war, after taking their bag and baggage, they are going to leave this country, an agreed solution will be very much possible rather than to-day. Therefore this demand for an agreed solution is an amazing one. Well, since the demand has been made and since some of us are busy in trying to arrive at an agreement inspite of the disappointments in that direction more than once, we request the political parties to unite and to co operate for such an agreed solution. After all for hundreds of years we have been living in this country together: we were born here and will die here. Whatever we want can be accomplished only in this country. Whether we are Hindus, Muslims or any other community this country is ours. We belong to this country. In the common interest of our great country we should unite and co-operate. The whole conception of the establishment of national government in India was to develop this unity in this country and to make one country of this great continent. It seems to me quite strange that after 60 years or more of the existence of the Congress and other political parties we should be thinking of dividing this country by applying various methods and not talk of a nation as far as this country is concerned. Therefore we appeal to the political parties to unite and co-operate. Then we appeal to the British Government not to be indifferent spectators. In fact the whole thing is becoming a joke when the British get up and say “we are ready to part with power but give us an agreed solution.” People who profess that they are prepared to part with power at the present moment do not really want to part with power: they want to remain in power; and this demand for an agreed solution is an excuse for not parting with power. The British people cannot remain indifferent spectators to what is going on

in this country. Therefore in the third part we request for a solution by herself with or without any agreement and declare dominion status. They have great experience in democracy and in framing constitutions based on dominion status. Let them put that constitution into operation as soon as possible. The crux of the present political position is that the Englishman generally speaking is not deploring the position that has developed in this country. It appears to me that he is exulting over it, but his exulting does not show the best side of the British people. Why they are exulting when they go about lecturing to the whole world about their intentions to make the whole world democratic and when they are pretending that they are fighting this war to make the world safe for democracy and freedom? We want to be convinced that you are fighting for democracy and we will be convinced about it when you declare as soon as possible that your real intention is to give immediate dominion status to this country. These are ordinary things which we must keep before us. Before I conclude my speech I earnestly hope that the political parties in this country will come together and by coming together they will understand each other better. It is no use for the heads of each party to talk and do nothing else. We are men and not demi-gods. Men are human-beings and human beings always prosper by coming together. Let them come together. Let there be an agreement between different parties. Let the people feel that they belong to one country and pull on together (cheers.)

The resolution was put to vote and carried.

Mr. Shroff:—What about Rule 4 (c)?

Prof. M. D. Altekār:—We passed that rule keeping in view some special cases. There are provinces where there are Liberal Associations for instance the Punjab has now been added to them. There are others where there are no Associations, for example, Bihar and Orissa. It was suggested that people who come from those provinces where there are no regular Associations should be nominated as members directly under certain conditions. That was why that Rule was framed. My friend, Mr. Shroff comes from Bombay and it is open to him to come to the Council through the Bombay Association.

POST WAR DEVELOPMENT

Sardar P. S. Sodhbans:— Mr. President, Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, the resolution that I have to move runs—

The Federation welcomes the steps so far taken by the Honourable Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Planning and Development Member of the Government of India, with respect to post war development and trusts that he will be successful in persuading the Governments of the Provinces and the States to follow a vigorous, uniform and coordinated policy for the whole of India as one economic unit.

The Federation urges that the provisions of the Government of India Act prohibiting discriminations against foreign companies for the legitimate protection of Indian industry are unfair and should be repealed and trusts that the Government of India will soon secure the desired freedom in that respect.

Sir Ardeshir Dalal was one of the Committee who prepared the Bombay plan. The Bombay plan is already before the country and you all know that it is a plan which if put into operation will bring heavens in India. India has got vast resources but these resources are not fully developed and that is so because we Indians have no control. In the plan it has been suggested that the economic reconstruction of the country can only be done satisfactorily when there is a National Government at the centre. Sir Ardeshir Dalal when he was here during October last discussed various points with regard to the post war planning with the Indian Chamber of Commerce. There he stated that he had accepted the Membership of the Executive Council of the Viceroy because he thought

that the British Government had determined to have that plan operated in the interests of the country. I have no comments to make in regard to what Sir Ardeshir said in that connection but I am sure that he will do whatever possibly he can for the development of the various items of the plan. He has toured the country by an aeroplane for carrying on all his efforts for the post war planning. He has prepared various schemes which have been passed on to the provincial governments for their consideration. A separate portfolio has been created in our province for the post war reconstruction and a Minister has been appointed to carry out all the work in that connection. But I am unable to understand one thing. Why is it that the British Government is at the present moment considering the question of imports into our country after the war? What articles will be imported to our country is engaging their attention. As you are aware a good many industries have been started in our country during this period of war. Whether these industries are going to exist after the war or not we do not know. Nor do we know whether the Government has considered this question. None denies the assistance that these industries rendered for the war effort and in spite of all this, the British Government is considering the question of imports to our country of manufactured goods. If these very articles which now are being manufactured in our country are to be imported from Britain and other countries after the war, the fate of our industries is sealed because it will not be possible for our country to stand foreign competition. You will be surprised to learn that a circular has already been issued that such and such articles will be available in this country because the British manufacturers are busy manufacturing those articles for export to India. If the idea is to capture our markets by foreign manufacturers I fail to understand why these industries should form part of the post war reconstruction. There is another aspect of the matter and that is this. The articles that are being manufactured in our country are controlled by the Government and are not allowed to come to the consumers. You all know that if we want any article of necessity, say woollen cloth, of our own manufacture we cannot get but woollen cloth of foreign manufacture is being made available. Articles manufactured in America and England are available but those manufactured in our own country are not allowed to come to the consumers. In this state of affairs, I do not think there is any hope for our industries especially those which have come into being during the period of war.

Another very important aspect of the matter is the transport problem. You must have noticed in the Press that the Punjab Government are going to control the transport business of the province. In the Central Assembly during the Railway Budget it was stated that the Railways wanted to control the road transport. There will be coordination between the Railways and the companies formed under the aegis of the Railway Board or the Local Governments. It is a queer position. The Railways want to control the transport and at the same time the Provincial Governments are also keen to bring the transport under their own charge. Where is coordination? You all know, that the transport problem plays a very important part in the economic development of the country. The articles that are manufactured must find markets and should be transported to those markets at as cheap rates as possible. If the Railway Board or for the matter of that the provincial Governments are going to control the transport then there is no hope for our industries. The railway rates will remain as they are with the result that the transport charges will be very high and our industries will not be able to compete with the foreign industries. In this connection I would like to bring to your notice a very anomalous practice which exists in our country. Foreign articles directly imported from the the ports to the interior of the country are transported at cheaper rates as compared to the articles within the interiors of the country. I shall make myself more clear. I was a member of the Railway Advisory Committee and I found that it was cheaper to bring foreign manufactured biscuits from Karachi to Lahore as compared to bringing them

from Sukkur to Lahore. We have a biscuit factory at Sukkur you know. It is a very dangerous policy of the Railway Board and we have to guard against it.

Transport system in Lahore and many other places has all these years been working very satisfactorily. The object of transport is to provide cheap and convenient means of communications. If transport is cheap, naturally that will go a long way to help the industries and in the long run will improve the economic condition of the country. If this transport system is taken by the Government its expenses will be topheavy. I understand that very highly paid officials are going to be appointed by the Government. The whole thing is bound to end in great loss to the province. Any and every business enterprise taken up by the Government is bound to end in loss. The Punjab Government started a sugar factory: it went into liquidation. They started a Tannery at Shahdara which again went into liquidation. They started the Mandi Hydro-electric scheme which, as everyone knows, is a white elephant to the province. It was started by the Government in the teeth of opposition. I had an occasion to give evidence before a committee appointed by the Government. I suggested that the two crores of rupees already spent should be scrapped but the Government did not listen and after that so many crores and crores of rupees have been spent on that project. It is still there and a burden, a very heavy burden on the tax-payer of the province. The Lahore Electric Supply Co. is one of the most successful enterprises which have been run by private management. The Government has now come forward and we do not know what will happen to that; perhaps it will have to share the same fate as other Government enterprises. (Hear, hear) I can cite many such examples where the Government has been a failure.

Coming back to the resolution before us, we want that the Government should be independent economically. We do not want India to share the fate of China which although a free country politically has all along been a slave country economically. Any other slave country could not move an inch in the face of treaties which have been forced upon China.

With these words, Sir, I commend my resolution for the acceptance of the Federation. (Cheers)

Mr. M. D. Altekar : The subject of the resolution is a lengthy one. I do not hope to do any justice to it within the short time at my disposal. I only want to make one or two general observations. What we want is the development of India economically in all aspects, so that economically India should be as far as possible self-sufficient. During the last war we realised how dependent we were upon our imports. That also was enforced on this country by the Government of this country in the interests of the British manufacturers and next to the British manufacturers, in the interests of any outside manufacturers rather than Indian manufacturers. We do not want that state of affairs to continue. But I take it that this resolution means a general support to a policy of development of this country industrially and economically. I happen to be one of those who have several differences with what is called the Bombay plan. I happen to be one of those who believe that Government of India is not free to manage its economical affairs by itself, (Hear, hear) and that Government is being dictated to in these matters by a superior power and unless there is a national government nothing can be done. The Bombay Plan people were right in one respect when they say that the plan could not be put into operation unless there is a national government in the country, a government that could resist the power that sits over it. So we have to become self-sufficient economically and industrially and for this purpose whatever our good friend Sir Ardeshir Dalal is doing is welcome and we hope that he will do much more and will succeed. The difficulties in the way are no doubt numerous. The two countries with whom we are now in economic

conflict look upon us as their market. They are our good old friend, England, and the United States of America. Both these countries are very anxious, from what we hear of what is being said in America and England, that India should continue to be their market. And what we want is that India should not continue to be so any longer. Instead, India should produce articles for her own needs and should not be dependent upon imports as far as possible. As it happens I have been a free trader by conviction and a protectionist by necessity. (Laughter). When the whole world goes protectionist there is nothing for India except to be a protectionist and so the second clause of this resolution must commend itself for your acceptance.

There are provisions in the Government of India Act against discriminations to be made against foreign firms in the interests of Indian industries. Those must go. That is a very simple proposition and I think we all accept it. I now refer to some of the difficulties in our way. In the first place post-war planning means a tremendous expenditure and those who have indulged in this game of post-war planning have talked about sterling balances in England. There are huge balances in London belonging to us. It is rather strange that there should be any doubt as to whether we will receive those sterling balances back or not. It is not a very healthy position at all. But as yet, since the Monetary Conference last year, no statement has been made in England that India should feel absolutely secure in this regard. I am very much afraid that various ways will be devised by means of which these balances will not come back straight to India and will be used by others and if so all this talk of post-war planning will evaporate into the thin air.

Secondly, I am doubtful whether the poor masses in India are really in a position, in the practical absence of sterling balances, to contribute materially to the industrial development that is planned by several people. I express these doubts in order to show the difficulties in our way. Thirdly, as we are passing this resolution it is to be considered whether England and America will satisfy us by accepting the position that India will no longer be a market for either of them. These are difficulties we have to contend against. But I hope and trust that those who have taken to this planning business will see that these difficulties will be removed. I give my support to this resolution. (Applause).

The Resolution was then put to the House and carried.

President :—There are two Resolutions next which are to be put from the chair. The first is :

Defence Of India Act.

The Federation, while granting that in war time some extraordinary powers are necessary for the Government; notes with deep regret and concern that the powers under the Defence of India Act and the Rules have been on numerous occasions misused as has been proved by decisions of High Courts and the Civil liberties are being invaded without adequate justification and for political ends.

The resolution was put and carried nem con.

President :—The next Resolution which is to be put from the chair runs as follows :

Indian States.

In view of the close ties existing between the people of Indian States and the people of British India and the impossibility of the former remaining unaffected by political progress in British India, the National Liberal Federation considers that the rulers of Indian States should declare as their goal as rapidly as possible, full responsible Government. This

should be carried out by extended facilities for mass education, the extension of local self-Government, the creation or enlargement of State Assemblies and other representative institutions vested with responsibility as well as power. At the same time the Federation hopes that the subjects of Indian States will resort only to constitutional methods for securing reforms and redress of their grievances and assures them of its full support.

