

15th March, 1924

THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

(Official Report)

FIRST SESSION

OF THE

SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1924



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, 15th March, 1924.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

COUNTERVAILING DUTY ON SOUTH AFRICAN COAL.

845. ***Sir Campbell Rhodes**: 1. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the statements in the South African Press that the amount of Indian goods exported to South Africa exceeded by £1,500,000 the value of merchandise exported by the Union to India, and that the exports from India to South Africa consisted largely of rice and cotton-goods for the use of Indians in South Africa?

2. In view of the fact that a retaliatory fiscal war between South Africa and India might injure seriously the interests of the Indian cotton mills and of Indian subjects in South Africa, are Government prepared, before putting into effect the Resolution passed in the Assembly on the 7th February, to order an inquiry by the Tariff Board as recommended in paragraph 189 of the report of the Indian Fiscal Commission?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: 1. Yes.

2. I must point out to the Honourable Member that the Resolution adopted by the Assembly said nothing about retaliation. The Assembly recommends the imposition of a countervailing duty on South African coal on economic grounds and in view of the depression in the Indian Coal trade. As I indicated in my speech on the Resolution, the Government doubt whether the action recommended by the Assembly can be justified on economic grounds and whether that action is in the true interests either of the Coal Trade itself or of consumers in India generally and in Bombay in particular. In view, however, of the expression of the Assembly's opinion contained in the Resolution, the Government have decided to refer for investigation to the Tariff Board the question whether the Indian Coal Trade is in need of protection either against coal from South Africa or against imports of foreign coal generally and, if so, whether, having regard to all the interests concerned, protection should be accorded to it.

NEW PENSION RULES.

846. ***Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas**: Will Government be pleased to state when they intend to publish the new pension rules which were promised in the fundamental rules regarding grant of leave, etc., which were brought into force from the 1st January 1922?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: I would ask the Honourable Member to refer to the reply which I gave to Sardar V. N. Mutalik's question on the same subject yesterday.

ALL-INDIA CENSUS REPORTS.

847. ***Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas:** Will Government be pleased to furnish the Members of the Assembly with all-India Census reports?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: Copies of the Report and Tables of the Census of India, 1921, have been placed in the Library of this House both in Simla and Delhi where they are available to be consulted by Honourable Members. Government do not propose to supply all Members of the Assembly with copies.

THE PARSI PIONEERS.

848. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether their attention has been drawn to a leading article in the "Indian Daily Mail" of February 23rd, 1924, under the heading of the Parsi Pioneers?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Battalion of the Parsi Volunteers which was distinguished by the title of the "Parsi Pioneers" and formed after the Bombay riots of 1921 was intended to be for local service only?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether it was not clearly understood from the beginning that the formation of a volunteer battalion exclusively of Parsis was intended to ward off local menace such as arose in Bombay on the occasion of the Royal Visit in 1921?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) Government have seen the article.

(b) and (c). No. The battalion was constituted under the Indian Territorial Force Act—*vide* Gazette of India Notification No. 2452, dated the 30th December 1921, and is, therefore, liable to general service in addition to local service. The battalion was never officially designated "Parsi Pioneers."

THE PARSI PIONEERS.

* 849. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that the title of the Parsi Pioneers was given to distinguish it from the Territorial Forces and whether the reasons for the special title were not publicly stated by Colonel Lavie?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Parsi Pioneers were given (i) British uniform, (ii) British food, clothing and accommodation, (iii) British ranks, (iv) Conveyance allowance on the British scale?

(c) Whether the Parsi Pioneers were not given training on the same line as that given to the Auxiliary Forces?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) As already stated, the title "Parsi Pioneers" was never given to the battalion officially. Its official title was originally the 1st (Territorial) Battalion, Bombay Pioneers. This title was subsequently changed to the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers—*vide* Gazette of India notification No. 1994, dated the 1st December 1922. The battalion was formed as a Pioneer battalion at the request of the Parsi community of Bombay but the Government of India have no information of any public statements having been made by Colonel Lavie in this connexion.

(b) (i) Members of the Parsi battalions were given the same scale of uniform as members of the University Training Corps, that is, British.

(ii) Yes.

(iii) They use British ranks in the same way as the University Training Corps.

(iv) They receive the same conveyance allowance as the University Training Corps.

(c) No. They are trained on the same lines as the University Training Corps.

THE PARSİ PIONEERS.

850. **Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that Colonel Lavie represented at the time of formation of the Parsi Pioneers that the battalion enjoyed the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by British territorial regiments?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether military authorities had authorised Colonel Lavie to make such representation as aforesaid?

Mr. E. Burdon: The Government of India have no information and are making inquiries the results of which I will communicate to the Honourable Member.

CONVERSION OF THE PARSİ PIONEERS INTO A TERRITORIAL BATTALION.

851. **Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the military authorities have now decided to convert the Parsi Pioneers into an ordinary territorial battalion?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that such a decision has caused great discontent and irritation in the Parsi community?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that the Parsi Pioneers have declined to accept that decision on the ground that it is a breach of promise made to them?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) The conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed are given in the statement on the table. These terms were, I may mention, accepted by 8 leading Parsi gentlemen of Bombay, and Government see no reason why these terms should be altered.

The unit was constituted under the Indian Territorial Force Act and, therefore, already forms one of the units of the Indian Territorial Force.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Statement showing terms and conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed.

1. That a technical unit of the Indian Territorial Force be formed in Bombay from the Parsi community exclusively and recruited under the conditions laid down for the Indian Territorial Force generally.

2. That the rules should provide for the continuous training of this unit on lines approximating to those laid down for the University Training Corps.

3. That as such training would differ in character from that prescribed for the infantry branch of the Indian Territorial Force the Parsi unit should belong to another branch.

4. That the unit should be designated the Bombay Pioneer Battalion.

5. That the unit should be allowed the same choice as regards uniform as the University Training Corps (British).

6. That when called out or embodied for training or service it should be given a special scale of rations, the British service scale being suitable for this purpose.

7. That the unit should be officered by gentlemen of the Parsi community, but that in the first instance European Officers for the post of Commanding Officer and second in command should be eligible.

8. That a regular officer should be appointed as adjutant.

9. That headquarters should be provided by the Government together with all clothing, equipment, as in the case of other units.

10. That the unit will be subject to all liabilities as regards service as other units of the Indian Territorial Force.

11. That as soon as may be practicable a Cadet Company of the Battalion be formed in order to give preliminary training to prospective recruits.

AMALGAMATION OF THE PARSİ PIONEERS WITH THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

852. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether an option has been given to the Parsi Pioneers to agree either to the disbandment of the Parsi Pioneer battalion or to its amalgamation with the Territorial Force such option to be exercised within a month of the notice?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that a large majority of the members of the Parsi Pioneers have decided to resign rather than accept conditions of service that they regard as humiliating and different from those originally promised?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the period of the option will expire on the 10th March?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state whether the military authorities would see their way to extend further the period within which the option is to be exercised until the committee proposed by Mr. Venkataswami has reported upon the steps to improve and expand the Indian Territorial Force so as to constitute an efficient second line of reserve of the regular army and to remove racial distinctions?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) No option of the kind has been imposed. As a result of a meeting held in Bombay on the 17th December 1923, at which two prominent members of the Parsi community were present, it was decided that as there appeared to be some misapprehension regarding the liabilities of members of the battalions under the Indian Territorial Force Act, the members should be called upon to complete and sign a certificate declaring that they fully understood their liabilities for service and training as soldiers of the Indian Territorial Force and that they were desirous of completing their engagement.

Those members who are not willing to sign the certificate will be allowed to take their discharge. One month has been allowed to members in which to decide whether they will sign the certificate or not.

(b) The Government of India have no precise information on the point.

(c) and (d). The time limit given by the local authorities was to expire on the 15th March, but in the meantime, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has issued instructions that no final decision is to be taken locally regarding the future of the battalions. A report has been called for, which will be submitted for the orders of the Government of India, and the Government of India will also consider the suggestion which I understand the Honourable Member to put forward, namely, that outstanding questions relating to the Parsi Battalions should be examined by the Committee which he has mentioned.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

OVERTIME ALLOWANCES TO CLERKS OF THE G. P. O.

196. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether under Government sanction overtime allowance used to be paid to clerks of the Calcutta G. P. O. for the disposal of inward foreign parcel mail articles on account of there being no permanent staff for the work?

(b) Is it not a fact that the payment of overtime allowance has been suspended and the work is being managed by auxiliary hands drafted from different departments?

(c) In view of the possibility of drawing from other departments clerks to do auxiliary work in the Foreign Post Department twice in a week, are not the departments from which clerks are so drafted for auxiliary work actually overstaffed? If so, do Government propose to abolish the superfluous appointments? If not, will the drafting of auxiliary hands be stopped?

Mr. G. B. Clarke: (a) The inward foreign parcel mails formerly arrived in Calcutta in the evening and, in order to prevent delay in their delivery, overtime work had to be resorted to and paid for; but there was also a permanent staff sanctioned for the Foreign Parcel Department.

(b) Yes; but there is also a permanent staff sanctioned for the Foreign Parcel Department.

(c) The inward foreign parcel mails now arrive in Calcutta usually in the morning on a week day. Under the arrangements now in force, no clerk belonging to another Department of the General Post Office is required to work in the Foreign Parcel Department for more than one day in each month and, if the arrangements were discontinued, no reduction in the staff of the Departments from which the auxiliaries are drawn would be possible. As the arrangements do not cause any dislocation of work in the other Departments nor any hardship to the clerks who are employed as auxiliaries in the Foreign Parcel Department, Government do not propose to discontinue the practice. It may be mentioned that the permanent staff of that Department has recently been strengthened.

WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE INWARD FOREIGN PARCEL MAIL.

197. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Government be pleased to state whether in Bombay the inward foreign parcel mail articles are disposed of by auxiliary hands requisitioned from other departments or by permanent staff attached to the Foreign Parcel Department?

(b) If the work in connection with inward foreign parcels in Bombay is done by a permanent staff attached to the Foreign Parcel Department, does the Government propose to adopt the same system in Calcutta?

Mr. G. B. Clarke: (a) In the Bombay General Post Office the inward foreign parcel mails are disposed of by the permanent staff of the Foreign Parcel Department assisted by extra clerks on overtime allowances.

(b) As stated in reply to the Honourable Member's question No. 196, Government do not propose to make any change with regard to the arrangements in force in the Calcutta General Post Office.

ORDERLY PEONS FOR INSPECTORS OF POST OFFICES.

198. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Will Government be pleased to state when orderly peons were sanctioned for Inspectors of Post Offices and when and why they were withdrawn?

Mr. G. E. Clarke: Orderly peons for Inspectors of Post Offices were sanctioned from various dates up to 1908. They were withdrawn during 1923-24 as a measure of retrenchment.

RECOVERY OF MUNICIPAL AND HALKHURI TAXES FROM POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH STAFF OCCUPYING GOVERNMENT QUARTERS.

199. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether postmasters are not required to live in the Post Office quarters in the interest of the Department? Is municipal and halkhuri tax recovered from them?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state if municipal and halkhuri tax is recovered from telegraphists living in quarters provided for them?

Mr. G. E. Clarke: (a) The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative and to the second part in the negative.

(b) Yes.

TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENDITURE AND STAFF OF CERTAIN POST OFFICES IN CALCUTTA.

200. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state what was the total monthly expenditure of the old Simla and Beadon Street T. S. Os. in Calcutta and what is the total monthly expenditure of the new Beadon Street T. S. O.?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the amounts of house rent paid for the old Simla and Beadon Street Post Offices and the new Beadon Street Post Office?

(c) What is the amount of house rent paid for the Barabazar P. O.?

(d) What is the number of (a) the clerical staff and (b) the postmen's staff (1) of Barabazar and (2) of new Beadon Street T. S. Os.? Are not the rates of house rent of the Barabazar locality higher than that of Beadon Street? If so, why is the house rent of the new Beadon Street P. O. so much in excess of that of the Barabazar P. O.?

(e) Has not the amalgamation of the Simla and Beadon Street P. O. increased the delivery area of the Beadon Street Post Office to a very great extent, and is not the delivery of postal articles delayed by the amalgamation?

Mr. G. E. Clarke:

			Rs.	
(a)	Simla T. S. O.	...	4,958	a month.
	Beadon Square T. S. O.	...	5,049	"
	(This was the correct name).			
	Beadon Street T. S. O.	...	10,984	"
(b)	Simla	...	150	"
	Beadon Square	...	225	"
	Beadon Street	...	1,500	"
(c)	Rs. 490	a month.		
• (d)				

		Clerical staff.	Postmen.
Bara Bazar	...	78	125
Beadon Street	...	51	100

Government have no information on which a comparison can be made between the rates of house rent prevailing in the two localities. The estimate for a departmental building was 4 lakhs in the Beadon Street office area. The Barabazar T. S. O. building was occupied on a lease for 10 years in 1916, that is, before the rise in rents in Calcutta took place.

(e) The delivery area of the Beadon Street T. S. O. coincides with the delivery areas of the Sinla and Beadon Square T.S.Os. taken together. The amalgamation has not resulted in delay in the delivery of postal articles.

WORKING HOURS, INCREASE OF LEAVE RESERVE, ALLOWANCES, ETC., OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES.

201. **Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Will Government be pleased to state what action is proposed to be taken on the recommendations of the Joint R. M. S. Conference of the Deputy Postmasters-General R. M. S. and Sorting and representatives of the All-India (including Burma) Postal and R. M. S. Union held in the Calcutta office of the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs in April 1923 under the chairmanship of the Deputy Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, specially with reference to the under-mentioned items:

- (a) The present standard of 36 and 80 hours per week for day and night work in R. M. S. Sections to include work done at record offices and the periods of attendance at railway stations, for these two classes of work 6 hours per week to be held a fair average.
- (b) In stationary mail offices the standard for day work to be 42 hours per week and for night work 85 hours per week and for work partly by day and partly by night 80 hours per week, inclusive of office duty.
- (c) The increase of leave reserve to 80 per cent. with a view to reduce the number of double duties to a minimum.
- (d) The sorters doing double duty in stationary mail offices to be entitled to double duty allowance.
- (e) Double duty allowance for R. M. S. officials in sorting offices or those resting at outstations or headquarters to do double duty at the same station to be entitled to double duty allowance.
- (f) Overtime allowance for R. M. S. officials in travelling sections detained on duty for more than an hour.
- (g) Increase of double duty allowance.
- (h) Diem allowance to cover expenses at outstations.
- (i) Increase of the number of mail vans.
- (j) The scale of pay in the R. M. S. to be the same as in the Post Office (1) in the time scale and (2) in the selection grades up to Rs. 250—350.
- (k) House allowance for R. M. S. menials where house allowance is paid to post office menials.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: The Director-General has carefully considered the recommendations of the Railway Mail Service Conference referred to. Of the 24 items, 8 have been accepted, 7 were not accepted by the Deputy Postmasters-General, 4 were rejected by the Director-General, and 10 are under further consideration.

With reference to the items specially mentioned by the Honourable Member:

- (a) and (b). Have not yet been accepted as they involved considerable additional expenditure.
- (c) The Honourable Member is referred to the reply to Question No. 424, given to Mr. Kamini Kumar Chanda on the 25th February, 1924.
- (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h). Have not yet been accepted on the ground of expense. At present honoraria at half the rates of double duty allowance are paid to sorters of stationary Mail Offices when detained overtime.
- (i) The Honourable Member is referred to the reply given to Question No. 433 of Mr. Kamini Kumar Chanda on the 25th February, 1924.
- (j) The scale was fixed by the Postal Inquiry Committee after careful consideration.
- (k) Government are prepared to consider any proposal which the Director-General may have to make.

COMPULSORY PREPAYMENT OF FREIGHT ON COAL.

202. **Mr. K. G. Neogy:** (a) Are Government aware that on the East Indian and B. N. Railways the coal traffic, unlike any other traffic, is subject to the disability of a compulsory prepayment of freight?

(b) If the reply to (a) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the section of the Indian Railways Act (Act IX of 1890) under which this differential disability is laid on the coal traffic in the face of the provision of section 42 (2) and section 55 of that Act?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) Government are aware that the East Indian and Bengal-Nagpur Railways enforce prepayment of freight on coal traffic.

(b) This was found necessary as consignments were frequently not taken delivery of by consignees and Railways were consequently put to loss. Government do not consider this action inconsistent with the provisions of the Indian Railways Act.

WITHDRAWAL OF RAILWAY DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION NO. 1-D., DATED THE 28TH DECEMBER, 1916.

203. **Mr. K. G. Neogy:** Will Government be pleased to state if the Railway Department Notification No. 1-D., dated Delhi, the 28th December 1916, is still in force or has been withdrawn? In the latter case will Government be pleased to state when was it withdrawn?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: The Notification referred to has not been withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

Secretary of the Assembly: Sir, the following Message has been received from the Secretary of the Council of State:

"I am directed to inform you that the Council of State have, at their meeting of the 13th March, 1924, agreed without any amendments to the following Bills which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 8th March, 1924:

1. A Bill further to amend the Sea Customs Act, 1878, for certain purposes.
2. A Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1894, for certain purposes."