The Resolution was put and carried nem con.

RACE RELATIONS.

Mr. Brij Nandan Singh :—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Resolution which has been entrusted to me for moving runs as follows :

“The Federation deplores the fact that race prejudice particularly as between white and the non-white peoples of the world persists now as ever, that in some parts of the world, as South Africa and the southern States of the U. S. A., race discrimination is on the increase, notwithstanding that both have fought side by side for a common cause against a common enemy and made common sacrifices.

It is of the view that unless a determined effort is made on a world scale against the curse of race prejudice, the non-white peoples of the world, who are now fully conscious of their rights are bound to revolt against the tyranny of the whites and imperil the cause of world peace.”

Any Indian with a least bit of self-respect should have no doubts regarding the principle which is embodied in this Resolution. Race discrimination, I take it, is an anachronism. It is in direct conflict with the fundamental principles of Christianity, that is to say, brotherhood of mankind. If important nations on the one hand who have joined the war declare that their aim is to give freedom, it is incompatible with that they are doing on the other side if they encourage fighting and quarrels between whites and the non-whites. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are not concerned with the treatment meted out to the other people like the Chinese or the Japanese. They are in a position to hit back because they are independent. But we in India are not so fortunately circumstanced. We are suffering from the very initial disadvantage of being a subject nation. Therefore we cannot deal with other nations on an equal footing. But the fact remains that whether it is the Indian or whether it is the Chinese or whether it is the Japanese or any other nation, the treatment that is meted out simply because of their being non-white is not one which can be tolerated by any rules or tenets of civilisation. You will see that the present war was begun by the British on the pretext of liberty, freedom and democracy. These three slogans were very much flourished in the initial stages. Now the fact that these principles have not been acted upon go to show the bona fides of the nations or the people who joined the war in 1939. We have got to see what is the treatment meted out to us. We have got to see whether we have not often been the victims of racial discrimination. Why go very far? With less than 2 miles from here there is the Punjab Club and ever since the Club was founded no Indian except as a servant or as sweeper has been admitted into it. Is it not a matter for shame? This is the thing which is happening all over the country. Some time ago Sir Hari Singh Gour one of the public men in India, was refused admission while he was in England into one of the expensive hotels. The question was raised by one of the professed friends of India in the Parliament and the answer given by the Minister concerned was that the matter is being enquired into. What has been the result of the enquiry, we do not know. Be this as it may. What is happening in South Africa beats all records. There are at present Indian soldiers and Indian officers of the Army and they are supposed to possess the same status and the

same position as the South African soldiers. But it has come to our knowledge and it has also appeared in the press that when one of the officers of the Indian Navy was travelling in a first class compartment, a lady came in and did not allow the train to proceed until that officer was made to get away. This is the way in which we are treated in South Africa and this is the way in which the coloured people are insulted without any rhyme or reason and simply because they are not born with a white skin. It is time for us to remove this injustice, this slur and this insult and the one way in which we can do it is by enforcing sanctions. Whatever may be the utility of this method we must let other people know that we are after all a self-respecting nation and cannot tolerate any insult hurled upon us. With these words I commend the Resolution for your acceptance. (Applause).

Mr. Baikunth :—Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to take up a very important question which if not tackled successfully at the present moment, may lead to another war, much more gigantic than the one being waged at present. This moment is most suitable for such a question as it just precedes the great world conference to be held at San Francisco on April 25 which is intended to devise ways and means for permanent world security. It is the race problem or the question of racial discrimination against the coloured people by the whites which dates so far back as the slave trade (being carried on by the white nations in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries) and has assumed great importance at present in South Africa, United States and the West Indies Islands. I may add that the present war is also due to the racial superiority claimed by the Germans over other races in Europe and Asia. It was remarked by Herr Hitler in 1933 that the Europeans had taught the Indians to walk. He first consolidated the people of his own race living in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia etc. and then made a bid for domination of other nations in Europe with the hope of extending it to world domination. The Jews who did not belong to his own race were exterminated by him.

The race question was first tackled by the humanitarians in the 19th century and their efforts resulted in the abolition of slave trade from the British Empire. In the United States slavery was abolished by Abraham Lincoln, though the racial question in all other aspects still persists. In Mexico and the West Indies Islands the question is as acute as ever and the most important evidence of the same is *the resignation of the Governor ship of the Bahamas by the Duke of Windsor on the question of providing adequate food to the coloured people.*

The most important question for the Indians is the obnoxious treatment meted out to our Indian brethren in South Africa. Most of these Indians are the descendents of those poor people who migrated to South Africa in the 19th century to serve the white population as indentured labourers after the Negro slaves were set free as a consequence of the Slave Emancipation Act passed by the British Parliament. They served the ancestors of General Smuts and his colleagues when they were in difficulties as to their labour problem. The service was faithful and loyal and was done just in a few pence a day—a very meagre sum as compared to the huge profits piled up by the European traders and land owners of the times. And now, look at the reward offered to their descendants! They are being repeatedly asked by the white Government of the South African Union to quit the Union or stay there under most humiliating conditions. Is this the civilisation of the white people of which they are so proud? *If this war is being waged to protect such a civilisation in which discrimination between man and man as one coming from a white stock and the other coming from a coloured stock exists, we should rather wish this kind of civilisation*

should be carried out by extended facilities for mass education, the extension of local self-Government, the creation or enlargement of State Assemblies and other representative institutions vested with responsibility as well as power. At the same time the Federation hopes that the subjects of Indian States will resort only to constitutional methods for securing reforms and redress of their grievances and assures them of its full support.

The Resolution was put and carried nem con.

RACE RELATIONS.

Mr. Brij Nandan Singh :—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Resolution which has been entrusted to me for moving runs as follows :

“The Federation deplores the fact that race prejudice particularly as between white and the non-white peoples of the world persists now as ever, that in some parts of the world, as South Africa and the southern States of the U. S. A., race discrimination is on the increase, notwithstanding that both have fought side by side for a common cause against a common enemy and made common sacrifices.

It is of the view that unless a determined effort is made on a world scale against the curse of race prejudice, the non-white peoples of the world, who are now fully conscious of their rights are bound to revolt against the tyranny of the whites and imperil the cause of world peace.”

Any Indian with a least bit of self-respect should have no doubts regarding the principle which is embodied in this Resolution. Race discrimination, I take it, is an anachronism. It is in direct conflict with the fundamental principles of Christianity, that is to say, brotherhood of mankind. If important nations on the one hand who have joined the war declare that their aim is to give freedom, it is incompatible with that they are doing on the other side if they encourage fighting and quarrels between whites and the non-whites. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are not concerned with the treatment meted out to the other people like the Chinese or the Japanese. They are in a position to hit back because they are independent. But we in India are not so fortunately circumstanced. We are suffering from the very initial disadvantage of being a subject nation. Therefore we cannot deal with other nations on an equal footing. But the fact remains that whether it is the Indian or whether it is the Chinese or whether it is the Japanese or any other nation, the treatment that is meted out simply because of their being non-white is not one which can be tolerated by any rules or tenets of civilisation. You will see that the present war was begun by the British on the pretext of liberty, freedom and democracy. These three slogans were very much flourished in the initial stages. Now the fact that these principles have not been acted upon go to show the bona fides of the nations or the people who joined the war in 1939. We have got to see what is the treatment meted out to us. We have got to see whether we have not often been the victims of racial discrimination. Why go very far? With less than 2 miles from here there is the Punjab Club and ever since the Club was founded no Indian except as a servant or as sweeper has been admitted into it. Is it not a matter for shame? This is the thing which is happening all over the country. Some time ago Sir Hari Singh Gour one of the public men in India, was refused admission while he was in England into one of the expensive hotels. The question was raised by one of the professed friends of India in the Parliament and the answer given by the Minister concerned was that the matter is being enquired into. What has been the result of the enquiry, we do not know. Be this as it may. What is happening in South Africa beats all records. There are at present Indian soldiers and Indian officers of the Army and they are supposed to possess the same status and the

same position as the South African soldiers. But it has come to our knowledge and it has also appeared in the press that when one of the officers of the Indian Navy was travelling in a first class compartment, a lady came in and did not allow the train to proceed until that officer was made to get away. This is the way in which we are treated in South Africa and this is the way in which the coloured people are insulted without any rhyme or reason and simply because they are not born with a white skin. It is time for us to remove this injustice, this slur and this insult and the one way in which we can do it is by enforcing sanctions. Whatever may be the utility of this method we must let other people know that we are after all a self-respecting nation and cannot tolerate any insult hurled upon us. With these words I commend the Resolution for your acceptance. (Applause).

Mr. Baikunth:—Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to take up a very important question which if not tackled successfully at the present moment, may lead to another war, much more gigantic than the one being waged at present. This moment is most suitable for such a question as it just precedes the great world conference to be held at San Francisco on April 25 which is intended to devise ways and means for permanent world security. It is the race problem or the question of racial discrimination against the coloured people by the whites which dates so far back as the slave trade (being carried on by the white nations in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries) and has assumed great importance at present in South Africa, United States and the West Indies Islands. I may add that the present war is also due to the racial superiority claimed by the Germans over other races in Europe and Asia. It was remarked by Herr Hitler in 1933 that the Europeans had taught the Indians to walk. He first consolidated the people of his own race living in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia etc. and then made a bid for dominating other nations in Europe with the hope of extending it to world domination. The Jews who did not belong to his own race were exterminated by him.

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to perish in this world and then build up a new civilisation which does not discriminate between man and man.

It is a pity that the San Francisco Conference is dominated by a white majority and even the few coloured people over there have been nominated by the white Governments. As such we fear lest the question of racial discrimination should be brushed aside altogether in the deliberations of the San Francisco Conference. By letting the discrimination against the coloured people to continue the great peace makers will be creating in the minds of the coloured people a feeling of vengeance against the whites, as was created in the minds of the Germans after the humiliating peace treaty of 1918 and will sooner or later lead to a great racial struggle between the coloured and the white people all the world over, until the great champions of racial discrimination are defeated. It is therefore hoped that the great heads meeting at San Francisco would realise the gravity of the situation and declare unequivocally that racial discrimination in any country whatsoever shall be considered as an aggression of the same magnitude as the aggression of one state over another and will be met with armed resistance if necessary by the International Army to be created by the new League of Nations. The evil must be nipped in the bud. When this racial discrimination is going to bring about another world war sooner or later why not fight it now and pave the way for a permanent world security. Thomas Dewey, the Governor of New York, has recently signed the Anti-Racial Discrimination Bill for his own state. I am sure President Roosevelt will go ahead of Dewey and will not only sign an Anti-Discrimination Bill for the whole of the United States, but will get it incorporated in the World Security Charter to be drawn up at San Francisco. We appeal to all the coloured delegations to San Francisco to make it a common cause and get it included in the new League Covenant that racial discrimination within a country shall be deemed as an act of aggression to be fought by the International Army.

I for one do not stand for an armed fight against racial discrimination if it can be avoided. We have to prepare the world for general toleration of man by man on human grounds alone. Let the whites imagine a rule over them by the coloured people and a discriminating and humiliating treatment meted out to them by the coloured people and let them tell us as to how they would welcome such a state of affairs. General Smuts and his white colleagues in South Africa are very few in number and are not the original inhabitants of South Africa. They are immigrants over there just as the Indians and deserve the same treatment as the Indians. The country belongs to the black natives of South Africa and they have in fact the right to dictate terms to all foreigners and it is not open to one class of immigrants to dictate to the others. If General Smuts is injured in an accident and is taken to a hospital of coloured doctors who attend to the coloured people first and then attend to General Smuts or neglect him altogether, what feelings will the General have? I believe our doctors are the only civilised product of the western civilisation who treat all patients equally well, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

"Might is right," which is the slogan of the aggressors, is being followed by the champions of racial discrimination. Because the whites are strong in the U.S.A., South Africa and the West Indies, they are treating the coloured people as such. We have to fight, according to the words of Mr. Churchill, for four freedoms for the whites as well as for the coloured people.

The Resolution was then put and carried nem. con.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir :—Mr. President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, luckily for me, the resolution which has been entrusted to me is one which is unanimously supported throughout the country. I will first read it out

“This Federation deplures the failure of the Government of the Union of South Africa to abolish the Pegging Act which prevents Indians from purchasing immoveable property and which constitutes a breach of the Cape-Town Agreement. This Federation is of the view that the recent attempt of the South African Government to replace the Pegging Act with a Licensing Board (now found to be ultra vires of the Provincial Council) in no way removes the basic objections to the Pegging Act on the principle that it makes for racial discrimination and statutory racial segregation. The demand of Indians is for an unqualified acceptance of full citizenship rights for Indians permanently settled in South Africa.

In view of the uncompromising attitude of the Government of South Africa towards this legitimate demand of India, this Federation feels that it was a mistake on the part of the Government of India to have sent the High Commissioner to South Africa and it urges the Government of India to recall the High Commissioner forthwith and to adopt all fiscal and commercial sanctions against South Africa until the Pegging Act is abolished ”

This South African question has been with us for the last 25 or 30 years and we have now come to a point where the whole of India, and surprisingly enough even the Anglo-Indian press, is agreed. The second part of the resolution is the operative one and the one which may require a little consideration. The first part of the resolution I may term as a truism. We demand two things: Firstly, that the new High Commissioner should never have been sent to South Africa. This proposal was put forward by practically every school of thought in India including the European Press. But, unfortunately, the Government of India did not see their way to accept the suggestion put before them with such unanimity. We were told in the Assembly that it would be tantamount to breaking off political relations. But that is exactly what we demanded. It was a gesture which could have done us not the slightest harm. What is this High Commissioner going to do in South Africa? The latest papers say that he is getting into touch with Field Marshal Smuts. That makes us no wiser nor does it do us any good. South Africa must be definitely informed of the resentment felt in this country and the one way of doing it was to delay sending this High Commissioner to South Africa. The Government sent him. It does us no good, it does them no harm. The new High Commissioner, against whom we have not a word to say, is a most suitable man to go to South Africa and that is a most unfortunate affair. I do think that the Government of India, on this occasion, should certainly have bowed to the will of the people. The next proposal that was made was that there should be some sanctions. That is a much more difficult matter. It may do harm to a certain number of Indians in South Africa but the curious part of it was that our brethren in South Africa themselves suggested that sanctions should be effected and should be brought into existence and that they were prepared to suffer any loss or inconvenience by such an action on the part of the Government of India, (*Hear, hear*). Surely the Government could do it and do it effectively and quickly. But we are told that they are considering the matter. We are also told that there are some raw materials that come out to this country from South Africa and that we cannot do without them. That argument has been exploded; there is nothing that this country cannot do without. It may cause us little inconvenience, it may cause an industry

a certain amount of inconvenience, it may even be that that industry may partly have to shut down, but when it is a question of the honour of this country, the prosperity of no industry, the continuance of no industry should come in our way (*loud applause*) and, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, to put it very briefly, we reiterate here today the demand of the country made in the press and on the platform that these two effective measures should be carried out by the Government of India and we do hope that in this case at least the Government of India will bow to the wishes of our countrymen. (*Hear, hear*) (*Cheers*)

Mr. E. H. Banerji:—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, ordinarily the seconder always starts by saying, "I have great pleasure in seconding this motion," but while seconding this motion it is not much a matter of pleasure. On the one hand, when our brethren and our countrymen were fighting on the very African soil to save South Africa and other African territory from the clutches of the enemy, on the other hand, at about the same time the South African Government was preparing to have a legislation much harmful and much prejudicial to the interests of our brethren over there. This irony of fate coming specially at a time when the very life and soul of Africa was in suspense, has come as a great shock to all humanity. The second thing that requires consideration is that on the one hand the British Government and those who have favoured the policy of an empire have boasted about the Commonwealth of Nations. But here one member of that very Commonwealth of Nations is sucking the very blood of the other member of the same Commonwealth of Nations living on their soil. Therefore, considering all these things, one has no alternative but to condemn and be disgusted of the attitude of the South African Government in the strongest possible terms. The South African Government has taken these measures in spite of the fact that our Indian Government has a representative in the name of the High Commissioner in South Africa for the last 25 years or so. In spite of his most vehement protests, the South African Government, disregarding of the feelings of the Indian Government and disregarding of the feelings of the Indian people, has gone ahead with this anti-racial legislation, or I should say, a legislation prejudicial to the Indian race. Unfortunately, situated as we are, our Government is not able to enforce any sanction which could have a very far-reaching and a very sobering effect on the South-African people. But, as Sir Cowasji Jehangir has very nicely put it, the Indians resident in South Africa itself have offered to suffer all consequences as a result of the Government of India lodging its protest in whatever manner and in whatever language. If the South African Indians have to suffer by that, they are prepared to suffer the consequences in order to uphold the dignity of the Indian race. Therefore, with these words I second this resolution. (*Cheers*)

The resolution was unanimously carried.

Chairman:—We will now adjourn for lunch and meet again at 3 P. M.

After-lunch Meeting.

Chairman:—We shall now begin the afternoon session and Mr. Sharma will read the messages that have been received.

The messages were read by Mr. Haradatta Sharma.

Mr. L. X. Rego (Bombay) moved the following resolution relating to future recruitment to the Indian Services :—

'The Federation views with deep concern the continued recruitment of the Indian Services from outside India and is of opinion that such recruitment is inconsistent with the postwar status envisaged for Indians by the repeated declarations of Government themselves.

The Federation, therefore, strongly urges upon Government the necessity for stopping all future recruitment to Indian Services from outside India.'

Mr L. X. Rego said :—I consider myself fortunate to associate with this resolution as it vitally affects the youth as well as the future of our country. There is glamour and kudos in rendering service to the state besides, like virtue, it is an award in itself. The ideal would be to give one's service to the state voluntarily and free. We are told that in India 1 per cent of the population owns 30 per cent of its wealth. If this privileged 1 per cent could come forward—and there are men of character and capacity among them and I am sure you will all concede there are—to give free service to the state the bottom would be knocked out of the communists' platform and much of the class struggle which is a familiar theme of theirs may prove ineffective. Moreover, there will be less rivalry on the part of communal organisations as they would have little to fight for. But this is a counsel of perfection. Congress ministries did work on an honorarium of three figures but the power they wielded was said to have been a compensation in terms of crores.

But the resolution of today concerns itself with the forces that are vitiating the body-politic by employment of foreign personnel in the services when there is ample and efficient material available in this country to draw upon. A young man just out of the portals of a college or school is anxious at the outset to seek a career in the services of the state. Today this type of problem is considerably eased by the vast number of jobs available in connection with the active prosecution of war. Young men of education and enterprise have willingly taken active service in the field or in other departments connected with war. Many of them have been precluded by having to associate themselves with the essential services connected with the war from taking up appointments in the permanent cadre of the services, or from even appearing for competitive examinations. In the event of cessation of hostilities, several thousands of young man will be out of employment. The problem of educated unemployed will swell to proportions which any Government will have to face at that juncture. During the last war the experiences of most of those who did war work was disappointment and frustration. That sad story should not repeat itself during the post-war period. Young men who have done their bit towards the war and have thereby contributed towards its success should in all fairness have prior claims for absorption in the permanent cadre of government service.

It is against such a setting that we have to consider the resolution which is before you. The educated unemployed would be a real menace to the peace and tranquility of the country unless Government devise every possible means of meeting this problem. One of the means as indicated in this resolution is to stop all future recruitment to Indian services from outside India.

Another important aspect emphasised by this resolution is that the continued recruitment of the Indian services from outside India is inconsistent with the post-war status envisaged for Indians by the repeated declarations of Government themselves. Mr Amery, the Secretary of State for India, in his declaration in Parliament in August 1940 and Sir

Stafford Cripps' offer of 1942 was unmistakable pertaining to two definite issues : the right of this country to frame its own constitution and the promise of full Dominion Status after the war. If these declarations had any force or meaning, recruitment from outside India should have ceased by now. This would have been the proper manner of implementing the promises made. Government could still show its sincerity of purpose by stopping forthwith recruitment to the key services from out of India. A foreign personnel in the composition of the services is an anomaly in a self-governing country and will operate prejudicially to its administration. In view of the declared policy of government towards India, the Lee Commission recommendations should be treated as a dead letter. They can no more be considered as valid or operative in a changing world and under a different set of conditions and circumstances obtaining at present. To perpetuate its recommendations in the matter of European recruitment is to perpetuate decades of British domination. If Government have an honest intention of carrying out their settled policy towards this country immediately the war is over, recruitment from outside India should not continue a day longer. Lord Haldane once addressing a large number of law students in London pathetically exclaimed - 'What is to become of you all, young men?' Let us put to ourselves with equal feeling the same question as what is to become of our young men if old-time conditions of recruitment and tenure of service are permitted to continue?

With these few observations, Ladies and Gentlemen, I commend this proposition to your unanimous acceptance.

Mr. S. S. Bhagat :—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution. I consider it a very necessary resolution. It is a resolution that is going to affect thousands, if not millions, of Indians. I will ask you to consider it in all its implications. My learned friend, Mr. L. X. Rego, has dealt with the position of young Indians who are either employed in the defence services or are working in Defence Department or those who are qualifying for jobs in the post-war period. So I do not wish to cover that ground over again. But I will draw your attention to another aspect of it and that is the hold that Britain means to keep on India and to keep her subjugated by employing her sons under one pretext or the other. The principal pretext that they have is of importing the experts. I do not wish to give you the dictionary meaning of the word 'expert.' I will just remind you of the well-known definition that Sir William Auson gave me and that was that there were 3 kinds of witnesses liars, damned liars, and experts. Most of the experts who come to this country are probably of the latter category. Experts have been imported into India to teach us, as if we have no men capable enough among us. Why should these experts be necessary? Are we incapable of producing men who can look after our interests, are we incapable of producing men who will be able to manage our household? For 150 years England has been teaching us the art of self-government, and how to equip ourselves to be able to stand in the comity of nations. For generations past, England has been declaring her ability to teach Indians and they have carried out propaganda in all parts of the world in this direction. It is wonderful that after 150 years of teaching, we are still incapable to manage our own house. Is it not a matter of shame that in 150 years we have not been able to look after our own household and to look after ourselves? I will remind you of the Punjab examinations which are being held now-a-days. Teachers are very anxious to see in some form or another that they should secure sufficient number of pass percentage, because in private institutions, the success of the institution is measured by the pass percentage secured by the school or the college. Here we have a set of teachers who have been teaching us for 150 years, getting promotion after promotion and telling the world that they are the best teachers, yet they judge us incapable of doing all these simple things. I will not take up your time by pointing out to you all the aspects of the situation, but there is one important aspect to which I will draw

your attention and that is that, not content with managing or interfering in our rights in British India, the Britishers have in fact shoved their officers in Indian States so that they can maintain their position. It means that Indian States are incapable of paying high salaries to fully qualified officers. Therefore, the Government of India, in their generosity, lend their officers at reduced pay to Indian States. They say that Indian States are unable to carry on their work and to look after their interests, hence these officers are sent there. Nothing of the kind. These are only excuses to maintain a hold in Indian States in post-war India. I am sure that we all will unite in passing this resolution and say that we in India are quite capable of looking after ourselves and that we do wish that our future generation may be able to earn their livelihood and to serve their own country as they think best.

The resolution was unanimously carried

Mr. President :—The next resolution is with regard to war controls and food problem and Prof. M D. Altekar will move it.