THE BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS.

SECOND STAGE—*contd.*

Expenditure from Revenue—contd.

DEMAND NO. 21—SURVEY OF INDIA.

Mr. President: The Assembly will now resume consideration of the Demands for Grants.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,38,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of the 'Survey of India'."

Mr. K. Rama Aiyangar (Madura and Ramnad cum Tinnevely: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Survey of India' be reduced by Rs. 3 lakhs."

I proceed with this cut on the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee. This subject is dealt with on pages 179-182, and on page 182 their figures are summed up. They propose a reduction of 9 lakhs in paragraph 10 on page 182, and they take into consideration two other items of expenditure which were charged to other heads that have to be taken into this and say that it must be put at at least 28 lakhs, of which Rs. 7,09,000 comes under the saving that they propose. Honourable Members will see that the detailed estimates from page 75 to 82 deal with the subject, and it will be seen that practically nothing definite has been done as suggested by the Retrenchment Committee. Twelve survey parties continue to be maintained. I have tried to go into it as carefully as I can, but I do not see what policy is being adopted now by the Government of India. Do they propose to transfer some of these parties to the Provinces, or do they propose to continue the parties here and levy monies from the Provinces for work done, or do they agree with the Provinces that they should pay certain amounts and keep these survey parties under the control of the Government of India? I do not think that the latter two have been adopted as a policy by the Government of India. It looks to me that all the parties are being continued as the Government of India parties. I am not able to find out the total extent of work available with the Government of India to be done by these parties and for what length of time they will have to be maintained for finishing the work. I am not able to see that. It is impossible for one to conceive that the Government of India will be permanently keeping the establishment on which they will have to spend about 28 lakhs for any work they may have, especially after the reforms have been introduced and most of the work has been transferred to the Provinces. If extra money has to be spent on them because they have to keep them and others have practically to use them, it will not be proper to keep them at that high figure. I do understand that there may be a portion of this expenditure which will always have to be spent by the Government of India, for example, the permanent establishment under the first two or three heads noted in the detailed estimates, Controlling and Administrative staff, Correspondence and the Drawing Office, Photographic and Lithographic Office, Engraving Office, Trigonometrical Office and the Drawing Office. All these and a portion of the survey parties may be necessary. For example, it may be that 4 or 5 parties may have to be permanently maintained to re-survey in places

[Mr. K. Rama Aiyangar.]

which have to be re-surveyed or to undertake surveys in places where the administration is extended, or in the hill tracts or the frontiers and in war zones and probably coal fields. Therefore, you may have to keep 4 or 5 parties permanently. But the continuance of 12 parties is not, in my opinion and in the opinion of the Retrenchment Committee as I see they have recommended, a proper charge on the revenues of the Central Government. The 8 lakhs reduction that I propose is practically what they have recommended. The difference between my proposal and theirs will be about a few thousands of rupees. For example, they propose 28 lakhs as the final limit. My proposal will take it to Rs. 27,07,000. But it will be seen that the recoveries from the various heads noted on page 82 have increased from 21 lakhs to Rs. 22,89,000. So that, practically the one lakh that I have added will be covered by the extra receipts from these sources. Therefore, 3 lakhs will be the amount to be deducted if these principles are adopted. If, on the other hand, it is proved or established or if it is explained, that 8 lakhs is really not a drain on the Central Government but is only profitable, then that may be considered. But as far as I have been able to follow closely the figures, it is not possible to say that it is necessary to keep that establishment. I see that two parties are proposed to be put to work in Burma and that next year about Rs. 1,60,000 is expected to be recovered from the Province of Burma. I take note of that also. All the same I really cannot see that a permanent expenditure of 80 lakhs should be made from the revenues of the Central Government for this. The tendency seems to be not to reduce but to rise higher bit by bit. It will be seen that on page 82, the lump reduction recommended by the Retrenchment Committee of Rs. 6½ lakhs is noted. But the next line will show that, while the Budget estimate for 1923-24 was Rs. 85,88,140, the revised estimate is Rs. 87,16,700. The two items that I refer to, charges under forest and land revenue, have been treated in this as credits from those departments. That appears lower down. It is mentioned: Debitable to Forest, 1,10,800. That is estimated in the coming year's list. But the portion from the land revenue is kept on. So that, there is need for the reduction of 2 lakhs that has been recommended, unless it can be shown that the parties are going hereafter to be either dispersed or to go over to the Provinces or to be otherwise disposed of. Therefore, I am unable to see why this reduction should not be made, and I recommend that this reduction be made and I request the Honourable Members to support my motion.

Mr. President: Reduction moved:

"That the Demand under the head 'Survey of India' be reduced by Rs. 3 lakhs."

Mr. M. S. D. Butler (Secretary: Department of Education, Health and Lands): Sir, it has been truly said that virtue is its own reward. There is no other Department, I think, which has made a heavier cut in its Expenditure as a result of the Retrenchment Committee's report than the Survey of India, and yet my Honourable friend gets up and tells us that nothing has been done, and that the tendency is for the expenditure of the department to rise higher and higher. I am sorry to have to inflict figures on the House, because they are always tiresome, but in order to show what we have done, I must quote the actual sums involved. If the House will look at the Budget for the Survey of India on page 82 of the Demands for Grants, they will see that in 1923-24 the net total expenditure was shown as Rs. 29,50,000. This was after making a cut of

Rs. 6,50,000, which is shown higher up in the same column, on account of the retrenchments recommended by the Retrenchment Committee. The previous figures were therefore Rs. 29,50,000 plus Rs. 6,50,000. Thus we actually reduced in 1923-24 straight off a big sum amounting to nearly one-sixth of the total Budget from the Survey of India grant. So, to say that we did nothing at all is not at all correct. I may also point out that it is equally incorrect to say that the expenditure of the department is rising, on the contrary it is falling. The figure Rs. 29,50,000 for 1923-24 has really to be increased by the sum of Rs. 1,10,000 debitable to Forests on the same page in order to give a comparison with the current year. Thus the actual Budget for 1923-24 should have been Rs. 30,60,000. This year our net Budget figure is shown as Rs. 30,07,000 and this includes a charge which has never been made before, and which will be found on page 75, namely, customs duty on stores, Rs. 57,000. Previously, that was not charged to the Survey Budget, but under the new system of accounting it is charged. So that really the figure Rs. 30,07,000, which is our net Budget for this year, for the purposes of comparison with last year, should be Rs. 29,50,000. Thus there has been a fall from Rs. 30,60,000 in 1923-24 to Rs. 29,50,000 in 1924-25. This shows that there has been a steady reduction each year,—in the first year Rs. 6,50,000, and this year another lakh or so, and we shall endeavour as far as is possible to go on making reductions as opportunity occurs, until we reach the figure of 28 lakhs proposed by the Retrenchment Committee. Whether this will ever be possible I cannot say. Obviously each year the tendency is for salaries to rise as increments fall due, and therefore it can never be said exactly what one year's total will be as compared with the previous one. But it is quite clear from the figures that I have quoted that in the first year we made a very heavy cut, and in the second year we have made a further cut, and we have always economy in mind and shall do whatever we can in future years. I hope then that what I have said will show that it is not fair to charge the Department with having done nothing in the matter of the Survey, and also that we are making successive reductions and very considerable reductions.

The Honourable Member also asked whether we proposed to bill the Provinces for work done, and what we were going to do in the way of transferring the work to the Provinces. Obviously the ultimate object of the Survey of India department is the production of maps, and all its work must be centred in the place where maps are made. There is no use in telling the provinces that we will give them our survey staff, and that there is an end of the business. They want the maps. The production of maps requires a central office with the most elaborate modern machinery, and for reasons of economy that must be centred in one place, and therefore the control of the survey must be with a central body. All we can do to the provinces is to bill them for anything which is properly debitable to them for what we do for them. That we do already. If Honourable Members will look at page 82 of the Demands for Grants they will see that we actually receive Rs. 22,39,000 odd for our services in one form or another. Some of these recoveries are on account of maps and instruments supplied and others on account of contributions. For instance, we take Rs. 55,000 as the contribution payable by the Hyderabad State; we debit certain amounts to the Marine Department, and to the Public Works Department of Provincial Governments. Then we charge the Provincial Governments on account of Forest Survey Rs. 2,44,610. We charge the Provincial Governments on account of Revenue Survey, Rs. 1,00,000 and so on, making altogether, as I have said

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before, nearly Rs. 22½ lakhs. These sums are deducted from the gross total, and thus we arrived at the net Budget figure which I have already explained.

The Honourable Member also asked why we still keep up twelve parties. But, if he will look at the Report of the Retrenchment Committee, he will see that they say that we should go into the question whether 12 parties are needed, or failing that, that we should so reduce our expenditure as to bring it within the recommended limit. Well, we had been into the question of the number of parties necessary, and we found that, India being the large country it is, we cannot get on without 12 parties. So we preferred to make our economies, not by cutting off one party or two parties, but by reducing the strength of each party in the same way that the Army Department have made reductions, not by abolishing a large number of individual regiments, but by bringing down the strength of all the regiments so that each will cost less than it did before. But the skeleton will be there, so that it may be expanded if it is ever necessary, and I think that the House will feel that that is the best method to adopt. So long as we get our economies, it is surely better to keep these skeleton parties alive and to spend less on them, but to have them ready for expansion in case that is necessary in future.

The only other thing that I need say is that I have been instructed by my chief, the Honourable Sir Narasinha Sarma, to say that he hopes that, when Members of the Legislature go to Dehra Dun, they will take the opportunity to see the branch of the Survey of India which is located there. As Honourable Members are aware, the headquarters of the Survey of India are in Calcutta. That is the big map producing centre, but we have a very important branch at Dehra Dun, which deals largely with the production of forest maps, and there is there in miniature everything that they will see in Calcutta. I went there myself six months ago, and Members will certainly find that a visit will interest them greatly. Not only will they see map production, but Dehra Dun is the centre of the geodetic activities of the Survey of India and there are many interesting things in that connection which can be seen. I trust that those Members who go to Dehra Dun will take the opportunity which will be presented to them of visiting the Survey of India, and I am sure that, when they have done so, and seen the humble quarters in which the Survey is working, they will come back here full of zeal to have more money spent on housing the Survey of India better than it now is at Dehra Dun, and to increase in every way the activities of the department.

Mr. K. Rama Aiyangar: I withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,38,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Survey of India'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 22.—METEOROLOGY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,32,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Meteorology'."

Dr. H. S. Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muham-
madan): I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Meteorology' be reduced by Rs. 100."

I base my motion upon the recommendation of my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas as a member of the Inchcape Committee. His supplementary minute is printed on page 190 of the Committee's report and all I have to say is borne out by his very weighty observations. Honourable Members will find that the Simla office of this department costs something like 4 lakhs of rupees. There is moreover an office in Agra and one in Alipore. They will find the information on page 88 of the detailed estimates for grants. The Simla office costs Rs. 3,75,650. Last year the Budget estimate amounted to Rs. 8,12,000. Now, the point I wish to make is, why is the continuance of the Simla office necessary. Sir Purshotamdas gives three reasons why it should be abolished. He says that the Simla allowances of the clerical staff would be economised, lower travelling charges and allowances will ensue and the cost of building would be cheaper. Those Honourable Members who have visited Simla in connection with their legislative duties must have seen the office of the Meteorological Department there and my submission is that that office is more like a barrack and in the near future the department will ask for the reconstruction and improvement of that building. At any rate this was suggested in the Inchcape Committee's report. I submit, Sir, that I have yet to see whether Simla affords any special facilities for the establishment of the headquarters of this department there. It would seem that places in the plains are as suitable for the location of the office at Simla and I therefore move that the motion I have set down be carried.

Mr. G. Picher (Bengal: European): I do not claim to be a meteorologist or a physicist but I should be guilty of a very grave dereliction of duty if I sat here silently whilst this vote for the Meteorological Department is under discussion and said nothing about the extremely grave misgivings which exist in Calcutta in regard to the conduct of this department. It is quite possible that in the general opinion of this House this department exists merely to provide a very interesting quarter column in the daily newspaper or to give early intimation of the necessity of buying a new umbrella when the monsoon is coming on. This department exists for very much more important purposes than that and I want to say just a word, first under the general heading and then under a particular detailed heading, in regard to its functions and its execution of, or its failure to execute, them.

The general functions of the Department seem to me to be of two descriptions, firstly, protective and, secondly, constructive. It exists primarily, I imagine, to give warnings of the sort of weather we are going to have in a country which is subject to extraordinary variations of climate and weather conditions and, secondly, to assist the Finance Member and the Agricultural Department by giving them some estimate in advance of the kind of rainfall we are likely to expect and that in a country where the whole course of year's finances depends, as the Finance Member told us the other day, on the nature of the monsoon. In regard to the first, the protective functions of the Department, we know in Calcutta that there is running through this department a spirit which I cannot help regarding as one of excessive economy and, as Mr. Hindley told us the other day,

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there is all the difference in the world between economy and retrenchment. A policy which blindly cuts down the expenditure of a department of this nature can hardly be described as a policy dictated by economy, by a desire to obtain better management, to get greater yield from the assets of the department. The Inchcape Committee took Rs. 84,000 out of this department rather in the extravagant fashion of the woodmen we sometimes see engaged in so hacking and cutting a tree that all its beauty and utility disappear. Under this head I should like to get some definite information from the Honourable Member in charge of the Department. In Calcutta we have seen one extremely able member of this service disappear. I refer to Dr. Harrison who is now employed as Chief Scientist to the School of Mines, under the Admiralty, in Portsmouth, a post than which there is none more productive and important in the Empire. Why is it thought worth while to let men of that calibre leave this country after they have been here for 15 or 16 years and thus lose their services at a moment when the country might justifiably hope to profit from their training and experience? Then there is another point. We hear of observing stations in the Bay of Bengal being closed down. I speak without my book and I have not been able to verify the references but I should like to know whether it is a fact that as a measure of pure economy, the Table Island observing station was closed down and also whether the Honourable Member's department has record of a storm of which due warning could not be given, or was given at a later than but for the closing of this station it would have been given? Then right through this Department, as far as I can see and judge from all we hear in Calcutta, there is some dissatisfaction among the European personnel. I saw a statement in the papers recently that within the last 5 or 6 years the superior personnel, which was formerly recruited in the proportion of 4 Indians to 10 Europeans, is now in the proportion of 10 Indians to 4 Europeans. I make no complaint at all on that score if Indians are efficient. If you can get men like Professor C. V. Raman, F.R.S., by all means use them. I want to know whether the efficiency of the department is being jeopardised by these changes. One hears that the efficiency of the upper air observations in Agra has been impaired. We hear from time to time that Mr. Field is going up and down to Simla and being asked to do work of a clerical nature in Simla. This officer is a very highly qualified technical expert and should be employed, in our opinion, on specialized work for which his high attainments qualify him.

Now, Sir, I want to turn to a very important item of a particular nature connected with the working of this department. It arises out of the terrible disaster to the "Okara" which occurred on May the 5th last year. That disaster occurred a few months after the duty of giving storm warnings had been removed from Calcutta to Simla. It may be a mere coincidence, but it can hardly be a matter for complaint if a community which depends on sea-faring endeavour is inclined to see some sort of connection between these events, and we should like to know whether the Department has yet made up its mind on the recommendations made by the Committee which inquired into the "Okara" disaster. That Court of Inquiry said, Sir, "It is evident from the evidence of the witnesses that Captains of ships in the Bay are quite out of touch with the Meteorological Officer"—that is since there has been a removal of these functions to the Central Department in Simla. "He is a gentleman far away up in Simla"—this is not newspaper gossip, but the considered

opinion of the Court of Inquiry appointed to examine the "Okara" disaster—

"He is a gentleman far away up in Simla, whom they are never likely to meet; yet he is one with whom they are to correspond by wireless and from whom they are to receive what ought to be valuable information. In fact he appears to be a gentleman with whom they have not much concern."

The Court of Inquiry go on to criticize the distribution of storm warnings in some detail and to voice the complaints made by captains at sea and so forth. With regard to the delay that may occur in sending wireless warnings from Simla instead of from Calcutta, they say that it involves a delay of half an hour, but, the Court of Inquiry continue:

"It does appear to us that the advantage that would be gained by having the Meteorological Officer in Calcutta so that he could meet personally the captains with whom he corresponds and get to know those who are keen and willing to supply useful information, and to urge others to do the same, is so great that we recommend that his question should be considered as being one of prime importance to shipping in the Bay of Bengal."

I understand that a conference sat in Calcutta which Dr. Gilbert Walker and possibly Mr. Norman attended. We should very much like to know what, if any, decisions have been come to. I may draw the attention of the House and of the Honourable Member in charge to a statement—I think it was made, I have not verified it, at the annual meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce by Sir Willoughby Carey—it was said, if my recollection is accurate, that the Chamber of Commerce were extremely anxious to know what was being done in this important matter.