Professor M.D. Altekar :- Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution which I have the honour to move is as follows : —

“The Federation views with profound concern (1) that the food situation in the country, though somewhat improved, is still far from satisfactory ; (2) that the quality of rationed foodstuffs is often so poor as to render them unsuitable for human consumption ; (3) that the administration of the control of essential commodities has often been so inefficient as to lead to scarcity of food in the legitimate markets, to inflationary prices, to black-markets and to phenomenal and wide-spread corruption, and (4) that transport facilities for passengers and goods are inadequate and this has caused great hardships.

“The Federation urges Government to evolve a more satisfactory policy and administer it efficiently so as to save the people from all avoidable hardships and distress.”

The resolution speaks for itself and I am sure it will commend your support at once. But I want to bring one more thing to your notice. It has been said, perhaps occasionally with some justice, that the Liberal Party in India has very little contact with the masses of the country. This is just a resolution in which we think of that contact in a most efficient manner and particularly so because the other parties in the country do not concern themselves with the question of prices and black-markets. The other day, in Bombay, the Food Commissioner tried to control the price of milk in our city. He used certain methods for that. Those methods resulted in something desirable. They have decided to give cheaper milk to thousands of young children and to women. Therefore the Commissioner succeeded partially. But the Bombay Corporation, mainly dominated by the Congress, passed a resolution against this action of the Food Commissioner. Perhaps the reason was that some people—I am not levelling a general charge against Congress people, they are patriotic men, they are honourable people, but some of them, in Bombay, as far as I know, are connected with black-markets and therefore they did not protest against, that resolution. Since some of them are connected with black-markets the general mentality of the Congressmen is to neglect these things. But some party must take up this question and bring it to the notice of the Government as to what is happening and what must be done. It is a matter again for the Liberals in the country to pay their greatest attention to this subject of food situation and controls. I have put here 3 clauses which speak for themselves. Though the food situation is somewhat better, it is yet far from satisfactory. As to why it is unsatisfactory, will take a long time to discuss and I am not going to do it. But the fact is that the

position is still very bad. In the cities we talk about it, read about it, we discuss it, read about it in papers and I have found that in some villages it is hopeless. I do not know what are the conditions in your province, but I know my own province. Though it is said that a certain portion of the annual yield of food-stuffs would be taken by the Government for which reasonable price will be paid, yet it is found that very little is left in the households of poor villagers for their existence. That kind of thing is not at all satisfactory.

With regard to the quality of food-stuffs, there are complaints on all sides. I for one may tell you that the foods I have tasted during the last 2 or 3 years were never tasted by me before and I never thought of their existence in my country. The quality of rice that we have been getting in Bombay during the last three years is such a wonderful quality that it is for the first time that we have realised that such a rice is produced in this country. The same thing may be said about wheat about jawar, and about bajra. We have been eating bread that is horrible. Some time back I was travelling and in my compartment I met some people. There were some American and British officers. When I saw a beautiful wheat bread in their hands, I became rather jealous. Why I do not get a bread like that, I do not know. The quality is very much deteriorated. What appears to me to be the case is this that these things are stored for some purpose. When that purpose is served, the storage still goes on and after sometime when it is found that the thing is thoroughly useless then it is brought to feed the civilian population and is distributed to them in markets. That kind of thing is extremely unfortunate, and the Government should take immediate steps to abolish this state of affairs. With regard to such a simple thing as vegetables, I submit that I largely depend for my strength on vegetables—if they are too costly for me to purchase and I do not get them, then I am lost and finished. When our younger generation must consume these things and when they do not get enough, you can imagine their condition. I am afraid that the next generation is very likely to be a generation of weaklings and the sin of it will be on the policy of Government of the present day.

Now, I come to controls. Here in this resolution we have said that the administration of the control of essential commodities has often been so inefficient as to lead to scarcity of food in the legitimate markets. What happens is this. Whenever a thing is controlled, it disappears in the market altogether. We do not get it. Sometimes it is controlled in such a fashion that you have to pay a much larger price than you used to pay before. I will give you a recent instance. In Bombay, only the other day, before I came to Lahore, I purchased a pair of slippers for myself. It was a quality for which I had paid Rs. 8 six months ago. Now it is controlled. The shopkeeper told me that I should not worry because I would get it at controlled price. And what was that controlled price? It was Rs. 12/-. If this is to be the effect of this control, then God save us from this control or may God control this control! Legitimate markets have become devoid of those articles and the prices have been increased.

We are all talking of inflation. But I am constrained to say that the Government has been doing absolutely nothing to stop inflation.

But why have inflation? In the first place these inflationary prices have become a curse for everybody. This has led to the creation of black-markets though I do not know where they are. You cannot ask for their address and cannot go to them. We have asked the Government and they do not know where they are. I will give an instance of the black-markets. *Dhotis* are an absolute necessity to many of us. Of course I am speaking in Lahore and so I do not know about that here. Here people are accustomed to wearing *pyjamas* rather than *dhotis*. The latter are a necessity in other places. We used to have a pair for 3 or 4 rupees. Since this war

started gradually we have been paying 10 or 20 rupees. Now we have to pay 30 or 40 rupees for a pair of *dhotis*, and even then no *dhotis* are available. A few days ago we had our marriage season in Bombay. It is customary to make a present of *dhotis* to the bridegroom. It may be argued that instead of *dhotis* he may be presented with sarees (laughter) but so far the custom has been to present him a pair of *dhotis*. The shop-keepers knew very well that there would be a great demand for *dhotis* in the months of January and February, and all *dhotis* disappeared for two months. Government said that they were going to ration the article, but they have done nothing yet. We do not know whom to blame, and whether the Government is on the right or the left side of the black-markets. Government must do something quick to abolish the black markets and control the prices. Then something about corruption. I am speaking in Lahore and I am afraid I may say something that may bring me in trouble. Every time we talk of corruption we are told, bring cases to our notice and prove them. One finds corruption is there but it is very difficult to prove it. I have seen some cases which I may relate. A poor man goes to take his ration from a ration shop. This is a fact though I am not able to prove it in a court of law. A barber who comes to my house now and then complained the other day that every time he goes to the ration shop he has to pay eight annas to the shopkeeper before he gets a ration. These are very small amounts but I will give you some interesting instances. The Bombay Victoria Terminus Station is a famous railway station. You cannot purchase a third class ticket unless you pay something; you cannot purchase an inter class ticket unless you pay something; and it is also very difficult to get an upper class ticket unless you know how to do it properly." We have been doing it through the travelling agency otherwise it means lot of trouble. I will tell you what happens at Boribander in Bombay. They sell third class tickets from 6 o'clock in the morning. Under our present regime 6 o'clock is fairly early. About two thousand people stand in a cue at 6 o'clock before the booking office of the Victoria Terminus. There are dozens of people who do not travel anywhere, but they have made it a business to purchase tickets and then sell them at a profit. The railway staff standing there do not help the public in this matter. I do not want to put it in a strong language, but if you go to them they say that they cannot do anything, you do your best. The public is suffering from all these things. Corruption has entered even higher places. In Bombay a man cannot take even a little sugar out of the city. At Dadar railway station, which is a suburb near V. T. and where thousands of people get down, a passenger may be asked to open his bag and he may be detained for half an hour, but in some cases even an elephant goes through and some people escape entirely. All these things are the result of the faulty policy of the government. I do not want to say that the government do it deliberately: I do not say that the government do not want to remove it, but I will say that the bureaucratic government is always an obstinate government and they are to be convinced that what is done is not the right thing. By this resolution we have requested the government to evolve a more satisfactory policy and administer it efficiently so as to save the people from all avoidable hardships and distress. There is one reason why the government should do it. I have come to the conclusion that the food situation in the country has spread more dissatisfaction among the people than all the efforts of all the political agitators in the country, and that is not a good proposition for the government and that is the reason why the government should remedy it. I want to make a particular suggestion in this regard and then bring my speech to a close. Food councils are formed at various places and meetings are held and in all such meetings the bureaucratic mandate prevails. There the people discuss things but the chairman, who is often the District Magistrate of the place, says something and that is carried out. Apart from that, at these councils the commercial interests are almost alone represented and the interests of the consumers are not adequately or properly represented. Therefore I request the government to take some representatives of the consumers in their

conferences so that they will come to know of the sufferings of the people in this regard. Merely the commercial interest representatives will not do. The ordinary people must be properly represented, and if that representation is included in the councils perhaps the government will get more information in this regard. There is inadequacy of food in this country. We have often been told that the fall of Burma is one of the causes of that inadequacy. I want to put this question. I happen to be a student of economics and have been unable to find out the exact position in this connection during the last two or three years. Are we exporting any foodstuffs from this country? If we are, then we are doing a criminal action: Government alone knows. It is very difficult now-a-days to analyse the figures which they publish, but I hope the government knows what is the position. I request the government to stop all exports of foodstuffs from this country and with that request I finish my speech. I request you now to accept the resolution (cheers).

Rai Bahadur Chuni Lal Ray (Indian Association, Calcutta, Bengal):

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: Coming as I do from Bengal, I am possibly expected to say something about the food situation there in 1943 and in 1944. But so many things have been said already that I need go beyond a few points only which have not received the publicity that they deserve. The first of these points is that the maximum number of deaths from starvation occurred not in July and August 1943, when the food supply was very meagre, but in the months of October and November, a month after 18 lakh tons of rice, which is equal to 12 weeks' food for the whole of Bengal, had been harvested. The number of destitutes dying on Calcutta's streets, only 1,314 in August, rose to 2,185 in September and to 5,775 in October; and the November figure, though less than that of October was ahead of that in September and nearly twice as much as in August. In rural areas the excess of October and November deaths over those of August-September was probably very much worse than in Calcutta. A larger number of deaths when food was plentiful than when supply was short is an enigma requiring explanation.

Had the 18 lakh tons harvested in early September been promptly distributed, as it should have been, there would not have been a single death after September. Not to speak of actual distribution, even a programme for distribution was not drawn up till the 25th October; and during these 7 weeks (from the harvesting to the 25th October) men were dying by tens of thousands and by lakhs, while the Ministers were sitting tight on the 18 lakh tons of rice. In spite of repeated requests, figures relating to deficits revealed by food drives in June and August were never published by the Provincial Government; it was only in February 1944 that the Central Government disclosed them, in answer to a Council question. With earlier information about the figures, a programme for distribution to deficit areas could have been made out within three days. That this was not done, that as much as seven weeks were taken over this simple thing, are matters which should receive the attention of Government. We are constantly hearing about War Criminals be tried—were the Famine criminals any better?

A second point which has not received sufficient publicity is the Bengal Premier, Sir Nazimuddin's, statement at a Muslim League meeting in Karachi in November 1943 that although his Food Minister was convinced that if the situation was to be adequately met it was essential that the quota promised should be sent to Bengal within the next few months (evidently May to August), he and other Ministers submitted to the dictation of Major General Wood that sufficiency of food for Bengal was to be advertised and to be repeated *ad nauseum*.

And if sufficiency of food for rural Bengal thus advertised by the Bengal Ministry was a myth, so was their report to the Acting Governor that Calcutta had not even 3 days' food. The situation was certainly not

so bad as less than 3 days' food—and it was only a dodge to get out rice from producers in rural areas, in utter disregard of their bare minimum requirements, for supply to Clive Street employers of labour, who could accumulate during the next few months huge quantities which started rotting in their godowns from October onwards.

A third point is that the persistence, after December 1943, in getting Calcutta's food from outside was absolutely unwarranted by circumstances. It is true that there was urgent need for getting food from outside during the emergency of 1943; but this emergency disappeared by December, when Bengal reaped a record harvest of 80 lakh tons against a normal crop of 65 lakh tons. My predecessor said that not a single grain should be allowed to be taken out of India. I would say that we should carry on the Grow More Food campaign with such earnestness and such vigour that we should not only relieve ourselves of importing a single grain; we should be more than self-sufficient and grow surplus for export outside. This point was brought out in a letter published in the Statesman of the 23rd November 1943 and was again pressed in a letter addressed to the Food Member on 11th December 1943. It was suggested that Calcutta should be fed thereafter on Bengal rice; and it went on to say: "Bengal's position for 1944 is now certain, but the food prospect for Upper India would not be known till 4 months later. Is it wise in the circumstances to continue importing from the Upper Provinces or Sindh? Any grains that may be purchased by the Government of India under their contemplated scheme of feeding Calcutta should be kept up to April in the provinces where they are purchased. Movement of grains, if necessary, should commence only after April; and necessity or otherwise, of movements, also distribution if movement is necessary, should be determined not by the present demand of Calcutta's food from outside, but by ascertained crop position in April. It is certainly desirable that Bengal should build up a reserve after its year of starvation; but the necessity for replenishment of reserve is no less for the provinces that exported heavily to Bengal during the last 8 months, and completely denuded themselves of all surplus."