Arising out of the Court of Inquiry into the fate of the "Okara" there are several other important criticisms and suggestions about which I should like to have an answer if possible. For instance, there is the question of summer time for loading. Summer time lasts, I think, from November 15 to May 25. The evidence given before the Court of Inquiry showed conclusively that some of the worst storms in the Bay occur in October and May, and the "Okara" was actually lost in May. The Court of Inquiry wisely suggested that the period for full summer time loading should be restricted to the time between the end of November and the end of April.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee (Industries Member): May I rise to a point of order. The question of summer time—I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member—the fixing of the summer time does not arise under the Demand which is now under discussion, that is, Meteorology.

Mr. G. Plicher: May I suggest, Sir, that if we are to have a Meteorological Department manned by experts which costs us Rs. 7 lakhs a year, it is not asking too much to expect that their knowledge and experience should be utilized in the fashion in which undoubtedly they would be utilized if one of their experts were stationed in Calcutta, as he used to be.

The second point to which I would like an answer is whether the Department has done anything to recommend a permanent all day and night watch by a wireless operator at the Sandheads. The whole safety of the shipping in the Bay of Bengal constituting four or five millions of tons of shipping per annum inward and outward depends on the efficiency of this Department. It is the only Meteorological authority in this country. If it fails to exercise its influence and keep our shipping safe, then there is no one else who can do so. Then there is the question of the Admiralty line for the change of the international watch keeping period which passes

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through 90° Longitude—that is, half way across the Bay. I should like to know whether any recommendations have been made to the Admiralty. Probably it is outside the technical functions of the Department. Nevertheless we should like to know whether and how far the Department has exercised its influence with the Admiralty so that some of these unhappy consequences may be avoided in the future.

My last inquiry concerns the whole question of the expenditure on the Meteorological Office in Calcutta. At present, so far as I am able to ascertain from the accounts, there is a half-time officer there. He is given something like Rs. 800 to 450 over and above his pay derived from the Educational or other service to which he may belong. Sir, I would like to point out how much the Finance Member relies for his ways and means on safe communications in the Bay of Bengal. How much does the Finance Member derive from that port of Calcutta? Something like 16 to 18 crores out of his 40 crores of customs revenue come from there. In the Income-tax Department also he relies on that city for five or six crores; and I think the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Calcutta opinion generally is in a very strong position in claiming that more of the departmental expenditure shall be expended there *ad hoc*, and that the Meteorological Department should keep in close touch with the Port Officer and the captains of ships in the Bay of Bengal. And, Sir, if I may anticipate the next two or three votes for a moment, I should like to say that this tendency to limit expenditure on the Scientific Departments has been of a general character. I would not confine myself solely to the Meteorological Department. The next vote concerns the Zoological Survey. The distinguished head of that Department has recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. It is only a few weeks since he described how he and his superior officers look anxiously round their shelves to see whether their valuable specimens have been stolen merely on account of the value of the glass bottles in which they are contained

Mr. President: There is a motion for reduction on that point; and I cannot allow the Honourable Member to anticipate it.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson (Associated Chambers of Commerce: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I have only a few words to say. With a great deal of what Mr. Pilcher has said I am entirely in accord, but I do not agree with the suggestion that he has made for any reduction of the period of summer time. Ships are lost on 365 days in the year, and merely because a ship or two or three ships get lost at times inside the summer season, that is not in my opinion any adequate reason for reducing the time thereof.

Sir Gordon Fraser (Madras: European): Sir, there is just one small point which I would like to refer to which affects Madras. I want to ask the Honourable Member in charge whether it would not be possible to resume the publication of weather reports in Madras. These used to be issued daily, but one of the very small cuts effected was to cut these out from January to March. Now there cannot possibly be any real economy effected there if the accounts are taken on a commercial basis, because we do pay for the charts and there must be the standing expenses. In the case of Madras we have got a long coast-line, shipping is a very important matter, and we look with the greatest interest for these reports every day, as we should get the earliest information concerning the weather in the Bay and arrange our shipping and our steamers accordingly. I do not think, if the Honourable Member were to look into the matter carefully,

that he would find that he is really effecting any saving. Another point is that it is rather a strange coincidence that during the three months for which the reports are cut out, January to March, as being the three quiet months of the year, the first three weeks of January this year and last were weeks of depressions in the Bay: which means that we were put to the greatest inconvenience as we did not know what the consequences might be to our steamers in Coconada, Vizagapatam and down south. We have only one protected port on the coast, Madras, and that itself is an artificial port. I doubt if Government are effecting any saving; if there is, it could only be a few hundreds or one or two thousand rupees. I would, therefore, ask the Honourable Member in charge if he cannot resume publishing the charts during the whole of the 12 months.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I am very grateful to Honourable Members for the interest they have evinced in this very important subject, and I entirely echo the views expressed by my Honourable friend from Calcutta when he said that this rather obscure department does a very great amount of valuable work, work that protects the agriculture, commerce and shipping of the country. I am very glad indeed that the work of this department, done by scientific officers of very high standing in their own profession, is being recognised and adequately recognised. My Honourable friend Dr. Gour referred to the question of the transfer of the central office from Simla to a plains station. He based his argument on the note recorded by my Honourable friend opposite in the Retrenchment Committee's report. He will find that the recommendation of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was on the assumption that the transfer should be effected only when the financial conditions permitted and when new buildings had to be put up. This is what Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas said:

"I understand that the Government building which this establishment occupies at Simla is only temporary and will require to be rebuilt before long. I recommend that, at the latest, when the time for rebuilding comes, the necessity and advisability of locating the Director General at Agra . . . should be seriously considered."

Dr. H. S. Gour: The passage I relied upon is this:

"The Director General of Observatories did not give any scientific reasons necessitating that the headquarters of his establishment should be at such a naturally expensive and remote place as Simla."

This is a statement which stands by itself and must be read apart from the rest.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I do not see, Sir, how one sentence of a note can be read apart from the rest of the note. Dr. Gour, as a great lawyer, may be able to do so, but I cannot do so. I contend again that the recommendation of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was based on the assumption that the building would be rebuilt in Simla and he recommended that, before that was done, the question of the removal of the headquarters should be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, we are not contemplating putting up permanent buildings in Simla at present. Financial considerations entirely preclude that idea, but, when we do think of putting up permanent buildings, the valuable suggestion made by my Honourable friend opposite will certainly be taken into consideration.

Now, Sir, I turn to the very valuable observations of my Honourable friend from Calcutta. He has observed that excessive economy is being exercised by this department. No one, Sir, has regretted that more than myself, but, in accordance with the recommendations of the Inchoape Committee, we had to fall into line, and I have felt that the retrenchments

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that were made went a little beyond what was really necessary. I am very glad to say that my Honourable Colleague, the Finance Member, has been persuaded to allow us to spend a little more money in the budget year. This will be evident from the additional grants which we have asked for, printed in heavy type, in the Demands for Grants. We fully recognise, as I have already said, the importance of the department, and we are proposing to spend during the next year a little more money than we were allowed during the current year. Mr. Pilcher has referred to the retirement of Dr. Harrison. Dr. Harrison was not a whole time officer of the Meteorological Department. I am not personally acquainted with the circumstances in which he retired. But he was an educational officer and, if he chose to find a career elsewhere, the Meteorological Department could not prevent him from doing so. Then, he said it was very deplorable that Mr. Field, a very great authority on upper air work, should have been taken to Simla to do clerical work. I regret that Mr. Pilcher should have suggested that Mr. Field was being made to do clerical work in Simla. Far from it, Sir. I think it is a great mistake to imagine that Dr. Gilbert Walker, the head of the department, whose place Mr. Field had been asked to take up during Dr. Gilbert Walker's leave, is merely employed on clerical work at Simla.

Mr. G. Pilcher: I did not wish to make that suggestion.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I am very glad, Sir, that Mr. Pilcher recognises that the head of this department does perform very valuable work though his headquarters are at Simla. Mr. Field went up to Simla in order to carry on Dr. Gilbert Walker's work during the time that Dr. Gilbert Walker was away.

Mr. G. Pilcher: I am sorry I have been misunderstood. I merely desired to suggest the urgent necessity of maintaining continuity in the upper air work at Agra; it seems scarcely desirable in a scientific service continually to employ a purely technical officer on administrative work and impair the results of his scientific observations.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I do not want to suggest that upper air work is not very important, but at the same time what I wanted to point out was that the work of the head of the department is equally important and we wanted the most senior and the most capable officer to do that work while the permanent incumbent was away. Then, Mr. Pilcher referred to the question of Indianisation. I do not wish to make any observations on this point beyond stating that the young Indian gentlemen who have been appointed to this department in recent years all hold very high scientific degrees and have been well reported upon by the head of the department who carries very high authority in these matters.

Now, I come to the question of the very deplorable disaster that took place in the Bay of Bengal last hot weather. Popularly this disaster has been to a certain extent attributed to the transfer of the storm warning work to Simla from Calcutta. This transfer was effected upon the advice of Dr. Walker and with the very best of intentions. We found that in Calcutta we could only afford a half-time meteorologist, whereas in Simla we had two or three scientific officers of very high standing and very high qualifications. We thought that this storm warning work, which was of very great importance, could be done very much better by having two or

three officers together who could consult each other and come to some kind of decision on various important points, on the very complicated scientific problems that arise in this connection. The delay in telegraphing the views of the department from Simla to Calcutta never exceeds more than half an hour. The inquiry report mainly animadverted on the fact that one particular message had not been broadcasted immediately. We have

12 Noon. carefully examined that point and Mr. Field, who was responsible for the decision not to broadcast that particular message, contended that the conditions were far from definite and, according to his judgment, it was better that it should not be broadcasted. In a matter like this, where very important considerations are affected, we can only depend on the judgment of the particular officer concerned. As I have already stated, we have tried to develop again the work that used to be done in Calcutta. Honourable Members will find at page 88 of the Demand for Grants that we have restored the system of weather telegrams in Calcutta at a cost of very nearly Rs. 10,000. We have also appointed an Assistant Meteorologist in addition to the existing staff. We are doing all we can in the direction of making the Calcutta Office as satisfactory as possible. Then the Honourable Member asked about

Mr. G. Pilcher: May I interrupt the Honourable Member and ask him whether we could have a definite statement as to the decision of the Government of India on the particular recommendation of the Court of Inquiry on the loss of the "Okara" in which they say that they would "also recommend consideration of the advisability of having the Meteorologist who deals with the Bay of Bengal storms posted in Calcutta instead of in Simla as at present." This recommendation was made several months ago and Calcutta is anxiously waiting for some definite decision on that point.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: We have carefully considered that point and for the present we have decided, at least for the Budget year, that we should carry on the storm warning work in Simla as we have done during the current year. That is the provisional decision. But we are strengthening the staff in Calcutta and the staff there would also be able to co-operate with the Simla staff by getting in touch with the mercantile and shipping community. As regards summer time, that is a matter which is dealt with in the Department of my Honourable Colleague Sir Charles Innes and I do not know the exact particulars. But I have no doubt that a definite decision will be announced. I may state that the point with regard to the zone line, which Mr. Pilcher has raised, has already been taken up and we are in communication with the Admiralty with regard to this matter.

The point raised by Sir Gordon Fraser related to the publication of weather reports in Madras. I regret very much that some inconvenience has been caused to the mercantile community in Madras on account of the discontinuance of the publication of weather reports between the months of January and March. I shall look into this question and, if it is possible, we shall try to restore their publication during these months.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas (Indian Merchants Chamber: Indian Commerce): I hope the Honourable Member opposite will not mind if I rise to say that primarily my note of dissent was based upon the ground pointed out by my Honourable friend Dr. Gour. (Dr. H. S. Gour: "Hear, hear.") I have not been able to understand, and I am afraid the remarks that the Honourable Member opposite has just made have still

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

left me unconvinced, of the reasons why the Director should be stationed at Simla, especially when he has such an important office at Calcutta and such important work at Agra. But, as I was making a minute as a member of the Retrenchment Committee, I had to base that recommendation principally on the ground of economy. Therefore I say in the second sentence that at the latest when the building of Simla has to be built the headquarters of the Director should be removed to Agra. Incidentally I may draw the attention of the House that, if the headquarters of the Director can be removed from Simla, there will occur the following two savings at least, namely, the Simla allowance of the clerical establishment and also their travelling charges. I think, Sir, that the saving on this score alone will make up for what Sir Gordon Fraser has asked, namely, a thousand or two thousand rupees which the Government at present are saving by not printing the weather reports during the three months that Madras so badly wants them.

Dr. H. S. Gour: But what scientific necessity is there for keeping the Director at Simla?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I therefore will not look upon what my Honourable friend opposite has said as final and I trust he will reconsider the decision, generally from the points of view that have been mentioned in my minute of dissent, and especially from the point of view urged by my Honourable friend Dr. Gour, namely, that there is no scientific reason for keeping the headquarters of the Director at Simla.

Mr. G. Plicher: Can I ask the Honourable Member for definite information on the subject of the closing of certain stations in the Bay of Bengal on grounds of economy and inquire whether he can give the House an assurance that there will be no further reduction or restriction on the usefulness of the observing stations in the Bay of Bengal.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I regret to say that I have not got the papers just now with me. I shall be able to supply the information to the Honourable Member later on. I have no definite recollection with regard to this particular question which he has asked me.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes (Commerce Member): May I just supplement the remarks of my Honourable Colleague in regard to one matter, namely, that of the period for the summer load line. That question has been taken up by the Government of India in consultation with the Local Governments concerned and commercial bodies in India and it has also been taken up by an expert Committee of Board of Trade at Home. I have no doubt that the labours on this side and at Home will result in a satisfactory decision being arrived at on a very difficult question.

Dr. H. S. Gour: May I ask the Honourable Member in charge of this Department whether he is prepared to give an assurance on behalf of Government that the head office will be removed from Simla as soon as possible because we see no scientific reason for its continuance there.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: There are many scientific reasons for the maintenance of the office in Simla. But, as I said, it is not much use our discussing the question of the removal of the office until we know that we can find funds for building a proper office in the plains or anywhere else. When such a time arrives, certainly all the considerations will be taken into account. I regret that I cannot give any assurance to the Honourable Member because it cannot be in my time that funds will be available for the building of a proper office either in Simla or elsewhere.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Meteorology' be reduced by Rs. 100."

(Dr. H. S. Gour asked for a division)

Mr. President: Those who desire a division will rise in their places.

Dr. H. S. Gour: The Honourable Members who want to take part in this division are in the Library waiting for it.

(Mr President again put the motion to the House, and it was negatived.)

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,32,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Meteorology'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 28—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,20,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of the 'Geological Survey'."

Dr. H. S. Gour: Sir, my motions* under Demands Nos. 23 to 28 have one object in view, namely, to elicit from Government information on the following points. Honourable Members will find that under the head 'Archæology', Demand No. 26, provision is made for Rs.3,980 on account of Archæological scholarships. I wish to know, Sir, why similar scholarships are not provided for under the other scientific heads, such as Botany, Zoology, Geology, Survey of India, etc. It seems to me that if you are to train up apprentices in these various branches to take their place in the future cadre of the services, it is necessary that scholarships be provided and students drawn from the universities to undergo training in the various scientific departments under the Government of India. I therefore commend my motions under the various heads to the favourable attention of the Member in charge of these departments.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Sir, so far as the Geological Survey is concerned, I think for once I can satisfy my Honourable friend, Dr. Gour. We have already provided for one State scholarship in Geology during the next year. The item will be found in the Demand for the High Commissioner.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Geological Survey' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,20,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of the 'Geological Survey'."

The motion was adopted.

* "That the demand under the head 'Geological Survey' be reduced by Rs. 100."

"That the demand under the head 'Botanical Survey' be reduced by Rs. 100."

"That the demand under the head 'Zoological Survey' be reduced by Rs. 100."

"That the demand under the head 'Archæology' be reduced by Rs. 100."

"That the demand under the head 'Minas' be reduced by Rs. 100."

"That the demand under the head 'Other Scientific Departments' be reduced by Rs. 100."

DEMAND No. 24—BOTANICAL SURVEY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,41,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of the 'Botanical Survey'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 25—ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,09,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of the 'Zoological Survey'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 26—ARCHÆOLOGY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,29,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Archæology'."

Manvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I understand that the motion* which stands in my name is not in order; that we cannot move an increase in the Demands under the different heads; but I can simply express my wish and desire, and I wish only to say that this department is really a very important department which preserves ancient monuments and I consider the sum allotted to this head is indeed very insufficient. I hope that next year the Honourable the Finance Member will have sufficient money to increase the amount under this head.

Mr. K. Ahmed (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I associate myself with the amendment of my Honourable friend, having regard to the fact that the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee recently gave us a sugar-coated reply. The Archæological Department is responsible for the maintenance and preservation of the ancient ruins of Gour and Pandua, the old capital in the District of Malda in Bengal. But what do we find? Trees growing in the buildings and the buildings in a dilapidated condition are coming down. Sir, the history of India from time immemorial is full of beautiful monuments, tombs, mosques, temples and big buildings, and when Lord Curzon was Governor General of India he personally took an interest in the preservation of historical buildings, and at the present time, it is left to the Archæological Department to look after these buildings. It is better for the sake of these historical monuments that more money should be spent. I wish, Sir, that the Government of India would take care that this department is not neglected and that they may be able to do justice to the preservation of those buildings and ruins of the old Empire where the old Emperors ruled in this country for 600 years or say even from the time of the Hindu period. You will see those buildings as still standing; but probably after a few years you will never get the opportunity of seeing them at all. Visitors to India should be allowed to see these buildings and epithets written on them in gold letters and the engravings on them before they are allowed to perish. Where are the Golden Mosques, the Victory Gates, the Boundary Walls and those beautiful buildings of which

* "That the demand under the head 'Archæology' be raised by 3 lakhs of rupees."

the great Sanskrit scholars have written during the time of Lakshman of the 12th Century? I request that this Department should be abolished if it does not take the trouble and care to visit those places, inspect them and see what they should do. It is no use the officials drawing their fat salaries should remain idle. Every year there is a Budget which we are asked to pass blindly and without taking care that there is a department of officers drawing only salaries. I ask the Honourable Member in charge to take a little care to be good enough to go and inspect those historical buildings and monuments and see if he can do anything for the cause of history and for the purpose for which this department has been established. With these comments I have no objections to the Demand, but if after another 11 months we shall again have to remind the Honourable Member in charge, I shall be very sorry. My line of attack will be quite different next year.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,29,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Archæology'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 27—MINES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,28,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Mines'."

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated: Labour Interests): Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Mines' be reduced by Rs. 100."

My object in moving this motion is to draw the attention of the Honourable Member in charge of this Department, as well as of this House to some matters regarding the welfare of the workers in the mines. Sir, the first point which I want to touch is about the employment of women underground in mines. When the Select Committee considered last year's Bill, it recommended that within a short period of about five years the employment of women underground should be prohibited. The Government of India had promised to call for the opinions of the Local Governments and introduce this reform. I want to ask the Member in charge whether the Local Governments have been consulted on this point, and I want the Honourable Member to publish the opinions of the Local Governments and various bodies concerned on this subject. The reform in regard to the prohibition of the employment of women underground is absolutely necessary and it should be made as early as possible. I am anxious that the Government of India should, without delay, pass the necessary legislation. I have no objection to their putting a clause in the Act itself delaying the operation of the Act for a few years.

The next point on which I want information from the Honourable Member is as to the introduction of the shift system in the working of the coal mines in India. Sir, at present there is absolutely no limit to the number of hours which workers in mines work during one day. It has been admitted here, and it has been admitted in several reports published by the Government of India themselves, that workers in coal mines work for more than 16 hours, sometimes with their wives and children underground. The Chief Inspector of Mines in his report has pointed out that it is quite possible to introduce the shift system and stop this evil altogether. Unfortunately, the Government of India have not yet taken action on the

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

report of the Chief Inspector of Mines. I know, Sir, that the Government of India have also consulted the Local Governments on this point, but I am anxious that the Government of India should publish the reports which they must have received by this time from the Local Governments and state what action they propose to take. I feel, Sir, that action on this matter also is absolutely necessary. We cannot allow the workers in mines to go on working for any number of hours in a day. We must fix a limit, as we have fixed a limit for the work in factories. I hope, Sir, that the Government of India will take action on this point at an early date. I know that the mine-owners will oppose both these reforms; but, Sir, the Government of India should take this into consideration that at no time in the history of factory legislation or any other labour legislation have the employers themselves approved of any reform. Whenever any reform has been effected, it has been effected in spite of the opposition of the employers

Dr. H. S. Gour: Who opposed the Workmen's Compensation Act? Did the employers oppose the Workmen's Compensation Act?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Well, Sir, the Workmen's Compensation Act was introduced in India 25 years later than it was introduced in other civilized countries, and, when the employers found that they would be discredited in the whole world if some small measure of workmen's compensation was not introduced, they consented. I do not say that they will not consent under certain circumstances. Surely I know that the employers in India did not oppose the fixing of the limit to the working hours in factories to 60 hours a week. I know why they did not, because the working hours in the factories were limited by the very practical means of the strike that took place in Bombay and elsewhere, and therefore, to make a virtue of necessity, they did not oppose it. I feel, Sir, the employers will oppose the introduction of this reform, but let the House remember that, as the employers themselves want protection for themselves for their interests, and the House has passed a Resolution giving some protection to the mine owners in India, they have no business now to come forward here and oppose a small reform which is in the interests of the workers.

Then, Sir, I want the Government of India to inquire into the working conditions of the mines in many respects. The House will remember that last year there was a great explosion in one of the mines as a result of which about 70 lives were lost. Sir, our Mines Act is the weakest as regards its provisions for the safety of the workers. (*The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee:* "No, no.") The Honourable Member says "No," I say "Yes". I want the Government of India therefore to appoint a Committee to inquire whether the Honourable Member is right or I am right. I am quite ready to have the matter inquired into. Sir, I feel that our provisions for the safety of the workers underground are very weak considering the legislation that we see in other countries. Then, Sir, in the coal mines the wages are also very low, considering the wages in factories. I want the Government of India to inquire whether the wages paid in the mines are really wages that will suffice to enable people to make both ends meet and to save some money. Then, Sir, there are several other points which require inquiry, and I am anxious that the Government of India should appoint a committee and make a thorough inquiry about the working conditions in the coal mines in India, as well as take immediate steps to introduce legislation prohibiting the employment of women and introduce the shift system without delay.

Mr. Chaman Lal (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, a remark fell from Dr. Gour as to whether the employers had opposed the introduction of the Workmen's Compensation Act. May I ask him to read the speeches of Honourable Members in the Assembly on the Workmen's Compensation Act, and may I remind him further that the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, as applied in India, are very different to the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act as it is applicable to the people of Great Britain, and further that the Act which was passed is so whittled down that it is really not worth having? May I also remind him that that Act, although it was passed in this Assembly, does not come into force until next year?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member's remarks are not in order. This is a question of the administration of the Mines by the Department of Industries.

Mr. Chaman Lal: Sir, the question of mines is really a most distressful question. As I said yesterday, I have been to the mine-fields and found more destitution there than probably exists in any other centre in India, I saw women and children going about with bare rags on their backs, I saw women wearing just an ordinary torn dhoti 5 yards long which does the work of a skirt as well as a blouse and that was all the clothing they possessed. I have seen such utter misery and destitution that unless something drastic is done you are up against a very difficult problem. If you go into the huts what do you find? The huts are ill-ventilated with barely room for a cot and a fireplace; and all the worldly goods of these poor miners consist of just a few utensils, and hardly any clothing. Everywhere you go in the mine-fields you meet the spectre of poverty. You find at the pits-mouth, as I found when I went there, that, whenever a labourer or philanthropist or anybody else interested in the men's welfare goes there, a clamorous crowd of miners collect round him saying bitter things against the contractors, agents and proprietors; and you never find any denial of the things alleged except a vague sort of denial. And my experience was that the agents, contractors and proprietors were ashamed of the black misery they had brought on the black country. Wherever I went I found complaints of starvation; the miners said they did not get enough food; their housing accommodation was abominable, their wages were horribly low; and there has never been any challenge of these statements. May I remind my Honourable friend Dr. Gour and those who think with him that in the coal-fields you have something like 200,000 men working in India, and you find that the average wages these men get, it has been reported by the Industrial Commission, are something like 7 annas a day. These miners dig out on an average about 2 tubs of coal—a miner and his wife. For these two tubs they get 7 or at the outside 8 annas a tub. This is all the work they are able to do in the course of one whole day's labour. And what sort of labour? Ten, twelve and sixteen hours' labour underground. The proprietors complain that these poor miners do not work more than four days in the week. It is impossible for any human being to work more than four days in the week under those abominable—nay, horrible conditions. I discovered a little while ago a certain report in the newspapers and this is what it said about the miner's condition:

"Many actually perish of starvation. These poor labourers are supposed to work for 12 hours a day. They have to go through life on insufficient food. They do not know from year's end to year's end what it is to have their hunger satisfied. They live from hand to mouth and have nothing to fall back upon in bad times."

[Mr. Chaman Lal.]

That is the condition of the Indian miner. Compare this condition, Sir, with the condition of miners in any other civilised country in the world and you will find that you are not very far from a dangerous state of affairs in the coal fields. You find when you look at the situation that, whenever there is any illness, or whenever there is any injury, there is no provision whatsoever made for the subsistence of the miners or their families. There is no provision made for the children. Are the children to go hungry? Are they to starve? They merely fall back, on occasions like these, on the charity of their neighbours. Nobody can declare that there is any shred, any shadow, of comfort for the miner or his family. Prostitution, which is the handmaid of poverty, is to be found throughout the coalfields, throughout the coal area. This is the state of the semi-starved coal miner. The horrible conditions under which he lives produce such a state of physical weakness that he is very much prone to any sort of epidemic that rages in the country. I think if I am not mistaken the Health Officer stated that 48,946 deaths took place in Bihar round about the coal area from cholera alone. Cholera, as everybody knows, is one of the epidemics which is directly due to poverty and insanitary conditions.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: May I ask if the Honourable Member will kindly give me the date of the report from which he has quoted.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: And the names of the collieries he visited.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I want the date of the report from which the Honourable Member was quoting.

Mr. Chaman Lal: Certain gentlemen who were interested in labour in Jharia wrote to the Health Officer asking for statistics, and the Health Officer said he was not going to give any facts to "troublesome busy-bodies." He said the official information was to be found in the Inspector's report. But subsequently the facts were supplied which revealed that in those days between May, 1st, and September, the 10th, 1921, there were these deaths from cholera in Bihar.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Cannot the Honourable Member give me the date of the report and the name of the Inspector? May I ask that statements should not be made in this House without our being able to verify them?

Mr. Chaman Lal: I will certainly furnish the Honourable Member with the references that he needs.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: May I ask, Sir, that the reference be given here and now in this House, so that I may give a reply and other Members of the House may have an opportunity of replying to these statements?

Mr. Chaman Lal: I am sorry, Sir, I have not got the actual cutting with me now but I can vouch for the correctness of the remarks I am making and will find out the exact date of the Inspector's report from which I am quoting and furnish it to the Honourable Member later on if that alone will satisfy him. But I can assure him that such a horrible state of affairs exists and ought not to be allowed to continue. Men, women and children are starving in the coal fields, and what are you doing? We have done nothing to better their condition. The average output of

a miner during the course of the year is reckoned to be 108·3 tons. This, if you compute it at the average rate of the price of coal in the coal area, you will find is worth Rs. 1,200 per month. The average rate of pay earned by the miner is Rs. 67·11 per annum. Imagine this state of affairs; imagine a family being brought up on those rates? What sort of decent living can you afford to a miner and his family on wages such as those. I say they are really leading the lives of semi-slaves—lives which no citizen of a civilised State should tolerate.

Mr. G. Pilcher: How many days in the year do they work?

Mr. Chaman Lal: I have already told the House if the Honourable Member had taken the trouble to listen to what I was saying. The owners complain that they work only 4 days in the week; but, as I have said, it is not possible to expect them to work more than four days in the week under the conditions in which they work.

Dr. H. S. Gour: May I inquire of the Honourable Member if it is free labour?

Mr. Chaman Lal: Of course it is free labour in a sense. But there is really no free labour in India. You are tied down to employment, to any sort of employment when you have the dread spectre of Hunger following your footsteps wherever you go.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Will the Honourable Member say if they work four days in the week all the year round?

Mr. Chaman Lal: My impression is that they do. Reuter cabled out in 1920 that Mr. Swann had questioned Mr. Montagu concerning the distressful lot of the Indian miner and suggested a minimum wage sufficient to guarantee a decent living and compensation for accident. Mr. Montagu said he would refer the matter to the Indian Government and ask them for suggestions. I do not know what the Government have been doing ever since,—whether they have considered the suggestion or not; but, so far as I know, no information is available on the subject and nothing has been done to better the lot of the Indian miner. I remember once there was a cartoon in a paper depicting an African plain with hundreds of dead and mutilated bodies of negroes and in the foreground there was a semi-fashionably dressed figure with a cannon in one pocket, a rum bottle in another and a sword between his clenched teeth, while in his hand he held the Holy Bible. Underneath were inscribed the following lines:

“ When Sol brought Morning to the Dawn
Said He to Her : My dear,
’Tis evident some Christian folk
Are opening markets here.”

That, Sir, is the condition of thousands of our countrymen in the coal fields and such the utter cynicism which ignores their needs.

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Halley (Home Member): Is he a European or a Europe-retuned gentleman?

Mr. Chaman Lal: Well, Sir, the Honourable the Home Member wants to know whether that was a European or a Europe-retuned gentleman. I do hope that a Europe-retuned gentleman will have more humanity in him than is displayed by our proprietors in Indian coal fields.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, my Honourable friends who have preceded me have described rather poetically the difficulties and miseries to which mine workers in India are subjected. Sir, I have also some knowledge of these troubles, because I represent in this House a constituency which contains perhaps a larger number of mines than that contained in any other constituency of this Assembly, and I can say that the descriptions given by my friends are not much exaggerated.

Well, Sir, I do not wish to dwell upon those points that have already been urged before the House by my friends who have preceded me, but there is only one point to which I wish to invite the attention of this House, and that is the question of accidents in the mines. The Honourable Member in charge of this Department will remember that a very short time ago there was a terrible accident in one of the mines of my province, and that was known as the Parbellia mine disaster. A large number of men lost their lives. It was believed, not only by those who are often dubbed as professional agitators by mine owners or by those who are responsible for the control of mines, but also by persons who were appointed to inquire into the causes of that disaster, that it was due to preventable causes. Sir, a Committee, which was presided over by Mr. Tallents—I believe the Honourable Member in charge must be aware of that—was appointed, and that Committee submitted its report some time back. Their Report was circulated for opinion, but, so far as I am aware, neither the suggestions made by the Committee had any effect upon those who are in charge of the administration of this department, nor were the persons who were responsible for that disaster brought to book. May I, Sir, in this connection ask the Honourable Member in charge to offer an explanation for that? That disaster,—the Honourable Member who represents the Government of Bihar and Orissa will bear me out when I say this—that disaster was due to sheer callousness on the part of mine owners. A large number of men lost their lives on account of the breakage of the roof of one of the mines, and that incident, which resulted in loss of life of so many innocent men, was almost ignored. Sir, I do not make here any statement which is not corroborated by facts contained in Blue Books issued by Government themselves. May I, Sir, for the enlightenment of this House quote from a Report which is issued by the Government of Bihar and Orissa, "Bihar and Orissa in 1922". It is a book of the same nature as the one published by the Government of India through Mr. Rushbrook Williams. At page 78 of that book—I may inform the House that this book is available in the Library to any one who is interested in this subject—on page 78 of this book we find the following passage:

"The number of coal mines in the province in 1921 was 522, employing an average of over 126,000 persons daily. The average Indian labourer is however not a good miner, and consequently the average output of coal per person employed (about 100 tons a year) is very little more than half the output per person in the United Kingdom. The inefficiency of the Indian miner also results in a high accident rate. The death rate per million tons of coal raised at all Indian mines in the five years ending 1921 was very nearly 14, while in England during the ten years ending in 1918 the death rate per million tons raised was only 5.10."

Mark the difference, Sir. The difference is very considerable between the death rate in England and the death rate in India.

Pandit Shamlal Nehru: Cheaper labour and cheaper life in India.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: That is what I was going to say, that lives are cheaper here than labour.

Well, Sir, with tragic humour, the author of this Report attempts to moralise upon these findings of fact, and says that the cause of this heavy death rate in this country is not to be attributed either to the mine owners or to the Government. This is what he says:

"A large proportion of these accidents—in 1921, 37 per cent. of the total number—was directly due to the fault of the deceased or his fellow workmen."

Sir, I wish the author of this report had been a little more human in his diagnosis of the causes of such serious accidents. May I place before this House side by side with this quotation, a passage from an article written the year before last by Mr. Simpson, the Chief Inspector of Mines in India. This is the diagnosis by Mr. Simpson of such disasters. At page 288 of the Journal of Industries and Labour, Volume I, Part 3, he notices this fact. He also feels that in India the death rate per ton of coal raised in the mines is much higher than in England or in any other country, and he seeks to analyse the causes at page 286. He says:

"The responsibility for these accidents, as gauged by the Inspectors of Mines, over the same quinquennial period from 1915 to 1919 was detailed as below:

	Per cent.
Misadventure	50
Fault of deceased	31
Fault of fellow workman	6
Fault of subordinate official	4
Fault of management	9

These figures show that one half of the accidents might have been prevented, and there can be little doubt that this is generally true."