Unfortunately, all this went unheeded; and not only did rice and wheat continue coming from Upper India to Bengal—the Bengal Food Minister started propaganda for making Bengalees wheat-minded. Propaganda to get over the rural Bengalee's reluctance to wheat continued even after it was known in April 1944 that the wheat crop was in deficit by 10 per cent.

And what is the situation today as a sequel to this? Food supplies have proved inadequate in the U. P., and the Central Government have had to come to its rescue. And Bengal has an excess of rice which the Central Government are now purchasing. Unnecessary transport from Upper India to Bengal during the first nine months of 1944 has necessitated transport later in the other direction. What huge waste of transport facilities at a time when wagons are not available for coal and cloth!

Another defect in the Government arrangements is connected with storage of grains, which has very often been entrusted to parties with absolutely no previous experience. You may have read in the papers of huge quantities of rotting grains that were being dumped not very far from Howrah Railway Station early in September 1944, quantities so large as to need hundreds of lorries plying several times a day for over a week. Similarly, huge quantities had to be destroyed at Dacca Railway Station and other places, having become unfit for consumption as a sequel to inefficient storage.

All this shows want of planning, panicky purchases, panicky transport and storage entrusted to inexperienced hands. Much of this could

have been avoided if one of the recommendations in the letter of the 11th December 1943 had been accepted and acted upon, the suggestion to start Grain Reserve Banks which should be linked to the Reserve Bank of India, at one end and to the thousands of village co-operative societies at the other, every village having at least one co-operative society. Cultivators should be induced to deposit their surplus produce in the village societies which, financed by the banks at tahsil, district or provincial headquarters stations, should advance such sums (not exceeding two-thirds of the value of the produce) as the cultivators may need for pushing on with their next crop. Storage will be in the hands of the producers who will be running the village societies; and wastage due to inexperience will be avoided. Very reliable information would always be available to Government about surplus and deficits in different areas; and quantities which under old conditions required months to purchase in the market it would be possible to purchase through banks within as many weeks. Planning would be easy, and panicky purchases and panicky transport would not be necessary; and the bulk of profit on sale of grains would go to the actual producers.

Grain Reserve Banks on these lines linked to the Reserve Bank of India and subject to some degree of Government control will, I believe, prove their utility not only for the abnormal conditions of the war period, but for all time as well. Neither simultaneous plenty in all provinces, nor simultaneous deficit everywhere, is usual, while it is quite usual to have plenty in some provinces and deficits in others. The experience of 1943 has shown that in the absence of a planned arrangement, deaths from starvation may be quite common in considerable portions of the country in spite of sufficiency of food for India as a whole. The Grain Reserve Banks will be the nucleus round which planning will be made; and it will be an excellent arrangement for stabilisation of prices all over the country.

I would conclude with only a few words about the very disputed point of responsibility for the tragedy in Bengal in 1943. The central Government wanted to make out that it had been entirely the Provincial Government's fault—the Provincial Government wanted to lay all the blame on the Central. Sir Nazimuddin's statement in Karachi possibly furnishes a clue to the correct solution—honours must be shared between the two. After food supply came to hand, the Provincial Government went on dreaming for 7 weeks before tackling the problem of transport; while, in the period prior to Bengal getting its own crop, the Central Government had more words than deeds in the matter of sending out grains from other Provinces. In April, Major General Wood came out with a big statement, which he described as the blueprint for the future; and in which he spoke of a 100 crore worth of purchase on the basis of determined figure for surplus in particular areas and deficit in others. What quantity this scheme contemplated as Bengal's deficiency figure was never given out in spite of repeated enquiries in the Assembly and Council of State, on the ground that it would not be in public interest. Possibly this figure was cut down later; and the reduced figure was, we know, 793,000 tons, to be sent out by December, which would justify expectation of despatch to Bengal of at least a lakh tons a month. But what where the quantities actually sent out when Bengal's needs were greatest? In the 30 days following the 100-crores worth blueprint, Bengal was given only 11,900 tons, less than one day's food in one whole month. For July, Sir Edward Benthall's statement of 2½ million pounds a day indicated no more than 35,000 tons in a whole month, Bengal's food for a day and a half.

All this was indicative of extreme apathy, nobody (except the sufferers) taking any serious interest in the very important problem of quickly getting food into Bengal. It is clearly necessary to devise more

satisfactory means for supply and distribution of food. Better arrangements for increasing local production by really serious action in the Grow More food campaign in places like Bengal, Bombay, etc., and Grain Reserve Banks to help in prompt distribution are my humble suggestions.

With these words I commend for your acceptance the resolution moved so ably by Professor Altekar.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

Professor I. D. Sharma: Ladies and Gentlemen, the resolution which stands in my name runs thus:—

“The Federation is of opinion that in the Imperial and International Conferences India should be represented largely, if not wholly, by non-official public men commanding the confidence of the people until such time as a National Government can appoint its own proper accredited representatives”.

Before discussing the resolution itself, permit me to say that the resolution owes its existence to the habitual practice of the Government of India to nominate its own officers, spokesmen and mouth-pieces to represent India in all Imperial and International bodies and conferences. The unfairness, the impropriety and the injustice of such a practice cannot be doubted by any fair-minded individual or nation. It may be admitted that the Government have from time to time nominated public men like the Right Honourable V. S. Srinavasa Sastri, Sir Ali Imam, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Sir Mohd Habib Ullah and now Sir V. T. Krishnachari. The resolution now before us demands that the representation of India in Imperial and International conferences be on an equal footing with the British Dominions and other nations' representatives and should represent India and her people and not merely the Government of India who as every one knows functions more often than not as a department of the British Government. If this demand of the Indians is acceded, it is only then that India's voice will be heard before the bar of the world opinion and her interests will not be sacrificed to those of their masters and henchmen.

I also want to impress upon you that this resolution is not only important but urgent as well. The urgency of passing such a resolution is demonstrated by the continual policy of the Government to nominate their own favourites, preferably officials, to these delegations. They appoint 'safe' people in whom they have full confidence that they will speak what they are tutored to speak. I shall show by placing facts before you how I have arrived at this conclusion.

Before the year 1907, Imperial Conferences were held without any representative of India being invited to attend them. Perhaps the British Government never felt the necessity of doing so. After that the Government of India were allowed to send their own nominees—not the representatives of the people. The last Peace Conference set the fashion in International Conferences. At the Peace Conference the late Mr. Montague and the Maharaja of Bikaner—Maharaja Ganga Singh—represented India. Mr. Montague was the Secretary of State for India at the time—the less said about a Maharaja representing the people of India the better.

At the International Labour Conference at Washington and the London Naval Conference, India was represented by Sir Atul Chatterjee. He was also the head of the Indian Delegation to Ottawa in 1932. If I am permitted to say, this gentleman, Sir Atul Chatterjee is a member of the steel frame, not of the war quality steel frame, but the old genuine steel frame, and entered the I.C.S. as early as 1896. It can be very well imagined how and in what manner must he have represented the interests of this country.

The other gentlemen who have either represented India or have headed Indian delegations, include Sir G. S. Bajpai and Sir Mohd Zafrulla Khan. I do not think this is the place for enumerating their exploits or adventures.

It has to be admitted that the Government often includes one public man in each of the Indian Delegations to International Conferences and I am proud to say that it is only those members who have commanded the respect of the world and brought honour to the motherland. (Hear, hear) Men like the Right Hon S. Sastri, Sir B. L. Mitter and Sir Ali Imam have been listened to with great respect and admiration. But our demand is that such delegations should not include such eminent personalities in a microscopic minority but should as far as possible include public men of the highest calibre and their number should be as large as possible. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan's performance at the Commonwealth Relations Conference should be an eye-opener to the Government. A person like Sir Zafrulla who occupies a very important position in the counsels of the Government, in the interest of national self-respect must have decided to tell the world what he told.

The delegation appointed for the coming San Francisco Conference is the latest example and demonstration of the flagrant flouting of the interests of the Indian people. Even the conscience of the Central Assembly, which is quite an easy conscience—Sir Cowasjee will excuse me, is shocked and a non-official resolution is being tabled on Monday, i. e. tomorrow to consider the matter and make the delegation truly representative.

To make the Indian delegation a pocket edition of the British delegation or to make it dependent on any instructions from the Secretary of State for India or the British Foreign Office is adding an insult to injury.

If India is to be heard, it should be the voice of India. Would England like its delegation to act under the instructions of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru or Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru or for the matter of that under the instructions of Canadians, Germans or Australians? Why in the name of international justice, should Indian Delegation be the nominees of the British? Even if 'safe' men are wanted why not trust the trusted Assembly. Let the Assembly choose the members of the Delegation

Such delegations as the Government of India appoints look, allow me to say, more like criminals before a jury than the accredited representatives of a great people. They can represent India truly only when they know that they are the representatives of the people and have the interest of the people only at heart and not the nominess of a subordinate, irresponsible and irresponsive Government. (*Hear, hear and applause*) I need not, Sir, stress any further the importance and urgency of passing such a resolution. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your patience in hearing what I had to say. (*Cheers*)

Mr. S. M. Bose :—We have listened to a very illuminating speech from my young friend Professor Sharma, who has sponsored this important resolution. I support this resolution and will place it before you from a somewhat different point of view. The present state of international anarchy is due the world being divided into about 60 different rival Sovereign States, each looking for its own interests—hence the War. A noble attempt was made by the League of Nations to stop the root cause of the war but it failed for many reasons. One of the reasons was that the League recognized only the State Sovereigns and allowed each citizen to recognise no body else but his sovereign who was entitled to his allegiance and loyalty. The inevitable result was that the League would have to go to war to preserve peace and it failed. There was international anarchy, each state fighting for itself. The

idea of self determination of which we hear so much now-a-days has led to estrangement between State and State. The League failed because it had no force behind it. It has been well said, justice without force is helpless and force without justice is tyrannical. Therefore we must have a combination of justice and force.

Various ideas have been mooted as to how to bring about permanent peace. Many writers have advocated union between sovereign states, so that there may be assured some form of super-state organization. The question naturally arises how should the competent parts be represented. There has been the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in which a scheme for preventing war and establishing peace was put forward. In that scheme, a body called the Security Council was set up by a "League of United Nations." "There was also to be established a "General Assembly" consisting of all the members of the League and still another suggestion of the Conference is the creation of an International Court of Justice to which the Security Council might refer justiciable disputes among States. To implement this tentative scheme, there is to be the San Francisco Conference. Now the point under consideration is that India should be represented there by non-official leaders. But our hopes have been dashed to the ground by Sir Olaf Caroe who stated plainly that we cannot have non-official representatives because the San Francisco Conference must be of a "Ministerial level", a very high sounding phrase, and the representatives must be Ministers. He perhaps forgot that in the Imperial War Conference in 1917, in which there were the British Prime Minister, and 6 Dominion Ministers, India was represented by Sir S. P. Sinha, a non-official member, and the Maharaja of Bikaner.