Now, Sir, in this article, Mr. Simpson, who must be admitted by every Member of this House to be a great authority on this subject, suggests various remedies. That article was written about 2½ years ago, but nothing has been done by Government to give effect to the recommendations contained therein. Sir, what he calls misadventure we ordinary people attribute to the faults of the mine owner. I have some personal experience of the disregard for the life of the coolies working in the mines displayed by most of the mine owners in the Chota Nagpur Division. If, Sir, the Honourable Member in charge has any doubt on this subject, I would ask him to visit some of the mines in Giridih—I am not talking of the mines in Jharia, because those mines are subjected to inspections by many important persons and particularly when such inspections take place, the mine owners take very good care to show their mines in very good condition. I would ask the Honourable Member in charge to pay a surprise visit to some of the mines in Giridih or to some of the mines in the district of Hazaribagh or even to some of the mines near about Jharia without informing the mine owners, and then inquire from the coolies themselves, not from persons who are supposed to create a rebellion among the coolies, but from the coolies themselves and find out how they are treated by the mine owners. Sir, I may state to this Assembly a small incident which was my own personal experience about a year and half ago. I went to visit a small mine in one of the districts of Chota Nagpur. I went along with three or four students. Sir, if the Honourable Member wants to know from me the name of that mine, I can give him the name confidentially, but I will relate to this House the incident which has a moral all its own. I went to one of these mines with

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three or four students. I was mistaken by the manager in charge of the mines to be a student myself. I went and visited the mines, made private inquiries from many of the women employed in the mines and the little boys working there, also from some adult coolies. They said: "What is the use of making any inquiries from us; if you want to make any inquiries about us, go and inquire from others because the only result of making an inquiry from us would be that we shall not be able to give you the true facts." Well, Sir, that is the phenomenon which can be perceived by anybody who goes there with a view to carry on an impartial inquiry. These coolies are subjected to such great hardships that they have not even the courage to describe their real conditions to those who go to them in order to find out what their conditions in the mines are. I need not, Sir, relate to this House many things which we hear in our part of the country, because I believe that we must not make here a statement which is not supported by facts either on record or which we are not prepared to corroborate by means of sufficiently reliable evidence. But I submit that facts as disclosed in the Blue Books issued by Government or in the reports issued by the Chief Inspector of Mines are sufficient condemnation of the present policy of the Government of India in the administration of this Department. I hope, Sir, Government will have a tender corner in their hearts for the interests of so many men whose lives are in charge of one or two managers whose business it is, whose interest it is, to get the utmost amount of work out of them without caring anything either for their lives or for their safety, much less for their health. With these words, I support the motion of my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: Sir, I only wish to make one remark in regard to Mr. Joshi's observation regarding the attitude of employers which I am extremely sorry that he should have made. Mr. Joshi himself sat on the Committee for the Workmen's Compensation Act and ought to know—and I submit does know—that the employers cordially lent their aid to the passing of that Act and the action of the employers last year was the subject of high approval in this House and as such was remarked upon by Sir Charles Innes in his final speech before the Act was passed.

With regard to the remarks of Mr. Chaman Lal, I have no intention of treating them as entitled to the slightest consideration from anybody. I have never listened to a more scandalous travesty of the facts, and young men of his age have no right to visit coal mines or any other mines or any other place with such warped eyes and come here and tell the House that general conditions exist which most emphatically do not exist and which he has not supported or attempted to support by the name of a single coal mine that he has visited.

Mr. Chaman Lal: May I point out, Sir, that every statement of mine is supported by facts taken from Government records?

The Honourable Mr. A. O. Chatterjee: My Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, takes a very deep interest in the condition of labourers. I fully admit his genuine interest in this matter. But sometimes he allows his better judgment to be overcome by reports that he receives at second or third hand. I am not at all sure that Mr. Joshi has visited the mines or made a very careful investigation of the conditions in the mines, as compared with the conditions in the homes where the miners would live if they were not employed in the mines. I should very much like Mr. Joshi.

for whom I have the greatest respect, to go and devote three months to a thorough investigation of the conditions in the mines and the conditions in the neighbouring villages. I think, then, he will revise his opinions very considerably. I stated yesterday that I did not claim that the conditions in the mines were perfect, but I said that they were improving. These improvements cannot be effected in a day. The conditions will take many years to become perfect. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that they will ever be perfect, because our own standards will rise correspondingly. But I do ask Mr. Joshi to go and see for himself and then make his criticisms.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I want to ask one question, Sir. Are all reforms to wait till I go to the coal fields?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: No, they will not wait. But at the same time I am quite certain that Mr. Joshi's criticisms will be far more valuable after he has made a personal investigation.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What are Government reports for? Are we not to use them?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I was coming to the Government reports. Mr. Joshi asked for information as to what was being done with regard to the recommendations that were made by the Select Committee on the Mines Bill last year on the question of employment of women underground in mines and on the introduction of the shift system. Government have carried out the undertaking that was given by my Honourable Colleague, Sir Charles Innes, on that occasion. We have made inquiries from Local Governments and Local Governments have consulted all the interests affected. We have not yet received the replies of all the Local Governments, and I am not therefore in a position to say what the decision of the Government of India would be when these replies are all received. As regards Mr. Joshi's request for the publication of the papers, I shall certainly consider that point when all the replies have been received.

Then, Mr. Joshi asks for an inquiry into the working conditions in mines and he referred particularly to the disaster at the Parbelia colliery to which my Honourable friend Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha has also referred. In this connection I should like to say that I have personally very carefully perused the report of the Committee of Inquiry that had been appointed by the Government of Bihar in accordance with the Mines Act with regard to this particular disaster, and I am rather surprised to hear from my Honourable friend Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha that the report contained allegations against the authorities of the particular mine concerned.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: I said that the report did fix upon individuals or upon certain bodies the responsibility for this. I never said "attacked." What I wanted the Government to say was whether anybody who was fathered with this responsibility had been punished in any way or not.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I have not got the report with me, Sir, and if the Honourable gentleman has got the report with him, I should like to see it now. So far as my recollection goes, the report

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said that the disaster was caused by certain circumstances which were not under the control of the mine authorities. So far as I can recollect, some of the work people had disobeyed the regulations. They had been smoking cigarettes. If anybody was responsible, he was involved in the disaster and was killed. That is my recollection. Unfortunately I have not got the report here, and my Honourable friend who meant to attack the Government on the subject, as far as I can judge, has not got the report with him either.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: I have not got it here but I have certainly read the report. There is no doubt that it did contain much more than what the Honourable Member now says. Cigarette smoking goes on in all the mines. I have seen it myself.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: If it does go on, it is against the regulations. I should like my Honourable friend to report cigarette smoking if he next finds it going on in any mine that he visits.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: All right.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: As a matter of fact, Government have not sat quiet. We have appointed a Committee to inquire into the question of coal dust and its effects in the mines. That Committee has got to make very careful laboratory and field investigations.

1 P.M. We have not yet received the report of that Committee, but I am hoping to receive it soon and we shall take steps to minimise similar risks in future. The fact is that in many of these mines they are now employing machinery where they used to employ hand labour in the old days and the danger from explosion of coal dust and similar circumstances has greatly increased within recent years. But Government have not been idle. My Honourable friend, who is a new comer in this Assembly, has quoted certain remarks made by my friend Mr. Simpson, the Chief Inspector of Mines, in the course of an article in the Journal of Indian Industries and Labour. Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha says that since that article was written in 1921 the Government of India have done nothing whatever to safeguard the health and lives of mine workers. I am astounded at his ignorance, absolutely astounded. We passed the Mines Act only last year which provided . . .

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: I rise to a point of personal explanation, Sir. I said that the suggestions made by Mr. Simpson in his article with regard to the education of mine workers, and such other suggestions, have not been given effect to. I should like the Honourable Member to tell me in what ways they have been given effect to. I did not refer to the Mines Act the provisions of which are honoured more in their breach than in their observance.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I certainly understood my Honourable friend to say that the Government have not taken any action with regard to protecting the lives and safety of mine workers since Mr. Simpson's article was written. I will just quote a paragraph from Mr. Simpson's last report to show, apart from the passing of the Mines Act, what has been done, and, as my Honourable friend is apparently a very diligent student of Blue Books, I am rather surprised that this paragraph has not attracted his attention. I am sorry I mentioned Mr. Simpson's last report. It is a report written by Mr. Penman for the

year ending with the 31st December, 1922. That is the last report available, and it is written by Mr. Penman. On page 18 he says:

"It may be mentioned that the Government of India are taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the enactment of the Indian Mines Act, 1923, to revise the regulations relating to the safety of mines and of persons engaged in mining. The new regulations will not come into force until the 1st July 1924. In the meantime, they are taking steps to ensure that the mine officials responsible for the regular inspection of the roads and working places in mines and for testing for inflammable and other gases shall be properly qualified persons. They have also, following the practice in other countries, appointed a Committee to inquire into the coal dust danger and to make recommendations as to the regulations to be enforced in order to minimise the risk of coal dust accidents in future."

If my Honourable friend had only taken the trouble to read this paragraph of the last report of the Chief Inspector of Mines, I do not think he would have made the speech that he delivered this morning.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: This very paragraph says that the regulations will come into force on the 1st July 1924. We are now in the middle of March 1924, and the regulations have not come into force so far.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Exactly. All that could be done under the Act has been done. We cannot introduce regulations without first drafting them and without publishing them according to law. The Honourable gentleman does not want me to be a law breaker.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: Nothing has been done so far.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I shall leave it at that.

Then he also quoted certain remarks with regard to the death rate in Indian mines as compared with the death rate in the United Kingdom. He gave the death rate per million tons. It is a well known fact that the efficiency of the Indian miner is not as great as that of the British miner. I do not blame the Indian miner entirely because in the statistics that are published we include both women and children in calculating the efficiency, so that the comparison is not really fair in my own personal opinion between the Indian miner and the British miner. But let us take the death rate per thousand persons employed and I will quote from Mr. Simpson's report for the year ending the 31st December 1921. On page 7 it is stated:

"The death rate per thousand persons employed was 1.17 while that of the preceding five years was 1.05. At coal mines only these figures were 1.35 and 1.14. At coal mines in the United Kingdom during the ten years ending with and including 1919 the average death rate per thousand persons employed underground was 1.46 as compared with 1.74 for Indian coal mines."

I do not think we have very much to be ashamed of compared with conditions in England.

Pandit Sham Lal Nehru: You have not very much to be ashamed of, but there is a little to be ashamed of.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I admit that the figures are not as good as those in the United Kingdom because, as I pointed out, the average death rate here per thousand persons underground was 1.74 and it was 1.46 in England, but then compare the education of the people there. Safety in mines as well as in factories does not merely depend on the employer. It depends to a very large extent on the alertness, on the literacy and on the education of the miner or the worker himself. Even though notices may be posted everywhere, if the worker is illiterate, he

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cannot possibly read them. If he comes to the works only occasionally, if he works in the mines only fitfully, he does not get to know all the regulations.

Mr. Devaki Prasad Sinha: Whose duty is it to educate him?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: It is the duty of the Bihar and Orissa Government, not mine. The Honourable Member from Bihar has invited me to go and visit the coal mines. If he had been here yesterday he would have known that I said yesterday I had lived in that area when I was a boy. I think that is more than my Honourable friend can claim. I have been down to the mines not once, but several times. I have spent weeks visiting the coal fields and I do not want any invitation from him to go there. I shall go there when I feel that I need to go there.

As regards the remarks of my Honourable friend from the Punjab, I shall leave him without any comments. I think he has been adequately dealt with by my Honourable friend Mr. Willson.

Mr. Darcy Lindsay (Bengal: European): May I offer a suggestion to the Honourable Member in charge, that he follow the example of my Honourable friend Mr. Burdon and arrange for a personally conducted tour to the coal fields. (*A Voice:* "At Government expense".) Naturally at Government expense. I am quite sure that, if some of the Members of this House who profess to know so much about the labour in the coal fields would join this tour, they would come back with correct information and we would not have this annual repetition of charges against the Government of India and against employers of labour in the coal fields. When I refer, Sir, to the employers of labour in the coal fields, it is somewhat refreshing to find that Honourable Members like Mr. Joshi and Mr. Chaman Lal should have so very much to say against their own countrymen, because, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, told us only a few days ago, a large majority of the coal mines in India are owned and worked by Indians. Sir, I have visited the coal fields, I have not been down a mine, but I have visited the coal fields, and from what I saw, from what I heard, I must say I cannot agree with what fell from my Honourable friend, Mr. Chaman Lal. The information given to me, Sir, was that the labour in the coal fields is very difficult to procure. It is almost entirely agricultural, and comes in and goes out according to the particular state of the monsoon. The men go away to their fields to till the soil and with a bad monsoon, labour is good in the coal mines. Another point is that these miners work for as few days a week as they choose. When their pay was increased, instead of working 5 or 6 days a week, they chose to work for three days a week; and I cannot agree with my Honourable friend from the Punjab that they are in the starving condition which he portrayed. There is very great difficulty, as I said, in obtaining the labour. Another point, Sir, is that the labour is very much in the hands of *Sardars*. They have their gangs, they contract with a particular mine for the raising of so many tons of coal per day, and, if there are individual hardships, I say that the blame lies at the door of the *Sardars*. With these few remarks, Sir, I leave the question to others to deal with.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Mines' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,28,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Mines'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 28—OTHER SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. President: The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,73,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Other Scientific Departments'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 29—EDUCATION.

Mr. President: The question is :

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,68,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Education'."

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Sir, I have no desire to add to the volume of the speeches on the Budget Demands, but I should consider it a dereliction of duty if I were to allow this opportunity to pass without pleading the cause of my educational home at Aligarh. Sir, it is really surprising and astounding that out of a Budget of over 100 crores, the Government of India is spending less than Rs. 3 lakhs on "Education." It may be said that "Education" is now a transferred subject and that the Provincial Governments are giving education to the people of the country. But, Sir, the Government of India cannot be absolved of their responsibilities if the Provinces are performing their duty, though not in a satisfactory manner.

Sir, coming to the chief point, I consider that the grant of Rs. 1 lakh to each of the denominational universities at Benares and Aligarh is highly inadequate and insufficient. Sir, it is well known to this House that my community, that is the Mussalmans, are a poor and moneyless people, that we are backward in education and that we have just passed through a very great crisis which has upset all our national programme. Probably the House is also aware that the Aligarh Moslem University came into being in the midst of the non-co-operation storm and it deserves a great deal of credit for the skill and courage with which it managed to emerge out of the fury of the tempest. But in doing so, it incurred the displeasure and the wrath, at least for some time, of the masses on whose help the national institutions depend to a large extent. Also the Mussalmans of India have exhausted their meagre resources in subscribing towards the Khilafat Fund and they are not at present in a position to subscribe towards their national institutions. The result is that the Aligarh Moslem University cannot expand, it cannot extend its faculties and it is now generally said, which unfortunately is also true, that, instead of having a first class college, we have now a third rate university. In these circumstances, Sir, I hope that the Government of India will reconsider the position and will be able to increase the grant which they are making towards the national universities. In pleading the case of my

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university at Aligarh, of course I do not mean to ignore the claims of the other denominational university at Benares and I earnestly appeal to the Government of India to find money for grants to these universities.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the remarks of my Honourable friend Mr. Muhammad Yakub. These two universities are directly under the charge of the Government of India. We are grateful to the Government of India for the grants that they have extended to these institutions. But since the grants were fixed, much progress has been made. The Department of Education has been sympathetic and they are aware of the progress we have achieved. I really think that my friend Mr. Yakub is right in drawing the attention of the Department to the necessity of the grants being increased. He has been modest in suggesting increased grants to each of these universities. I think the Honourable Member for Education and the Honourable Mr. Butler would agree that each one of these universities can very usefully spend Rs. 2 lakhs a year more. These universities are all-India institutions. Neither Aligarh nor Benares can appeal to the Provincial Governments for grants. In fact when they have, they have been told that they should appeal to the Government of India. Now, I think, Sir, that Aligarh deserves a great deal more of permanent recurring grant than it obtains. It is an ancient institution. It is well known that the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College had established itself very firmly as a first class institution long before it blossomed into a university. But a university is a very costly affair as every Member who is closely connected with a university knows. The Mussalman community has contributed a large sum towards the establishment and upkeep of the Aligarh University, and I hope that the Government of India will take into consideration the representation which has been made on its behalf. I would also add that the Government should also be pleased to take into consideration the needs of the Benares University. Since the Benares University was established, it has developed very rapidly. It has established several departments. Its scientific department is very well equipped now. One new institution which has been established since the university was brought into existence, is the Engineering College which is a unique institution of its kind in India. There is no college in this country where education for degrees in mechanical engineering or electrical engineering or mining engineering is imparted except the Engineering College of the Benares Hindu University. The standard fixed for education is the standard of the London University Degree of Science in Engineering, and it has been a very costly affair. The college came into existence owing to a munificent grant given by His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala, a grant of Rs. 5 lakhs non-recurring and Rs. 24,000 recurring. The college has now been in existence for nearly six years. It has passed its first batch of students and it has attracted students from all parts of India. Nearly 75 students are receiving instruction there from the Punjab, over 100 students receive instruction in engineering at Benares from Bengal, about 10 or more come from Assam and a number of students come from Madras. In fact, there is no part of India from which students do not go to the Benares Hindu University. Some of our students sat at the examination conducted by the City and Guilds Institute, London. One of them came out first in his subject and another came out first in his branch of the subject. That shows the high standard which the college has established. I therefore think it is in every way meet and proper that

the Government of India should increase their grant to both these institutions. The Department of Education is well aware of the needs of these universities. The Benares Hindu University has collected nearly a crore of rupees from the public. The actual collections amount to very nearly a crore of rupees, perhaps only a few thousands less than a crore. Except for a grant of about a lakh, Government have not contributed in any way towards the non-recurring expenses of the University. We are at present 15 lakhs to the wrong side of the account. So far as our non-recurring charges are concerned, we need at least 2 lakhs a year more in order to carry on the departments as they stand. As the Aligarh University as well as the Benares University are institutions of an all-India character, they do require further assistance from the Government of India. The Benares University requires assistance from the Government of India also for the reason that it administers specially in at least one of its departments to the needs of the whole of India. Students come from all parts of India to its Engineering College for the reason that there is no institution in existence in the country which teaches up to the same standard as the Benares Hindu University does. I therefore strongly support the proposal of my Honourable friend Mr. Yakub and I hope the Government will see their way to offer a handsome grant to each of these institutions.