There we had the English Prime Minister and Dominion Prime Ministers and India represented by Non-Ministers. Then there were various Imperial Conferences in which India had been represented by non-official Indians like Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. But no fault was found. No body thought that the Thames would be set on fire if India was represented by non-officials at that conference. Now Sir Olaf Caroe says that India is to be represented at San Francisco by Ministers and he has succeeded in misleading Sir Abdur Rahim and so the adjournment motion was not admitted. I am glad that the dissatisfaction is going to be expressed by means of a Resolution to be moved in the Central Assembly. In 1923, the Right Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri said at the Imperial Conference :

"I cannot fail to remember that the position we occupy here at the Imperial Conference is not comparable by any means to the position occupied by the representatives from the Dominions. They are called here by virtue of being Prime Ministers. We come by nomination from our Government. We realise that that marks a great difference in status. We hope that next year or the year after, our successors who will take our place here will come here by their right. The person who will come in place of His Highness Maharao of Cutch who represents more than one-third of British territory in India will be sent by the Chamber of Princes by election and the man who takes my place may likewise be elected by the Central Legislature of the land." This was what the Right Hon'ble Sastri said in 1921. But now in 1945, instead of going forwards, we are going backwards. There should be sent non-official Indians who have the confidence of the people. I have the highest regard for the Ministers at Delhi. I say nothing against them. Admittedly India is a Dominion and I maintain that our national honour demands that India should be represented by men of her own choice, not by men chosen by the bureaucratic Government. With these words I second the resolution.

The Resolution was put and carried.

DEFENCE POLICY

Dr. G. S. Mahajani :—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I propose for your acceptance the Resolution which reads as follows :—

“The Federation urges that India's status as envisaged in the post-war world and her future role as a bulwark of peace in Asia require a radical change in regard to her defence policy. In the opinion of the Federation it is essential to take the following steps immediately with a view to ensuring the complete nationalisation of her defence services within a short period :—

- (i) The defence portfolio should be entrusted to an Indian member commanding the confidence of the public.
- (ii) The policy of Indianisation in all the grades of the Army, Navy and Air Force should be accepted and that large numbers of Indian Commissioned Officers already in the defence forces who have acquired valuable experience should be fully utilised to bring about Indianisation at an early date.
- (iii) The recommendations of the Shea Committee in regard to the expansion of the U. O. T. Cs. be given effect to.

The Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers should not be demobilised after the war merely in order to restore the pre-war proportion between Indian and British Officers. No non-Indian Officer should be appointed to any post so long as an Indian Officer with requisite qualifications is available. The Federation further urges that the army should be recruited from all provinces and classes to a much greater extent than at present.”

The resolution really explains itself. I shall only make a running commentary on it by dotting the ‘i’s and crossing the ‘t’s. In the preamble, you find there is a reference to two factors—one, India's status as envisaged in the post-war world, and—two, her role as a bulwark of peace in Asia. There need be no doubt that the status of India in the post-war world cannot be less than what was implicit in the Cripps' offer. We already passed a resolution this morning demanding dominion status within a year of the cessation of hostilities—dominion status carrying with it the right of secession. This naturally implies an obligation to defend our country. The relevance of this factor is thus easily understood.

The second factor is the role of peace which India will have to play in the world affairs. She comprises a large portion (about 18 %) of the world's population. Our culture is certainly higher than the average culture of the entire world. We are a nation with a tradition and history. The war has again shown that the safety and security of this country is a pivot in the security of the whole area of the Indian Ocean in which not only British but all the United Nations are vitally concerned. And during this war, India has been the arsenal for the democracy in this part of the globe. Our country has, therefore, to play a positive part in maintaining the peace in future. If peace is disturbed in the eastern part of the globe, the duty of acting as the bastion of democracy will fall on us. In view of all these considerations, the preamble suggests a radical change in the defence policy of this country. That radical change is specifically defined in the last sentence, namely, the complete nationalization of India's defence services within a short period.

You will remember, gentlemen, that this resolution is coming up every year before the Federation. But this is the first time that we are putting in definite words our objective of completely nationalizing our defence in a specified period. Self-government is really measured by the amount of control we exercise over our Civil Services, the Police and the

Army. Now what has been the history of these three arms of the Government? Even a cursory glance reveals very instructive facts. Speaking first of the Army, till about 1917, no Indian was admitted to its commissioned ranks. And the terms of reference of the committee appointed at the end of the last war—the Esher Committee—were only (i) internal security, (ii) North-West Frontier defence and (iii) how the army in India should cope with any external invasion temporarily till the Imperial force comes into play. In 1918 the Government took the first real step in this connection by reserving at Sandhurst 10 places for Indians. In 1923 the scheme of Indianising 8 units was adopted. In 1927 the places reserved at Sandhurst were doubled to 20. In 1931 the eight units scheme was expanded to cover one division including one infantry division, one brigade of cavalry and Auxiliary troops. In 1934, an Indian Sandhurst was opened and we have now the Military Academy at Dehra Dun. In 1939 the Chatfield Committee was appointed for modernising the Indian Army and under its recommendations the expenditure of mechanizing two Indian divisions was put against the Imperial exchequer. In 1944, last December, H. E. the Commander-in-chief appointed a Committee—the Wilcox Committee, and its terms of reference are the size, the composition and organization of the Indian Army. This Committee is now touring over the country, collecting evidence and may soon make its report. This history shows that progress at this rate will require for complete Indianisation of our army something like 50 or 75 years. Unless, therefore, our objective is clearly stated and accepted by the British Government no piecemeal reforms will be of any real use to us. And if the Cripps' offer conceded our demand for full dominion status with the right of secession, I fail to see how these Committees come to be appointed whose recommendations might commit us, before we are free to decide the issues, to expensive long range policies.

Regarding our control over the Civil Services and the Police, a speaker made some reference this morning to the Lee Commission. The report of the commission recommended that in the I.C.S. the ceiling limit of 50 per cent. Indianisation should be reached in 15 years and in the case of the Indian Police, in 25 years. Now in 1924 the percentage of Indians in the I. C. S. was 17 and in 1944 it reached 50. In Indian Police Service the percentage of Indians in 1924 was 11.2 and in 1944, out of a total of 422, 186 were Indians. These figures show that unless the objective of complete Indianisation is specifically laid down, we cannot attain the full content of dominion status. So much, Sir, with regard to the preamble of the resolution. Let us now proceed to the specific recommendations.

The first recommendation is that the defence portfolio be entrusted to an Indian member commanding the confidence of the public. The reasons have been set forth year after year. We always speak of creating the psychological conditions in the country so that young men will join the army in larger numbers and take advantage of the facilities placed at their disposal by the war. Now we argue on the intellectual plane of cold reason that this is also our war since our interests are closely linked up with the victory of the United Nations: but so far as the masses are concerned, mere logic does not work. You have to make an emotional appeal. And if we have been exhorting our young men to join the defence services—I know the difficulties in the way—we are here asking the Government to help us by creating the proper conditions in which the youth will respond to our appeal with enthusiasm. That is the significance of the demand for an Indian defence member. I need not go into its other aspects. If Indians are not associated with that branch of the administration where high policies are formulated, how then can they gain experience? From this point of view also, the defence portfolio must be entrusted to an Indian. In Burma they had a Burman as the defence minister. Are the Burmese, one may ask, more cultured and advanced than the Indians?

Our second recommendation reads :

"The policy of Indianization in all the grades of the Army, Navy and Air Force should be accepted and that large numbers of Indian Commissioned Officers already in the defence forces who have acquired valuable experience should be fully utilized to bring about Indianization at an early date."

Sir, as the war is coming to an end, one hears of schemes of demobilization and plans of absorbing the demobilized personnel in the civilian branches. There was a time when we were told that men of the right type did not come forward to join the Army. Now you have already Indian officers of the proper type—why demobilize them? Why not retain their services? War comes once in a way. The experience that men have gained now could not be got in peace time. It is surely not wisdom to waste away all this valuable experience.

In suggesting that emergency Commissioned Officers should not be demobilized, I gave some reasons when I spoke on this resolution in the last session of the Federation. The Liberal Party has always recognised four obstacles which bar our way to full political status. The first is illiteracy, the second our helplessness in matters of defence, the third our internal disunity and the fourth is the presence of the alien Government which accentuates these weaknesses of ours. The stalwarts in our party took up this matter of defence in right earnest long before any other party. The long-continued advocacy of Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer in this cause, Pandit Kunzru's ceaseless efforts in the Council of State, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar's services for the U. T. C. and Sir Raghunath Paranjpye's work on the Shea Committee are only some instances of the earnestness with which our Party has strived for removing this obstacle. We advised our young men to enter the Civil Service and get administrative experience and thus Indianize the Government machinery. They have done it and they are doing it. We now further advise them to enter the Army and by getting Commissions help to attain the other objective of nationalizing our forces. There are difficulties. But in spite of this, in spite of every discouragement, in spite of being dubbed "mercenaries" by their own countrymen, young men have joined the Army in this war. Now though we know that our two million Indians are under arms, we do not know the exact number of Indian Officers. It might be about four to five thousand. They are fighting in the sky, on the high seas and on land. They have obtained the richest experience that a modern war can give. Yet, my fear is that they will be, most of them, demobilized. We suggest here that they should not be demobilized. The Wilcox Committee is to make recommendations as regards the size, the composition and the organization of the I. A. But as laymen we may presume that if the strength of the I. A. was roughly two lacs before the war, after the war it might be about four lacs. For a standing army of this size about 8 thousand officers will be needed. You cannot get all these 8 thousand officers at once. But you have got with you to-day some four thousand Indian E. C. Os. I shall not say that efficiency should be sacrificed for Indianization, but we do submit that whatever officers are available, they should be retained and the Army must to that extent be Indianized. That is our demand in the second suggestion.

Now just a word with regard to the third item in this resolution, namely, that of giving effect to the recommendation of the Shea Committee for the expansion of the U. O. T. Cs. That committee made its report in 1925. The University Officers Training Corps are allotted to various Universities. The committee suggested that no artificial limit should be placed to the number of these contingents and all young men desirous of joining them should be encouraged to do so. Now enough facilities do not at present exist to meet the demand. The committee observed that the U. O. T. Cs. are the foundation of the future national army and that they are the reservoir of potential officers. If their recommendations had been accepted, there is little doubt that since the outbreak of the war there would have been a regular flow of young men for commissions in the Army.

Well, Sir, before I sit down, I have to make just one observation. When we speak of the complete nationalization of our defence services what is to be our attitude towards the presence of non-Indian element in the Army? People would naturally ask how far the presence of the British troops is contemplated. I should cite here the instance of Egypt. The British Protectorate in Egypt was abolished in 1922. But the question of the army remained a matter for negotiations which dragged on till 1936. In that year a treaty of alliance was signed between Britain and Egypt under which three things were secured: (i) the independence of Egypt was recognized, (ii) British troops were allowed to remain in specified areas on either side of the Suez Canal and (iii) a provision was made by which after 20 years there should be a revision of the treaty. If in this revision, it is found that Egyptian forces are able by their own resources to guarantee the safety of the Suez Canal then the British troops would be withdrawn. I am not, therefore, worried about the presence of the British troops on the Indian soil even after the complete nationalization of our defence services; because, that could only be, as in Egypt, under a bilateral agreement and only for a specific period.

I have, Sir, great pleasure in moving this resolution.