Dr. H. S. Gour: I cordially associate myself with the Vice-Chancellor of the Benares University and the spokesman of the Aligarh University. My only regret is that I have to ask for a similar concession in respect of the Delhi University. I think the Government of India should have granted to the Delhi University the same grant that they make to the Universities of Aligarh and Benares. But we are destined to start on a small sum of Rs. 65,000 which the Government of India have voted for the ensuing financial year. If the appeals that have been addressed to the Honourable the Education Member on behalf of the Universities of Aligarh and Benares receive a favourable response, as they deserve to do, I hope he will not forget the University which is the creature of the Central Legislature and works and operates under the eyes of its Members. These older universities have endowments running into about a crore of rupees each, but the Delhi University at present has no endowments to speak of, and I therefore appeal to the Honourable Member in charge of Education to treat the University of Delhi with the same consideration which he should extend to the Moslem and the Hindu Universities of Aligarh and Benares, respectively. Sir, only the other day I held a meeting of the Executive Council and they unanimously passed a Resolution confirming a Resolution of the Finance Committee that I should approach the Government of India and the Honourable the Finance Member to raise the grant to the Delhi University to at least Rs. 80,000, which as you see is a very modest increase of Rs. 15,000 over the sum sanctioned by the Government of India. I hope, Sir, I shall receive an equally favourable response from the Honourable Member in charge of Education.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma (Member for Education, Health and Lands): Sir, there is only one point in Mr. Yakub's speech which I should like to correct. The Honourable Member thought that the Government of India's expenditure on Education is a paltry sum of about 8 lakhs of rupees. I fear that is an incorrect statement. The demand is for Rs. 2,68,000, under this head, but the Honourable Member will find that more than 80 lakhs are being spent by the Government of India on

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Education in minor administrations, and the Central Legislature is in a way responsible for that expenditure; therefore the sum that is being spent on the whole by the Central Legislature and the Government of India in all its branches is a very much larger sum than the Honourable Member thinks Government are spending at present.

Well, we have had the recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee that perhaps the Government of India are spending, with the limited resources at their disposal, a little too much on university education and on secondary education, and that, if they get additional funds at their disposal, the first claim should be that of primary education. The Honourable Member for the North-West Frontier Province also expressed the hope yesterday that if any money is to be found it must be expended on primary education, especially in the North-West Frontier Province where a large number of schools have been closed.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): I beg to point out that I never said that all the available money should be spent on primary education. I simply said that the allotment was cut down for lack of funds and that secondary education as well as university education was as important in that corner of India as primary education.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma: I never meant to say that the Honourable Member would be satisfied with the re-opening of the hundred and odd schools which have been closed for lack of funds, and that he is not going to urge the claims of secondary and higher education in his own Province as well as in other minor administrations. What I said was that prominent attention was drawn to the claims of his Province. The Government of India have to admit, with sorrow, that more money could not be found for the needs of primary education in his Province. But I think those that have known the attitude of my Department towards education in general during the last few years will readily recognise that we have never minimised the importance that ought to be attached in India to the claims of university education. And the Honourable Sir Muhammad Shafi explained in clear and emphatic terms yesterday that the Government of India, realising the paucity of the number of universities in India, such a vast continent, have done their level best to increase the number of universities so as to cope with the work that is before the people of this country. With these sentiments I am in cordial agreement. There is no doubt that education in all its branches has to advance *pari passu* and with very rapid strides, but Honourable Members will realise that, so far as practical politics go, there does not seem to be much possibility of the Government of India being able to find funds for education, and they should not be accusing my Department or the Government of India of lack of sympathy, when they state the plain fact that they do not like to mislead the people by allowing them to cherish hopes that may not be fulfilled during the next year or later

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Sir, may I ask why we should not withdraw the grants from the Raj Kumar College? What have the Government of India to do with the education of the sons of Ruling Chiefs? The Chamber of Princes or the Ruling Chiefs themselves may look after the education of the sons of Ruling Chiefs and not the tax-payers of British India.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma: The Government of India will consult the Committee which has been appointed to assist the Department as to the distribution of any money that may be available between the Chiefs' Colleges and between the various universities claiming support from Government funds, and the other branches of educational activity, and we shall be largely guided by the advice that may be given to us by that Committee, supported by this House and the Council of State. All that I am stating here is that you may be sure of our sympathy, you may be sure of the recognition by us of the need of assistance to these national universities, but that you should not be impatient when we cannot translate that sympathy into action in the very near future, and accuse us of holding out hopes which we have no means of fulfilling. That is the point which I was trying to safeguard. The Benares University, the Government of India readily recognise, is fulfilling a very great national demand.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: May I ask the Honourable Member as to the rules according to which allotments are apportioned to the various Departments, and whether education is considered as having the foremost claim and the first demand on the revenues of the Government of India; and how these calculations are made and how the money is allotted to the various Departments of the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma: There are certain departments which are the primary concern of the Government of India, and money must be found for them readily and as a first charge upon the Government of India. Speaking on behalf of the Department of Education, I will never rest content with relegating education to a secondary position, but Honourable Members will recognise that education is largely a provincial and transferred subject, as being undertaken by the Provinces as a primary charge upon their revenues, and we cannot under the Devolution Rules undertake to spend any money on education in the Provinces. With regard to minor administrations which are directly under the Government of India, the existing educational institutions are being maintained, improved and better equipped, and as funds are forthcoming the needs of primary, secondary and university education would be co-ordinated and funds would be set apart for all these branches according as money may be forthcoming. There can be and are no clear rules as to how much money should be spent on university education, how much on secondary education, and how much on primary education, or how much should be allotted to the Province of Delhi, how much to the North-West Frontier Province, and how much to Coorg, and so on.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: Is the Honourable Member aware that a Sub-Committee, presided over by the Director of Public Instruction, North-West Frontier Province, was appointed by the Local Administration to go into the financial position of the residential Islamia College, Peshawar, and that after research and inquiry into the matter they found that the institution could not be run without a further grant of Rs. 50,000 or Rs. 60,000, and that a strong recommendation was made to the Government of India for that grant and that a grant of Rs. 40,000 was allowed for the year 1920-21 or the year 1921-22—I forget which—and that that grant has since been withheld, with the result that the institution is being run under a deficit

Mr. President: Order, order. I cannot allow the Honourable Member to make a speech, and, if he wished to raise that point, he should have put down a reduction to this Vote. The fact that no reduction was put

[Mr. President.]

down naturally made the Honourable Member assume that there would be very little to answer.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma: Sir, the Government of India certainly recognise the claims of the North-West Frontier Province and are aware that the Islamia College which I had the privilege of visiting some years ago is a college that deserves every encouragement and, if the Government of India are in the happy position of finding funds, I am sure that we shall be the first to help that College and secondary and primary education in the North-West Frontier Province, so that that Province may, by the growth of civilising influences, be a source of strength and not a source of anxiety to the people of India.

With regard to the Benares University, Sir, the Princes and people of India have come forward readily and cheerfully and subscribed large sums of money and I only wish it had been possible to increase its grant. So with Aligarh. We shall, if funds are available, cheerfully and readily take cognizance of the demands made by the two Honourable Members and Dr. Gour, and do hope to distribute such funds as are available between them. But more than that I am not in a position to state at present. For 1924-25 Honourable Members recognise that nothing can be done and they have not asked that anything should be done. That is all I have to say with regard to Education.

Mr. President: I must point out to Honourable Members that it is not fair to the Department, if they wish to move a reduction, not to give notice. No motion was put down except one for an increase which the Honourable Member knew was out of order; but because his name was on the paper I called him.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Santhal Parganas: Non-Muhammadian): Will it be in order, Sir, to discuss the affairs of the Lady Hardinge Medical College at this stage?

Mr. President: There is no vote for the Lady Hardinge Medical College here.

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: That comes under "Delhi".

Mr. K. Ahmed: May I ask, Sir, for some information from the Honourable Member in charge of Education? At page 92, under Demand No. 29, Education, there is an item of Rs. 13,000 under the head 'Grants to Universities'; that is to the Calcutta University. We used to see that item in previous years allotted to the Calcutta University, but how is it, Sir, that under this item there is nothing allotted this year? Of course, I know that the Government of India are very hard up for money and cannot allot any money for education. But money has been asked for by the representatives of the Universities of Aligarh, Delhi, and Benares, and with regard to Calcutta no question has been raised at all. Sir, if you ask from where the money is to come, and if my Honourable friend, Sir Narasimha Sarma, finds it very difficult to allot money for imparting education, I would suggest that it would be better for him to ask his friend, the Army Secretary, sitting next to him. It will probably be high time that an old military colonel, without work, should throw away his sword, gun and bayonet on the frontier and come near the western frontier near the house of my Honourable friend, Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum, and, instead of brandishing his sword, educate the people of those parts, so that they may not disturb the frontiers of India any longer. Sir,

how many crores and crores of rupees have been spent on the North-West Frontier to keep order? I think, Sir, the tribes will be very pleased to receive education

Mr. President: The question of education in the North-West Frontier is not in order.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, may I put one question to the Honourable Member in charge of Education? I see there used to be a grant of Rs. 18,000 to the Calcutta University in previous years. That has been evidently withdrawn. Does it refer to the Minto Professorship, and are the Government of India going to withdraw their support from the Minto Professorship of the Calcutta University this year? I will not make a speech, but I only want that question to be answered.

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: I think I can explain that point satisfactorily. The money referred to does cover the charge on account of the Minto Professorship which the Government of India founded in pre-reform days in the Calcutta University. It has hitherto been paid, but objections have been raised as to whether it is now a fair charge on Central Revenues. Pending a settlement of that question it has not been considered correct to place it in the Budget. If we are satisfied that it is a suitable charge on Central Revenues, we shall approach the Assembly in the matter.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: I hope we shall get it.

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: It is all a question as to whether it is a fair charge on Central Revenues.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum: Sir, can I not speak on the subject of the Islamia College on this occasion?

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: We are prepared, Sir, to meet the Honourable Member from the North-West Frontier when the North-West Frontier Province vote is taken. This vote, with which we are now dealing, deals only with three or four specific grants to the Benares and Aligarh Universities, etc.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney (Nominated: Anglo-Indians): Sir, I wish to take advantage of this motion and elicit certain information from the Honourable Member in charge. Sir, Honourable Members must be aware that before the reforms scheme European education was a Government of India subject. It is now a reserved transferred subject

Mr. President: That is not in order. It happens to be called "Education", but it is an extremely limited Vote. The Honourable Member has already had an opportunity yesterday, on the vote for the Education Department, of raising a number of matters of that kind. When it comes to education in the minor Administrations under the control of the Government of India, then a further opportunity will arise limited to those Administrations. As a matter of fact I think it is a misnomer to call this vote "Education". It appears to me to be grants-in-aid to certain colleges, and it will help the Chair a good deal if the titles of some of these votes are revised before we come to the Budget next year.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,68,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Education'."

The motion was adopted.

THE INDIAN PENAL CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Dr. H. S. Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhamadan): Sir, I beg to lay on the table the report of the Select Committee appointed on the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter to Three of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter to Three of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

THE BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS.

SECOND STAGE—concl'd.

Expenditure from Revenue—concl'd.

DEMAND NO. 80—MEDICAL SERVICES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 7,79,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Medical Services'."

Mr. B. Venkatapatiraju (Ganjam cum Vizagapatam: Non-Muhamadan Rural): Sir, for want of time, I do not propose to take up much of the time of the House. I only wish to raise a question with reference to an undertaking given at one stage by the Government of India that, in order to help the indigenous systems of medicine, namely, Ayurvedic and Unani, they would start a Central Research Institute at Delhi and they wanted to provide funds for it. But subsequently, when a question was put, they said on account of the Retrenchment Committee, they have not been given any provision for it. Later on, I understand the Honourable Mr. Butler said that they have not made any provision at all even this year. The fact that the Government had given such an undertaking was perhaps not known to the Retrenchment Committee. Otherwise, they would have been the last persons to say that money ought not to be spent for such a useful purpose. We know, Sir, that we are not able to provide proper doctors for all the millions of the population, because we are able to give only one medical practitioner for about 5,000 or 6,000 people. In these circumstances, it is absolutely necessary that, in order to put indigenous systems of medicine on a scientific and proper basis, as a large number of people are dependent upon private doctors, such as Unani or Ayurvedic doctors, there should be a Research Institute, and I hope therefore that Government will see their way to securing the necessary funds for establishing one.

Secondly, Sir, I want to know whether there is any difficulty in Indianising the civil side of the Medical Service. At one time the appointment of Indians was stopped on account of some directions given by the Secretary of State, and I do not know what the Secretary of State wants to do now and whether the 80 vacancies have been filled up. Is there any such difficulty in taking Indian medical practitioners who are otherwise qualified to fill up permanent posts in the Imperial cadre? In order to

elicit information on these two points, Sir, I move my amendment, namely:

"That the demand under the head 'Medical Services' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: Sir, my Honourable friend has raised two points to which I shall be very glad to reply. One of these is in connection with the Central Medical Research Institute which we proposed to establish at Delhi. The Honourable Member referred to this as an institute which was to be started for the purpose of helping the indigenous system of medicine in this country. But that is very far from being the position. The actual position, as I explained at the time when I put the matter before the Assembly, is that the Indian Research Fund Association had accumulated a large capital sum which it wished to devote to building a Central Medical Research Institute at Delhi for medical research purely on western lines, and that various anonymous donors had been good enough to offer to help to endow such an institution, if we would build it and be responsible for its upkeep. The only connection that that Institute has with the indigenous system of medicine in this country is that on one occasion, when a motion was moved in this House that some encouragement to the indigenous systems should be given, my predecessor in the office which I now hold explained to the Assembly that, medicine being a provincial transferred subject, the only thing the Government of India could do, if and when they created a Central Medical Research Institute, was to consider whether some investigation and research into matters connected with the indigenous system of medicine was not possible. That is all, and there should be no misunderstanding as to the position.

As regards the Institute itself, as the House is aware, the Retrenchment Committee fell heavily on all forms of medical research. They stopped the annual grant of Rs. 5 lakhs, which had been made for years to the Indian Research Fund Association, and also proposed to abolish all the unspecified medical research appointments under Government. I am thankful to say that the Government did not accept that recommendation in full, for they retained in the Budget six unspecified posts of research officers. But they did accept the proposal to keep in abeyance all the remaining unspecified research posts, and also for the time being the grant of Rs. 5 lakhs a year to the Indian Research Fund Association. The result was that it was a choice between the practical closing down of medical research and the building of the Institute on the one hand, and the giving up of the proposal to use the capital of the Indian Research Fund Association to build the Institute and in its place to utilise the interest on that capital for keeping alive medical research on the other. The Indian Research Fund Association wisely decided that it was a far more important thing to keep alive existing research than to spend their money on buildings, especially as there would not be enough money to keep them up. Accordingly, the project for building an Institute at Delhi has been put in abeyance, and the Indian Research Fund Association have devoted the interest on their capital, which amounts to about Rs. 2 lakhs a year, to keeping alive as far as possible medical research work against the day when more money will be available. This, I hope, will satisfy my Honourable friend on that point.