Sardar P. S. Sodhbans: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, while seconding the resolution, I only want to say that much of the ground has already been dealt with in the learned discourse of Mr. Mahajani and therefore very little has been left for me to say, with the exception that I belong to a martial race. (*Hear, hear.*) I belong to that community which brought revolution in the north of India and stopped further invasion from the west. On the other hand, from Indian point of view, we started invasions from east to west and conquered the territory which was under the control of Afghans and brought it under the sway of the Sikh rule. It was a Sikh rule, indeed, because our Maharaja was a Sikh and the greater portion of the army was of Sikhs. It was a rule of the nation, because the Maharaja never made distinction between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs while making ministerial appointments in the cabinet and in the army. That was the time when we were keeping control over the frontiers. After the death of the Maharaja, the times changed. Our armies were brought under the command of kindly, simple Muslim Generals. There was no distinction at the time of the Maharaja. What was the position at that time? Our armies were controlled by our own officers. Of course, there were French and Italian Generals to train our armies. Similarly, we demand now that when we get Dominion Status, all our armies from the beginning to the end, should be Indianised and those officers who are at present commanding officers of the army, should be promoted to Generals. We can promote them. I do not agree with Mr. Mahajani that we should have a treaty of the type which he mentioned. What we want is that our officers, when they have received training, should be in charge of the battalions and that they should be rapidly promoted, so that in the course of a few years, after we get Dominion Status, our armies should be controlled by our own officers, because we know that we are capable people and we can fight our enemies in warfare and in the open field. Can we not manage our own affairs and our own home? We can do so provided opportunities are given to us. Sir, apart from this, the matter with regard to demobilisation of the officers has already been dealt with by Mr. Mahajani that we want officers, who have suffered the rigours of war, who have received training and who have been on the front, should be retained and not demobilised. I was surprised to hear that British soldiers have been promoted as commissioned officers in order to keep up the proportion of the British officers in the Indian Units. This is the real position which we have with regard to our youngmen. When they will come back, they will be fixed. We

as Sikhs, have started the Khalsa Defence of India League under the aegis of H. H. the Maharaja of Patiala, and we are carrying recruiting campaign throughout the province for the enrolment of the Sikhs in the army. We want that youngmen should join the army. But at the same time we want also that they should be retained in the army after the war. There is one point on which I differ with the resolution to some extent and it is that the "Federation further urges that the army should be recruited from all provinces and classes to a much greater extent than at present." I to some extent agree that the army should be recruited from all provinces, but there are traditions which have been created. How can you bring those persons who have never seen or touched the sword and how they can become soldiers and fight the enemy? (A voice : we have created it.) There are Sikhs, there are Punjabee Muslims in the North and there are certain other martial classes who are well versed in the art of warfare by traditions. There are Gonds and Bhils and they are of martial type but not of the present type. You cannot expect them to fight in the same way as they are required. However I quite agree with the demand of other provinces to enter the army. With these words I second the resolution.

R. B. CAPT. R. R. M. BHANDARI. Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would ask you to come to action. I earnestly request you to start some military college on behalf of the Federation. If you do it, I will give Rs. 5,000 as a start.

SARDAR P. S. SODHBANS :—I question you. Military college cannot be started without the permission of the Government.

R. B. CAPT. BHANDARI :—There are two eminent Principals of our Colleges sitting amongst us and if they start teaching military science as optional subject in their colleges, nobody will stop them. I offer Rs. 100/- p. m. to each of them. Sometime ago I had approached D. B. Raja Narendra Nath, Sir Tek Chand, and Sir Gokul Chand Narang with an offer of Rs. 10,000/- and had asked them to start military training in our colleges. They called a meeting of the Principals and others but they put objections and said that the Government would not allow any training of the sort. But if there is a will there is a way. I tell you I have been doing things which the Government would not allow their Public Prosecutors to do, yet they were done tactfully and to their knowledge. I will read a few extracts from a letter I wrote to Lord Linlithgo, Viceroy of India, in 1940 and with it I offered him a year's income of which I sent him Rs. 7,000/- as earnest money if he accepted my proposals as mentioned in that letter, which said :—

"The highest among the officials and non-officials have of late been issuing appeals and been playing their part according to their interests for a satisfactory solution of the Indian problem. The officials like the British Premier and the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy naturally emphasised the urgent necessity for winning the present European War and the majority of the non-officials while agreeing with the above-mentioned officials have simultanouasly been asking for a just and quick solution of the Indian deadlock. The officials have been invoking the aid of the Almighty God and of the sacred principles of democracy and justice while the Indians have been complaining in their hearts and many who are not connected with the Government, through their words of mouth also, that the officials are yet neither ready nor willing to translate their beliefs into action in regard to the Indian demands. It is high time that the British as well as Indian Governments understand it once for all that promises alone, however substantial, cannot suffice for the removal of the deadlock. All the intelligent

Indians feel (and sooner the British authorities know this fact the better it would be for all) that some high placed and trusted Indians are just now usurping the ears of the authorities and monopolising the favours of the Government. Human beings as they are, they may be naturally and necessarily blinded by their self-interest and must be telling the Government that the Government can ignore the discontent of those who plead and even suffer for the permanent good of all Indians. They have been successful so far because the poverty of the Indian masses makes man-power available to the Government and the Government fails to realise that the man-power would be available in any case whether these trusted Indians be there or not."

Regarding martial races and War Funds I wrote :—

"It is not being realised that a few crores of rupees in the War Purposes Fund and a few lakhs of salaried men recruited from the so called martial races cannot win the war or even defend India if the need for her defence should arise. I am a Kshatriya and although I originally belong to the martial class yet through the cleverness of some people I no longer belong to that class. Still I challenge Indians of the martial classes or even Britishers in India to produce a better record of services to the King and the country during the last Great War, Afghan War, and other Indian calamities, than possessed by me. To quote from some documents, it was said by the Governors and other highest officers about me that "he risked his own life, gave the life of a grandson and gave a son reading in M. A. as relief while working at his own expense as a Red Cross Commissioner....."

I, therefore, say that it is utterly wrong that the martial races are doing better service than the non-martial races. Then I wrote :—

"So let this myth of martial and non-martial races be laid in its grave. Let men of all classes and communities be allowed to adorn the ranks of National Militia and out of these recruits for the army be chosen and let our army be officered by Britishers and Indians on equal, brotherly, and national basis. It is significant that none of these leaders of the martial classes have ever joined the army as a sepoy and that these few 'trusted' leaders have been usurping the King's and Viceroy's commissions for their near and dear ones and the lower posts for the people of their brotherhood."

There is something at the bottom of this distinction between the martial and non-martial races. Every man should be given equal opportunity. Man is a bundle of habits and circumstances. Give him a chance and he can become a Colonel and a General. I made other proposals for India's economic uplift and for political advancement, and in the end wrote that if my proposals are accepted then :—

"As a thanks-giving of justice, trust, and helpfulness everyone in India whether Indian or European between the age of 18 and 45 should enlist for National Militia on self-sacrificing terms so that the Government may not have financial difficulties for maintaining a huge militia and that all new entrants should forego the advantages of any big salary, allowances, and pensions etc. Everyone should also pay one month's income to win the War while I offered one year's instead of one month's earnings and sent a cheque No. 521584 dated 10th June 1940 for Rs. 5,000/- as a part payment. I also sent a cheque No. 521585 dated 10th June 1940 on the Central Bank of India Ltd. for Rs. 2,000/-

to be paid to anyone of one hundred British or Indian legislators or journalists who could kindly give a better or more acceptable solution by which India could help the Britishers in winning the war and solving the Indian deadlock. This prize I named "the Hon'ble Messrs Churchill, Amery, Lord Linlithgo, and Mahatma Gandhi Prize."

Gentlemen, my submission to you all is that we ourselves can do certain things yet we do not do them. Nobody cares for mere resolutions or talk unless they have a sanction behind them. We have no such sanction. I am a blunt military man and I suggest certain things which if we will accomplish, we will make some advance. The schools and colleges should start training in military science. The second thing is that if some of you join hands, I can get permission from the Government for such a training or even for the establishment of military colleges and schools. Government is ready to co-operate. We have to persuade and tell them how it will serve their purpose at this juncture and they will sanction it. That is how they have abolished all differences between martial and non-martial classes. (Cheers).

Mr. S. S. Bhagat :—Mr. Chairman, ladies and friends; I had thought that after the previous speakers had expressed their views on the resolutions there will be no necessity for me to indulge in speech making, but for some reason or other the recently appointed 'Colonel' Sodhbans and Captain Bhandhari have kept us from the real situation. After Mr. Mahajani's learned discourse it is only necessary for me to draw your attention to one aspect of the question, and that is that, shorn of all flowery language, the resolution boils down to this that let us have no racial discrimination in the army (hear, hear) and let us not have the Indian young men, who have rendered service to their country and to the British Empire be demobilized just because they happen to be Indians. That to my mind is the crux of the whole situation. In support of this view I should like to say a few words in elucidation of the history in the Indian field. When the Skeen committee was appointed we thought that Indianisation was going to take some practical shape and that some steps will be taken which will really produce a change in the hearts of the army officers. General Skeen was a statesman and a seer. The result was that for years the Committee's recommendations were shelved. They were not allowed to see the light of day. This discussion was an annual topic in the Council of State where yeoman's service was rendered by patriots almost every year. I will not take up your time too long but I will bring to your notice three things. The first is that in the year 1923, 100 British officers were recruited in the Indian Army on the alleged ground that the depredations of war had created great blanks and it was necessary to appoint one hundred British officers. Not one single Indian was appointed to these 100 jobs. Why, I do not know: the reason was not given. It is not necessary to give reasons. At the Round Table Conference noble sentiments were aired. It was said that unless India could be trusted with her defence there was no use giving her responsibility: unless Indians could defend themselves there was no sense in their being self-governing so let us give them training and equipment to enable them to defend their country. It was a noble sentiment. Not a few were taken in. In 1934 in the Assembly H. E. the Commander-in-Chief moved a bill called the Army Amendment Bill to the effect that an Indian academy should be started in an area where Indian Army officers will be given Viceroy's commission, but they will not be on the same level as the British officers trained in Sandhurst and other centres of military training. Sir Abdur Rahim, who now adorns the Speaker's Chair in the Central legislature, moved an amendment that such an invidious distinction should not be made and that all officers of the Indian army may have the same status and same pay. That

was a bomb-shell. His Excellency was not prepared to accept such an amendment. A point of order was raised. A first class constitutional crisis was brought about that the Indian legislature could not legislate on the rights of British officers and that the subject was ultra vires of the Indian legislature. Sir Shanmukhan Chetty then gave a ruling, after mature consideration, that the Indian legislature had every right to provide the same status for Indian officers and that it was perfectly intra vires of the legislature to say what status and what pay an Indian officer shall draw or enjoy. The government very nearly threatened to throw out the bill, but better sense prevailed, with the result that the Indian officers recruited since then enjoy the same status as the British officers of the Indian army. Mind you they do not enjoy the same status as members of the British army. That is a distinction which it will be well to bear in mind. As recently as last year Pandit P. N. Saprú moved a resolution in the Council of State that the Indian officers serving outside India should draw the same pay and enjoy the same rights as the British officers serving there. This seems to be a reasonable proposition that for the same work same pay should be drawn, but it was not acceptable to our masters, and the resolution was defeated. Clearly it had proved my submission that there is no change of heart among the British officers. The resolution that we have proposed now asks for a change of heart and definite signs that there shall be a change of heart. Some of you may not be aware that when a person joins the army he gives up all civil rights. Our youngmen thought that when they would join the army they would enter a service where there will be no racial, class or other considerations. In politics we have enough of it which is nauseating our healthy well-being, but I reveal no secret when I say that 90% of the Indian officers are disillusioned.

They came to know that the Army was not one brotherhood and there were distinctions made which did not produce that healthy spirit which was so necessary among soldiers. Our country has produced soldiers who are fighting the world over and who have proved their worth in all the theatres of war. An Indian soldier has showed that he is in no way inferior to a German soldier or a Japanese soldier or for the matter of that any other soldier. It is all the more creditable when it is borne in mind that he is fighting under conditions to which he is not accustomed. Why should it be said that India who has won over 2,500 decorations during this war cannot produce sufficient number of officers? His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in 1934 said that it would take 40 to 50 years for the Indian Army to be Indianised. He hoped that he would not be there to see that Indian officers were placed to rule over British officers. But that prophesy has been falsified. The conditions of the war have necessitated such rapid and accelerated promotions that we have Indians who hold Brigades. I do not wish to give out names but I know that an Indian Brigadier has, by his skill and tactful handling of men, amazed Americans. More than one Brigadier is serving in the South-East Asia Command. There is one Indian General and in the Indian Medical Service we have several Indian Generals and shall I say they are not upsetting the mental equilibrium of the British officers. We have produced men who have won the admiration of the world; we have produced, I am proud to say, more than 20 V.Cs.—the second largest number in the British Commonwealth of Nations. What I mean to say is that we have produced officers, and can produce officers, given the opportunities and training. These arguments should be enough to silence those persons who had the audacity to suggest that Indian officers lack initiative and courage and the necessary skill. This resolution is nothing but a demand to put the Indian officers on the same footing as British officers in the Indian army. It is in no way a revolutionary demand but is in fact the minimum demand. In conclusion I say that this resolution should be treated as one of the most important resolutions and should be passed unanimously. (Cheers)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. President : The next item is the election of office bearers. I recommend that the following gentlemen be elected as the General Secretaries for the year 1945 :—

1. Prof. M.D. Altekar.
2. Mr. Naushir Bharucha
3. Mr. E. Vinayaka Row
4. Mr. N. K. Balusbrani Ayer

The resolution was put and carried.