The second point which he raised was the question of Indianisation of the Civil Medical Services. Sir, there is much misapprehension about the actual position of the Civil Medical Services. It is often thought that the Civil Medical Services are manned almost entirely by Indian Medical Service officers, and as in the past most Indian Medical Service officers have been Europeans, it is often thought that the Civil Medical Services are in

[Mr. M. S. D. Butler.]

the main manned by Europeans. This is very far from being the case. The number of superior appointments in the Civil Medical Services is vastly in excess of the number of the posts reserved for Indian Medical Service officers. I will give the figures. I take them from a paper which was prepared for the Commission on the Public Services and the figures are correct to the 1st July 1923. Out of a total of 570 superior appointments in India and Burma, 86 are vacant. Of the remaining 484 posts, 270, or just half, were held on the 1st July 1923 by Indians, including 59 Anglo-Indians. Thus the fancied preponderance of European officers is a myth. It is also no longer going to be the fact that Indian Medical Service officers in civil employ will be solely Europeans. It is true that owing to the fact that until comparatively recent years, that is to say, about 10 years ago, the Indian Medical Service was almost wholly a European service, there were on the 1st July last, only 50 Indians amongst the 395 Indian Medical Service officers in civil employ. Since then the point in the I. M. S. cadre has been reached where the Indian element plays a much more important part. Of the 211 officers below the rank of Major still in military employ, 97 or 46 per cent. are Indians. Now the transfer from the military to the civil side of the I. M. S. occurs just about when a man comes to be a Captain or a senior Captain. The result is that to the number of Indians not in the I. M. S. already holding superior posts on the civil side, mainly of course the Civil Assistant Surgeons who have been promoted to be Civil Surgeons, there will soon be added about half of the I. M. S. officers transferred from the military to the civil side. The proportion of Indians on the civil side is thus about to rise very rapidly. The calculation which I made for the Royal Commission was that, when the point was reached, when one-third of the posts reserved for Indian Medical Service officers on the civil side came to be filled by Indians, then Indians would hold roughly 388 out of the 570 posts, or 68 per cent. of the total appointments in the Civil Medical cadre. To sum up, I would say that the position now is that

already half the Civil Medical superior posts are held by Indians, in which I include Anglo-Indians, of whom there are 59 and that as officers are transferred from the military side of the Indian Medical Service in the near future that proportion will rise very rapidly to close on 68 per cent.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 7,79,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Medical Services'."

Mr. M. S. D. Butler: May I say, Sir, before the vote is taken, that, if Honourable Members who are going to Dehra Dun wish to see the X-Ray Institute there, arrangements are being made to show it to them. It is well worth a visit.

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 31.—PUBLIC HEALTH.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,25,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Public Health'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 82—AGRICULTURE.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,61,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Agriculture'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 83—CIVIL VETERINARY SERVICES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,45,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Civil Veterinary Services'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 84—INDUSTRIES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 23,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Industries'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 85—AVIATION.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 19,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Aviation'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 86—COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,71,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Commercial Intelligence'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 87—CENSUS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Census'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 88-A.—EMIGRATION—INTERNAL.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 57,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Internal Emigration'."

Mr. S. Venkatapatiraju: Sir, I may be excused if I take a little more time on this question, which has become of extreme importance of late. The House is perfectly aware how the Government of India and the Members of this House are taking special precautions to secure proper treatment for emigrants in the colonies. But, unless we set a good example in our own country, it falls flat when we want to insist on the Colonies treating our labourers properly. In that view, Sir, I appeal to the Member in charge, the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee, that he has to see, firstly, whether the conditions which we are insisting upon for the benefit of our people in the Colonies are being observed in our own country. Sir, a large number of people are being sent to Assam; for instance, from my own district, Vizagapatam, we sent last year 8,200 men, from Ganjam about 600, from Godavari about 400, from Bengal they are sending about 11,000 altogether and from various other places, such as Bihar, and the United Provinces, they are sending a very large number of men. Now, I want to know whether any steps were taken to appoint a special officer to look after these people, how they are treated, what is the housing accommodation given to them, what wages are paid to them and whether there is any inconvenience or any misery to which they are subjected in those places. What we complain of is that they should not be given any advances in order to keep them under contractual obligations for a long period. I find they are still observing that in Assam. I also notice a large number of people are indebted as such to the extent of several lakhs. Moreover, when we have abolished the indentured system at the instance of the Government of India in all the Colonies, why should we still keep on an indirect indenture system under the Act of 1859? The other day the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee promised that he would repeal it. What is the difficulty in getting it repealed at an early date? Therefore, my first point with reference to this matter is that all the facilities which we want our labourers to enjoy in the Colonies should be equally insisted on in India with reference to the persons that are emigrating—namely, assisted emigrants to Assam. If they are free labourers, that is a different matter.

One other matter to which I wish to invite the attention of the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee is that during last year the *sardars* appointed have been increased to such a very large extent that it has become a regular nuisance. In my own district, Sir, the *sardars* have been increased to the extent of 2,520. Formerly there were 1,000 *sardars*. If 2,520 *sardars* are employed in one district in order to secure about 8,200 coolies, it means that practically there is one *sardar* for every emigrant. It is the same case in other places. It was pointed out by the District Magistrate of Vizagapatam in his report that he has found out a great deal of malpractices on the part of some *sardars* and adequate punishment has been meted out to them by depriving them of their licenses. I do not complain of that. But why should there be such an army of *sardars* to secure these recruits? I think it is not at all helpful for proper recruitment, nor is it in the interests of the country.

The second point that I wish to point out to the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee is that there are certain places, like the Agency Tracts, which require development. Hitherto there was a prohibition that no person ought to be recruited from these Agency Tracts because the then District Magistrate was of opinion that, if the Agency people were allowed to be sent out, there was no prospect of developing these Agency Tracts. When we found that along with some people from the Indian States, some people from the Agency Tracts were being smuggled, intimation was given not only to the Madras Government, but to the India Government that the

rule which had been till then enforced was not observed, because even the Agency people have been smuggled with the people from Indian States. Now, curiously when a complaint was made to that effect, that rule of prohibition was withdrawn. They are now being freely recruited from the Agency Tracts. It seems curious, Sir, that, when we complained that they ought not to have been taken, the very rule which was hitherto observed was removed. It is doing scant justice to the complaint made. Now, instead of sending our people to the various Colonies for emigration purposes, if the Government take it into their head to develop the Agency Tracts, then all the men that are sent abroad out of India could be utilised in developing this area. Under no circumstances, Sir, should the Agency Tracts which are very thinly populated be depopulated by sending a large number of people from those places. Even from the Agency tracts alone they have been sent to the extent of 1,025 people and about 1,300 men have been sent from the plains. When I brought this matter to the notice of the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee, the Honourable Member stated that the Madras Government wanted that these rules should be abrogated, and therefore they had done it. I appeal to the Government of India that in these matters they should take a broad view of things and should bring it to the notice of the Madras Government as to why it was that they prohibited people of these Agency Tracts from going outside and how is it that they have now all of a sudden and for what reason removed these prohibitions. There must be something at the bottom of it. Therefore I appeal to the Government of India, who, I believe, are sympathetic to the people sent abroad, to show the same sympathy to the people who are sent from these Agency Tracts. With this end in view, the Government of India should get into communication with the Madras Government and find out the circumstances under which the original rule was framed and the circumstances under which it was suddenly withdrawn. They should not be induced to take action on the representations of the Local Government but should exercise their own discretion and judgment and should find out why all of a sudden the Government of Madras want to go back upon their former decision. I earnestly desire that the Government of India should take steps to prevent the already thinly populated Agencies from becoming depopulated. Sufficient precautions must be taken to see that the people working in the tea estates are treated properly, are paid proper wages, are given proper accommodation and, that everything that ought to be done is being done by having a special officer appointed and not merely leaving it to the ordinary administration reports. With these words I move my amendment:

"That the demand under the head 'Emigration—Internal' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Emigration—Internal' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao (Godavari *cum* Kistna: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I should like to make a few observations at this stage so that my Honourable friend Mr. Chatterjee may reply to both of us.

Sir, for some years complaints have been made in the Madras Legislative Council that the policy of permitting emigration from these partially populated tracts of the Madras Presidency known as the Agency Tracts was unsound. On several occasions we have been informed in Madras that, though the local officers were not in favour of emigration, the policy of emigration has been sanctioned by the Government of India. Sir, the

[Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao.]

Agency Tracts in Madras are situated in the districts of Vizagapatam and Ganjam and occupy an area of about 12,000 or 18,000 square miles. They are very sparsely populated and the Raipur-Vizianagram Railway, to which a reference was made the other day by the Honourable Sir Charles Innes, goes across that country. The whole question is this. Are we now in Madras to permit our labour to migrate from a country where there are already difficulties in this matter of population? We have been informed that the Collectors of both the districts protested against this policy of permitting emigration from these Agency Tracts. That was some years ago. Then we were also informed that the Madras Government made many representations to the Government of India. That also was some time ago; and I should like to ask the Honourable Member to publish the whole of this correspondence between the Madras Government and the Government of India on the subject of emigration from these Agency Tracts. A year and a half or two years ago, when the late Sir Srinivasa Aiyangar was Member in charge of this particular subject, I was given to understand that there was a conference between him and some of the tea planters from Assam, and that in consequence of the representations made by them the Madras Government either consented to the suggestion made by the Government of India or concurred in some decision which was come to by my Honourable friend. Therefore, Sir, I should like to know where we are in this department and who is responsible for the present state of things by which the already sparsely populated parts of Madras continue to be depleted of the few persons who live in those localities. That is the main question I would like to raise. After knowing who is responsible it will be time enough for us to find out what remedy would be necessary. We are at present in the dark. We are told continuously that the local officers, the Collectors, are against this step. We have also been informed that the Government of Madras did not, up to a particular stage, concur in this policy. I would therefore specifically ask my Honourable friend to make a statement to us on the subject. As regards local feeling, several of those gentlemen interested in agriculture made a representation both to myself and to a friend that we should raise this question in the Assembly and therefore, before proceeding further, I should like to have a clear and unambiguous statement from my Honourable friend as to what the existing state of things is.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I want to draw the attention of the House to the legislation which supports recruitment of labourers for the plantations. The legislation punishes labourers for a breach of contract when an advance of money is made. This legislation is found in various Statutes. The first is the Indian Penal Code, section 492.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member is here confined to the manner in which the law is administered.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The point which I wish to make is that all the evils are due to the legislation which has been passed to support this recruitment. I do not propose to take up much time. I wish to mention the legislation which gives rise to these evils. The second piece of legislation is the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act. I want Government to repeal these two pieces of legislation. The Government of India have agreed to repeal the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, but I want the Government of India to tell me when they propose to introduce that legislation. Last year they asked Mr. Neogy to withdraw his Bill as they

were themselves going to introduce legislation. They have not done so this session and I want to know if they are going to do it next session. I want to know what reply they have received in regard to the repeal of certain sections of the Penal Code. Government wanted to consult the Local Governments as regards the repeal of this kind of legislation.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Sir, I rise to a point of order. The repeal of the sections of the Indian Penal Code to which my Honourable friend referred would not concern merely internal emigration, but the general law of the country. I thought, Sir, just now you gave a ruling that the discussion on this Demand should be confined to a discussion of the manner in which the existing law is administered. I submit that the question of the repeal of certain sections of the law applicable to the whole country and not merely to the question of emigration is not in order.

Mr. President: I pointed out to the Honourable Member that the amendment or repeal of existing laws is not within the scope of Budget debates. The scope of these debates is limited to the administration of the existing law by the Departments of the Government of India.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I do not wish again to speak on this point, but I wanted to mention that it is this legislation which is at the root of the whole evil. My Honourable friend says that section 492 is not concerned with recruitment. Section 492 deals with the breach of contract at a distant place to which servants have been conveyed at their master's expense.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I rise again to a point of order. I submit this point should have been brought forward by my Honourable friend when the question of the administration of the Home Department was under discussion in this House.

Mr. President: I am not sure it would be in order even then, but I am sure it is out of order now.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: All right, Sir, I bow to your ruling, and I now refer to a piece of legislation which directly deals with this question and this legislation is the Assam Labour and Immigration Act. Sir, there are several sections in this Act also which punish with imprisonment breaches of contract of service as well as refusal to render service. Sir, I want the Government of India to repeal that legislation.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has not appreciated the point I put to him. This is not a stage at which legislation can be amended or repealed. It is a stage at which the administration of the existing law can be criticised by Honourable Members. I should have thought the field of criticism was wide enough without introducing points which are out of order.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, it is difficult to distinguish between the law and the administration when the whole administration is supported by this law. If this law did not exist, this Demand would not have been put before the House at all. It is this law which compels the Government of India to put before the House the present Demand. As a matter of fact, Sir, the Government of India, by executive action, have stopped the operation of these sections, but they have not repealed those sections. I want them to repeal them, not to keep them in their armoury

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

to be used whenever they find it convenient. I do not wish to speak now about this legislation, but what I want to say is this. This legislation is against the modern spirit of freedom, this reduces the worker to a state of slavery. Sir, this is rather a strong word, and many of my Honourable friends here may not like it to be used against the British Government, but these are not my words. These words have been used about this matter by many officers in the service of the Government who are still occupying very high positions in the Provinces. I know some of them.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Sir, I am sorry again to rise to a point of order. You have ruled that the question of legislation is not in order

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee acknowledge that Mr. Joshi is right in saying the Government have suspended the law by executive action?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Yes, Sir.

Mr. President: Then that point is in order.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Now, Sir, I am not referring to the whole legislation. What I am saying is that the state of the labourer in Assam is practically slavery. Sir, we have been brought up in the belief, as Lord Olivier was brought up in a belief, that the Englishmen had abolished slavery.

They may have done it in some other countries, but I am quite sure they have not done it in India. As His Lordship was disillusioned about his belief regarding the salt tax, I am disillusioned about my belief regarding the abolition of slavery, and I am quite sure that, if the Members of the House will study this whole question, they will also be disillusioned—if they have any illusions now. This state of slavery is not only brought about by the legislation referred to by him just now, but it is brought about by some agreements which the planters have made among themselves. One of the conditions of the agreement is that the labourer belongs to the planter. It is the sense of ownership in the labourers. Then, Sir, another term of the agreement is that, if a labourer working on one plantation goes to another plantation, he will not be given service.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: Who has paid his fare?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am coming to that. If one planter has made some advance to a labourer and he wants to go to another plantation, that second master must pay the first master the sum advanced. This, Sir, is buying and selling in human beings. So all the necessary conditions which constitute slavery are there. A man is punished if he does not do work and is sent to jail. The second element of slavery is that a planter is supposed to have some kind of proprietary right over the labourer; he is supposed to belong to the planter. Thirdly, his being bought and sold. Now what more is required to constitute slavery? I do not know; if there are people here who can tell me what slavery is, if this is not slavery, I shall be very ready to hear their explanation.

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett (Finance Member): Service for the Government of India.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I pity the Law Member's lot. Now, Sir, I do not wish to take up the time of the House any longer. I would like my Honourable friend, Sir Basil Blackett, who is very anxious to find out the minimum income of an average Indian to study the wages table of the Assam plantations. Sir, the average wage in Assam on these plantations is between Rs. 5 and Rs. 6.

Sir Campbell Rhodes (Bengal: European): Is that real wage or money wage?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, it is a real wage, including

Sir Campbell Rhodes: I question it.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I have got authority for that statement: shall I quote it? It includes all the concessions which are supposed to be of great value. Sir, besides the money value the planters give their labourers some other concessions which a Committee appointed by Government has calculated come to 8 annas a month. Now, Sir, this study will be very valuable to my Honourable friend, Sir Basil Blackett, who wants to find out the average income of an Indian. Now, Sir, this very big income is the income of a man who goes 200 miles and sometimes 300 miles to get a better job than he has on his own field;—that Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 is the average income of a man who has gone 200 or 300 miles in order to get a better income. What then must be the monthly income of a man who remains on his own fields and does not care to go 200 or 300 miles away? *(The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: "That is a hypothetical question.")* It must be much less. The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett, I am quite sure, will admit that the remedy lies in removing these defects in legislation and I hope the Government of India will do it.

Mr. B. C. Allen (Assam: Nominated Official): I do not propose to enter into an examination of what may or may not constitute slavery, but I have some experience, in fact, considerable experience of tea gardens and I also have experience of 30 years' service under Government, and I am inclined to agree with the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett that the term "slavery" more appropriately applies to the members of the Government of India, especially when the House is sitting, than to the garden cooly.

Now, Mr. Joshi asked Government first to repeal the Assam Labour Emigration Act on the ground that contracts might be enforced under it although he was expressly told that they were not. I can assure Mr. Joshi that there is not the slightest chance of any contract there being executed under that Act.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Why not repeal that Act?

Mr. B. C. Allen: He also referred to Act XIII of 1859 which is still in force, but will shortly be repealed. Let me give Mr. Joshi the figures of my Division to show the extent to which that Act now operates. There are in my Division 8,72,000 adult coolies, and I find that during the last year there were only two cases in which coolies were sent to prison.

Diwan Bahadar M. Ramachandra Rao: May I point out, Sir, that the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma consented in this House that the term "coolie" would not be used in official parlance.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma: As far as possible, but we are now speaking in an Indian atmosphere.

Dr. H. S. Gour: We object to the term "coolie." Call him a labourer.