The other resolution is about the Council for the year 1945. It is a long list and the names have been submitted by each province. By virtue of powers vested in me I have also nominated 5 persons to the Council. I move that all these gentlemen form the Council for the year 1945. (Their names are given in the appendix).

The resolution was carried.

Mr. President : The next resolution that I have to put to the House is about the venue of the next session of the Federation. In that connection I move that the next session of the Federation be held at a place to be decided upon by the Council of the Federation.

The resolution was put and carried.

Rai Sahib G. R. Sethi : Friends and countrymen, I have been entrusted with a very pleasant duty of proposing a hearty vote of thanks to our learned President. The manner in which he has conducted our deliberations and the various practical suggestions that he has made in his address will prove of a very great value to the country (Hear, hear). I believe I am voicing your feelings when I propose a very hearty vote of thanks for the trouble that our worthy President has taken in coming from a long distance. I assure you that we need not be discouraged by the fact that there have been only a few members who have come to attend the session. All those who have assembled here will carry the message of liberalism, the message of practical politics to every home in this province and in the country.

Once again, Sir, I thank you on behalf of the Punjab for all the trouble that you have taken and the honour that you have done to us in coming here. (Cheers)

Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram : This is a vote of thanks and I don't think it requires to be seconded. I formally put this resolution to the House.

The resolution was carried amidst cheers.

MR. T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI : Friends, our proceedings have now come to a close. I cannot tell you how glad I am to have been the President of this session of the Federation. One reason is that it is the 25th session, the Silver Jubilee session, of the Federation. Occasions like these come but rarely. A second reason is that my early studies were connected with Indo-Iranian antiquities and the Vedic period when this land was the land of the Sapta Sindhus counting two tributaries on the western side of the Indus. When I first came to this province in 1930, my mind was not so full of what I saw as of what ideas I had of this province from my studies

about its ancient history. To be called upon to preside over a session held in this province with those ancient associations in my mind was especially gratifying to me.

For the last three days I have been the recipient of your kindness. I cannot adequately thank the members of the Reception Committee and Mr. Rallia Ram who in the absence of the Chairman, R. B. Lala Ram Saran Das, discharged his duties for him. I thank them all for the way in which they have looked after our conveniences

I wish the young ladies who inaugurated our proceedings with the patriotic song of Sir Md Iqbal were here to receive our thanks. At one time the sessions opened and closed with songs though that has not been the practice in recent years. That song was sung of the greatness of our country conceived as one before the idea of dividing the country had entered the author's mind.

I have to express my thanks to the office-bearers for their help and guidance of our proceedings. We have to turn to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, Mr. Bhende, whenever there is any question of procedure

One last word about the resolutions we have passed. Some of them were of great importance. That which related to Defence, and the others relating to Recruitment, and to South Africa were of great importance. I may add that the level of the speeches delivered were high and won my admiration

A word about Hindu-Muslim relations. One of the speakers referred to the cordial relations that subsisted between Hindus and Muslims. Just at this moment they might seem to have ceased. I referred in 1935 to a case which I may refer to again here to a new audience. It refers to Hindu-Muslim relations. In my southern presidency there is a Muslim Pir's tomb, over which the eldest member of a Hindu family presides after becoming a convert to the Muslim faith. The story is that, at one time, about a hundred years ago, a Hindu was cured of a serious illness by the Pir who presided over the tomb. The Hindu asked what he could do in return. The Pir said "If you want to make a return, you become a Muslim and preside over the tomb after me and one half of your family property or its income should belong to this institution and the other half should maintain the Hindu family. This goes on, the eldest of the family becoming Sij-jadanashin of the institution. This came to my notice when the two beneficiaries quarrelled over the accounts. Another fact that I always knew is that Hindus make vows and fulfil them to a Pir's Tomb at Nagose near Negapatam in the Tanjore district.

These friendly relations may come back again in your province. How that may be I cannot say. It is not a problem in my part of the country. There is no feeling of animosity between the communities in Madras. No doubt owing to the recent activities of the Muslim League some of them have enrolled themselves as members of the League, but that has not in any way affected the relations between the communities. It is important to you in this province. Last year Sir Maharaj Singh exhorted us to promote friendly relations between different groups and I can do no more than repeat the exhortation. This part of the country needs it more than Bombay where Sir Maharaj delivered it.

Attention has been drawn to the sparse attendance at this session. I have this to say. Recently communal parties have arisen. The Congress worked in the interests of the country without thinking of the interests of Hindus or Muslims separately. In the good old days we had Muslim Presidents of the Congress. We were not a communal body during the thirty-

five years of united Congress. Since the Congress divided, the non-communal character remains, in the Congress and the Liberal Federation alike, (Cheers)

The qualities that are required for any organisation have parted company. Individuals and organisations alike have two aspects—acquisition and consolidation of what is acquired. The active efforts for the acquisition of freedom for the country have largely been in the hands of the Congress. Proper decision and consolidating what is got are peculiarly within the qualities of the Liberals. The original Congress possessed both sets of people and both qualities. During the last ten years on all critical occasions the Liberals have had no deciding voice and had not been consulted. If they could have influenced the decisions the situation would be different. I am not blaming any political party. I have said more than I generally allow myself to say, namely, that on critical occasions if all the parties who have the interests of the country at heart had been consulted the decisions taken would have been different. Unfortunately the differences between the communal and non-communal organisations and the division within the non-communal groups themselves have adversely affected the decisions of the last ten years.

Let me say again how greatly obliged I feel to the Panjab for inviting me to preside over this session.

I forgot to refer to one matter—the formation of a Congress government in NWFP. Though it was not a subject for any resolution of ours, I take it to be a welcome indication of what may happen elsewhere also in the near future. (Cheers)

Gentlemen, let me finally thank you all for the assistance you have given me to make this session a great success. (Cheers)

Copy of the speech delivered by Mr. Burjor J. Shroff at the Silver Jubilee Session of the National Liberal Federation of India held at Lahore on 18th March 1945.

Mr. Burjor J. Shroff (Bombay):—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. This is Mr. Burjor Shroff of Bombay, speaking. I feel sure our confere Mr. S. N. Bose will be glad of my having taken up his suggestion to follow the rotarian practice in right earnest.

I have no hesitation in supporting, with all the emphasis at my command, the resolution demanding the immediate release of the political prisoners and the detenus notwithstanding the fact that in the past I had diametrically, on many an occasion, differed from the congress ideologies and methods. But today I stand before you here on this platform to join in the country-wide chorus of demand for their release. Undoubtedly, it is our righteous demand for Justice to our incarcerated brothers and sisters.

Looking back with an eye of calm and composed reasoning on the genesis and the growth of the present deadlock, we all clearly discern and from this platform I appeal to the British War Cabinet to calmly discern, that it had been the greatest blunder in the annals of the British Commonwealth in having wishfully and wilfully produced a malignant stalemate detrimental to the vigorous and successful prosecution of the war.

Now, Sir, in culling out into bold relief from this resolution, we find the three centremost points. They are the Deadlock, the detention and the instantaneous release. Firstly, we all demand that the chronic deadlock shall forthwith go lock, stock and barrel. Secondly, the mass detention of many an illustrious son and daughter of India has not the idea of the justification, legal, moral and judicial, for locking them up in prison cells. And, thirdly, therefore, their immediate release shall be carried out if ever the democratic British statesmanship cares for the prestige, if any, to stand upright before the world tribune.

We all have been hearing the word "Deadlock" which has been a favourite term merrily used by the Indian and the British governments. What is "a deadlock", then? Does it mean and imply, from their standpoint, the locking up of doors of the Legislatures in seven provinces, and the subsequent locking up in gaols of a vast number of those who wielded a matchless influence in the Legislatures? Whereas from India's point of view, as also from the world point of view, it connotes and signifies the self-locking up of the very British statesmen. In fact, it is the locking up of the conscience and the wisdom of the British Government struggling to hide their chaotic judgment.

What is the earthly reason and benefit in detaining indefinitely and without judicial trial so many precious and innocent lives in gaols? Where lies the guarantee, now, of the cartload of promises, assurances, declarations and even of the glamorous Charters drawn up right in the centre of the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea Regions, *i.e.*, at Yalta? All these simply denote a cruel farce, were the British policy still to persist in their stubborn attitude in having the free souls of India rotted in detention places which are otherwise known in Hitlerite parlance as "Concentration Camps".

What is the gravamen of the charge? They (the Govt.) say, that it was the Congress Resolution of August 1942 that had flared them up like a red rag. In the said Resolution, was enunciated the doctrine of emancipation, economic, political and industrial. It urged upon the quitting out of India, of the machinery, system and principles of perpetual enslavement. This was a very good excuse to pounce upon as they were all the while waiting for a chance to pounce upon and to pass on the Congress leaders to places of detention. If you had read and re-read and I too have read for myself several times—the 'Quit-India'

resolution, you will notice that there is not the shadow of a suggestion in the Resolution for the physical quitting of the British with bag and baggage out of India. It only demanded that their wretched policy of grabbing poor masses of the lean economic mouthfuls, and the wretched administrative machinery of grinding the Indians, should depart.

Even Gandhiji before his sudden detention, had clarified and also emphasised that he never meant the quitting out of India of each and every Britisher with his bag and baggage. On the contrary, he wanted them to stay and live with us as friends, as brothers and sisters of the Indians.

I feel sure that I am echoing the sentiments of our fellow countrymen that as true Indians and as our true kith and kins such of the British as are anxious to adopt our country as their Motherland are all welcome, that they work and toil for the welfare of our country and countrymen, by thinking like Indians, by breathing like Indians, and by joining issue with, and fighting for, India and the Indians.

I will have to leave out several points just to be short. You all remember, Ladies and Gentlemen, that before his accession to Viceroyalty, our great Field Marshal Viceroy, Lord Wavell, had declared in England that he was carrying with him an all-promising Mental Bag for the magical solution of the Indian deadlock. He would open it only when he arrived here in India.

There pervaded a feeling of very high hope and breathless, tense expectation that His Excellency would soon release all our incarcerated brothers and sisters; and would again revive and unlock the provincial legislatures. Nearly 18 (eighteen) months rolled away, but the much trumpeted Mental Bag or Portfolio has not yet been opened till this day. Gentlemen, with your permission, I do request and do entreat the Viceroy to please immediately shout "Open Sesame" for his Mental Bag to be open.

With my loudest but humble voice from this platform, I appeal to those concerned, particularly I implore those of the British Cabinet, in their own interests, for the welding of the future solidarity of the British Commonwealth, and especially if they wish and want the Commonwealth not to be split up into fragments, then they must forthwith set free all our Congress brothers and sisters now rotting in goals; and assist with all their might and main in setting again the ship of the State to progress onward and onward.

If they do so, it would surely reflect on the greatness and glory of the contented and happy Family of the Great Commonwealth (Hear hear).

The resolution was unanimously carried with great animation and applause.

Mr. Shroff :—What about Rule 4 (c) ?

Prof. M. D. Altekar : We passed that rule keeping in view some special cases. There are provinces where there are Liberal Associations for instance the Punjab has now been added. There are others where there are no Associations, for example, Bihar and Orissa. It was suggested that people who come from those provinces where there are no regular Associations should be nominated as members directly under certain conditions. That was why that Rule was put. My friend, Mr. Shroff comes from Bombay and it is open to him to come to the Council through the Bombay Association.

The National Liberal Federation of India

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