Mr. B. C. Allen: I may add that there were advances given under that Act which totalled over Rs. 14 lakhs, so that the labourer gets a substantial *quid pro quo*. My friend Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao expressed some anxiety as to the conditions under which labourers are employed in Assam. Well, Sir, I have a fairly intimate knowledge of the working of most of the Assam gardens, and I can assure him that if he went to Assam and studied the conditions himself he would, I think, have no cause for complaint and would be thoroughly satisfied with those conditions. Mr. Joshi has quoted certain figures showing what the wages amounted to, but his figures do not agree with the figures published in the Government reports. I find that during the last year the rate of wages paid, calculated on the daily average working strength in the Sibsagar gardens, was Rs. 10 for a man, nearly Rs. 9 for a woman, and Rs. 5-9-0 for a working child; that is to say, for a family consisting of a husband, wife and one working child the monthly income was Rs. 24. In the Dibrugarh sub-division, which contains more labourers than any sub-division in the province, the average monthly income of a family of that type was Rs. 29-14-0. The figures for the total number on the books was Rs. 18-18-0 in one case, and Rs. 21-6-0 in the other. Well, I think that it is generally recognised in the recruiting districts that one of the great attractions to labour in Assam is the fact that the labourer who comes to the tea gardens will be able to take up land and settle down as a peasant proprietor. In my Division alone there are over 260,000 acres of land held by ex-garden labourers. Information has also been collected from typical gardens showing the extent to which coolies possess cattle—I find that I should have used the term labourers, I apologise for using the word 'coolie', as the House objects to it, but that is the term by which they describe themselves in Assam—I find that 72,000 adult labourers owned 48,000 cows and 4,800 buffaloes, that is to say, as the term 'labourer' includes women on the average, every family possessed its cow and some had more than one.

Another thing which shows that conditions are satisfactory is the fact that the average birth rate exceeds the death rate. Before sitting down, I should like to call attention to what seemed to me a most noteworthy pronouncement made by my friend, Mr. Ramachandra Rao. I took it down at the time. He explained to us that the Agency Tracts of Madras were very sparsely populated and in that respect they correspond to some of the more mountainous tracts in my province. We are also sparsely populated and we are unable to obtain recruits from these sparsely populated tracts for permanent labour on the plantations, because people there are too prosperous. I do not think that anybody can now contend that people in the recruiting districts are not familiar with life in Assam as emigration to this province has been going on for many years. Surely every one must admit that before a cooly will leave his home and travel hundreds of miles to another province, he must have a very fair idea of the kind of life that he is going to meet with there and whether he is going to improve his conditions of life or not. Now, the statement which my friend made was this: He said: "Are we to permit our labourers to emigrate?" He did not say "Are we to prevent our ignorant people

from being misled or misguided?" But he positively suggested that we, the Legislature, should take steps to prevent people from going to places which they wished to visit.

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: May I explain, Sir. The Government of Madras for the last two or three years have had a big development scheme for the development of the Agency Tracts on which they have spent considerable sums of money. My Honourable friend knows that there is a development scheme in Madras to settle people on the land there, and it is certainly not a wise policy to move that labour in the way in which it is being done, namely, by all these agents, and taking them away to other provinces, while the inhabitants of these localities require that labour to settle on the land in Madras. Excuse me, Sir, it is a question as to what the policy of the Government is in regard to the movement of labour in this country, a subject which has not received any attention at all. It seems to me, Sir, that the whole question is this. As I explained, we know that the Government of Madras are anxious to develop that part of the country. The subject has received no attention hitherto and here we have the case of a few men who are living in the locality being moved under a promise given by the Government of India to another part of the country. That is the point.

Mr. B. C. Allen: That is precisely the point which I am endeavouring to make.

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: It is not a question of free will.

Mr. B. C. Allen: The Honourable Member says, it is not a question of free will. I deny that statement *in toto*. I entirely decline to admit that people in the recruiting districts now do not know the conditions of life in Assam and are not in a position to decide for themselves whether they wish to go there or not. It must be remembered that these garden *sardars* of whom Mr. Raju complained are people who are resident on the gardens and proceed from the gardens to work as a rule in their own villages and amongst their own people. As the Honourable Members sitting near me very pertinently remarked just now, if it is not slavery to deny a man the right to go to Assam if he wants to go to Assam, what is slavery? It is this extraordinary interference with the freedom of the individual which fills me with alarm when I contemplate the future of India, if full responsible government is granted. Is the Madras labourer to be kept in Madras simply because the upper classes in Madras wish to have him there, or is the man to be allowed to leave Madras and better the conditions of his life?

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: That is a question on which we differ.

Mr. B. Venkatapatiraju: Sir, I want to ask Mr. Allen whether he is quoting official figures because the latest report of the Emigration of Labour of the Assam Government gives on page 8 only Rs. 6-14-0, man, 3-14-0, woman and Rs. 8-7-10, child, and so on, as the average monthly wage including *tacca*, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Mr. B. C. Allen: The figures I read out to the House were copied from the Report here on page 8.

Mr. Chaman Lal: Sir, the Honourable Mr. Allen has read out to you certain figures relating to the wages earned by different plantation coolies. (*Cries of "Labourers"*). I do not see, Sir, how you are going to improve the lot of these poor devils by calling them labourers instead of coolies.

Mr. B. C. Allen: Sir, is it Parliamentary language to describe labourers as devils?

Mr. Chaman Lal: I do not know, Sir, where he got those figures from. I hold in my hand a volume entitled "Prices and Wages in India, 1923" and I read that in the year 1920-21, which are the latest figures they give, the wages earned in Sibsagar by non-Act labourers is Rs. 6-14-8 per month, women Rs. 5-14-10 and children Rs. 8-12-8. Sir, a question was put by the Honourable gentleman over there whether these wages were substantive wages—money wages—or not. In a note appended to these tables I read as follows:

"These statistics are compiled from the results of the report on emigrant labour in Assam and they are the average monthly cash wages calculated on the wages earned by the total number of coolies on the books for the months of September and March, including (and this is the most important point, Sir) *ticca*, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head."

I ask you, Sir, is there any other part of India where coolies living, as the Honourable Mr. Joshi pointed out under conditions of slavery and semi-slavery, would be allowed to live on wages of this kind without serious menace of a dangerous agitation?

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: Except the coal mines.

Mr. Chaman Lal: The Honourable gentleman over there says, "Except the coal mines". I am glad for once he agrees with me. You ought to take steps to see that wages in these plantations and coal mines are advanced to a reasonable level. I find that Rs. 5-15-10 were the wages earned in 1913-14 and in 1920-21 the wages went up to the magnificent figure of Rs. 7-0-5 per month. I hold in my hand an estimate drawn up recently in Madras by a Missionary, the Revd. D. G. M. Leith, as to the actual minimum subsistence allowance of a working class family in Madras, which is supposed to be the poorest province as far as workers are concerned. He says that considering food for man, wife and two children, rent, clothing, fuel and miscellaneous, the total amount per month comes to something like Rs. 22-8-10 and that he himself leans to Rs. 24 per month; that he has made no provision for light; that he believes it would be correct to consider the number of children in an average working class family to be more than two; that this estimate does not make any provision for holidays, none for the children's education, none for saving for old age, none for charity, (and I would myself add none for religious dues and social expenses, sickness, marriages, funerals, and births). It must further be remembered that these calculations provide for a most terrible life of hardships; for nothing more than a loin-cloth and a head-cloth, the latter being used as a covering at night, for a dirty, insanitary hut unfit for human habitation. Mr. Leith says: "In the wet weather when they must all sleep in the same hut, perhaps 7 feet by 7 feet, well, it must be bestial." He asks: "How are the expenses to be met?" There is only one source: Diminish the quantity of food. As a man said to me—"sometimes we cook and sometimes we do not." That is the condition of workers on the tea plantations also, and I cannot for the life of me imagine that it should be possible for any humane person to stand up in justification of the conditions that prevail there.

Mr. B. C. Allen: May I rise to inquire, if the missionary referred to conditions in Madras or Assam? If they were the conditions in Assam, how did a Madras missionary know anything about them?

Mr. Ohaman Lal: There is none so blind as he who will not see. If these are the conditions that prevail in Madras, if the minimum for a working class family is Rs. 24 in Madras, can you not imagine that it must be a terrible state of affairs for the workers on the tea plantations whose average wage according to these statistics is considerably less than Rs. 24? The average according to these figures works out to something like Rs. 16 or 17 a month. Is that not an atrocious state of affairs? I find in another official document, regarding the housing of these coolies (*A Voice*: "Labourers")—the Committee found two different methods of supplying the needs of the coolies. The workers were housed in barrack lines and lived congregated together under more or less strict discipline. That is what my Honourable friend has referred to. They lived in conditions of semi-slavery. They lived in barracks. They were given fictitious wages and semi-starved, and you draw your profits every year from the tea plantations and raise the price of tea. "On the whole"—what this Commission say? They say: "On the whole wages have not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living." Of course, they have not kept pace. These driven workers have been starved. What are you doing to ameliorate their condition? What legislation have you undertaken for the purpose? Promises have been made that all sorts of legislation will be undertaken to do away with this state of things. But nothing has been done so far.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I rise to a point of order, Sir. Will the Honourable gentleman kindly specify when these promises were made and by whom?

Mr. Ohaman Lal: I take it that when Mr. Joshi made that allegation and there was no denial it must be true. It is a fact, as the Honourable Member will find from the memorandum that was submitted to him, if he takes his memory as far back as two years, on behalf of the Trade Union Congress, on the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act and similar provision in the Indian Penal Code. That provision is still there in the Indian Penal Code, and it has not been repealed.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Did I make any promise?

Mr. Ohaman Lal: As far as I know, it was the intention of Government to do away with that particular provision. If it has not yet been repealed, I hope the Honourable Member will give an undertaking to the House now that he intends to do away at once with this provision in the Indian Penal Code.

I have nothing more to say with regard to the condition of the coolies. I do think that Honourable Members will not deal lightly with this subject which is searing the heart of every humane person in India.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: This question of emigration of labour to Assam has exercised us for the last forty years and more. Objection has been taken to the characterisation of this manner of recruitment and securing labour for Assam as a kind of quasi-slavery. But I remember when I was still a young man, and a very young man in college,—I remember that this Act, when it was first placed on the Statute-book, was described by one of the soberest politicians and publicists of Bengal, the late Rai Bahadur Kripito Das Pal, as a slave Act. We had not these troublesome . . .

- **The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee:** May I ask if the Honourable Member is referring to the Act of 1901? My information is that the late Rai Bahadur Kristo Das Pal died in 1884.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: I know, but I am referring to the first Act. I am sorry my Honourable friend was thinking of his answer and did not listen to what I was saying. I said when this first Act was placed on the Statute-book—this Act has passed through many incarnations. In 1881 for the first time the violation of labour contracts in regard to tea garden plantations was made penal, people were penalised for the violation of these contracts. Before 1881 we had Act XIII, I believe, of 1859 which regulated these contracts, but in 1881 a special law was passed with a view to regulate emigration to Assam, and since then the fundamental principle of that law and administration also has practically continued. There have been amendments, there have been improvements in the old Act, but our complaint is this that, according to the Act of 1881, tea garden proprietors were authorised to arrest their labourers when they left the precincts of their garden and were found within five miles of their garden, without any warrant or any legal authority.

Mr. B. C. Allen: Is the Honourable Member justified in referring to a provision of the Act which has been repealed many years ago, and which has no connection whatever with this case?

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: This is the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, 1901 (VI of 1901), as modified up to 1st July 1910 and section 193 of this Act reads thus:

"Whoever being a labourer voluntarily and without reasonable cause absents himself from his labour for more than seven consecutive days or for more than . . ."

This is not the section . . .

Mr. President: I can help the Honourable Member. He cannot change the law at this time. The motion refers to the administration of it by the Honourable Member.

Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: I cannot change the law. I know, Sir. I was referring to the section. The law is that, if a labourer has deserted a plantation and is found within five miles of it, the planter is authorised to arrest him without a warrant. That has been our complaint. I know the law is there. Though I have the honour of representing Calcutta I belong to Sylhet. Mr. Allen knows it. So I am familiar with the conditions of labour, if not in the Brahmaputra Valley, at least in the Surma Valley and I know this that in my district of Sylhet there are very few Act-labourers. They are free labourers there and the conditions of service there are infinitely better than the conditions of service in some of the upper reaches of Assam (*A Voice*: "No.") I know it has been admitted times without number by Government officials that good tea gardens do not want Act-labourers. It is only the mismanaged gardens and sometimes the unhealthy gardens that require Act-labourers. What we demand is that the operation of this law should be stricted as far as possible and all those gardens which cannot continue with the help of free labour must be closed. That is our contention and this, I think, can be to some extent done by sympathetic administration, sympathetic not towards capital.

but sympathetic toward the labourer, of the law even as it is, and if that is done, a great deal of the complaint will be removed.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: I shall first touch on the points that were raised by my Honourable friends, Mr. Venkatapatiraju and Mr. Ramachandra Rao. Mr. Venkatapatiraju objected to the fact that labourers were recruited now-a-days for Assam in his own districts and in the Madras Presidency generally on the ground that no steps were taken by the Central Government to see that these labourers when they reached Assam were properly looked after. I regret very much, Sir, that he has not really gone through the various items in the Demand for Internal Emigration for which he has proposed a reduction. If he had gone through the items, he would have found that in Assam we have got a travelling inspector, sub-assistants surgeons and various other people whose duty it is to look after the comforts of the labourers. But the real sting of his charge lay in the tail of it, that is to say, when he objected to any labourers going at all from the Agency Tracts which he represents. I confess that I was rather surprised at the line that my Honourable friend took. Mr. Allen has already dealt with this point to a certain extent. Does Mr. Venkatapatiraju suggest that we in the Central Government should prevent people in Madras from going to Assam if they want to go? It is for the Madras Government and for the people in Madras to safeguard their own interests if they wish to. I am sorry Mr. Ramachandra Rao is not here, but I can assure him that the Government of India did not take the initiative with regard to the emigration from Madras to Assam. The Madras Government have always taken the very greatest care in looking after the interests of labourers who migrate from Madras. Recently they were entirely satisfied that people going from Madras to Assam would be well looked after there and would work in satisfactory conditions. It was the Madras Government which suggested that they might be permitted to withdraw the embargo that they had hitherto placed over emigration from Madras to Assam. Would it have been consistent with the principle of provincial autonomy of which my friend is one of the protagonists for us to prevent the Madras labourer from going to Assam if both he and his Government wanted that this should be permitted? (Mr. B. Venkatapatiraju: "I mean assisted labour".) I do not see where assisted labour comes in at all. As I was going to say, this labour which goes to Assam now is entirely free labour; there is no provision in the Assam Labour Emigration Act now in force which compels a man to execute any document binding himself for any length of time. Those provisions to which my Honourable friend, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, drew our attention, as I pointed out in answer to a question from the Chair, have been withdrawn by executive notification (Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal: "Thank you".) I quite admit that they have not been repealed. My Honourable friend Mr. Joshi objected to the manner of administering the Act. The main feature of the administration of the Act is that these provisions have been withdrawn. Does he object to the withdrawal of these provisions relating to contract labour? (Voices: "No".) Then Mr. Venkatapatiraju asked why the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act has not yet been repealed. Last year, in speaking on this subject, the undertaking that I did give was that the repeal would take effect after three years from the date when I was speaking. There was no undertaking given that the Act of repeal would be passed either this session or the next session. If we do not fulfil, if we do not implement, the promise that I did make last year, then my Honourable friend would have a reason for taking us to task, but he is a little too previous now. He objected

[Mr. A. C. Chatterjee.]

to the large number of *sardars* going about in his district. Well, if every *sardar* produces only one or two emigrants, it just shows how carefully the act of recruiting is done. If one *sardar* had recruited about 100 men,

then it could have been urged that these men were misled.

As a matter of fact, Sir, I shall myself never be a party to any ordinance or law which would restrict the free movement of labour from one part of India to another, unless it could be definitely shown that conditions were extremely unsatisfactory in the part to which labour wanted to migrate. The very fact that people from Madras are willing to go so far as Assam shows that the conditions which agricultural labourers meet with in Madras itself cannot be entirely healthy or entirely satisfactory.

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: No, Sir.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: My Honourable friend, Mr. Ramachandra Rao, said that they were going to develop the Agency Tracts and they wanted to get the labourers there. If he is going to develop the zamindari tracts there or any other tracts, he has only to pay decent wages and provide good conditions. There is no need

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: May I point out that it is the Local Government who intend to do that and not myself. I have no property.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: If he is speaking on behalf of the Local Government

Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao: I would certainly not venture to speak on behalf of the Madras Government who have two representatives in this House. I was only speaking of the fact that the Madras Government had put forward a scheme for the development of the Agency Tracts, and that scheme was being given effect to, but on account of financial restriction; it has been withdrawn.

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Quite so. The Madras Government felt that they could not at present pay adequate wages to the labourers if they wanted to develop those tracts. In fairness to the labourers, they felt that they must give them freedom to go to any place where they could get decent conditions and decent wages. All that we have done is that we have not stood in the way of the Madras Government giving freedom to their own people.

Turning now to the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, I wish to refer to the fact that he objects to the agreements which are now made by the planters in Assam in order to protect themselves from the migration of labour from one garden to another. I was rather surprised to hear that argument from Mr. Joshi who, I believe, at various times rather flirts with trade unionism.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Do trade unions restrict emigration?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: Trade unions, so far as I know—I confess that my knowledge is not as extensive as that of my Honourable friend—trade unions object to men going and working on certain works unless certain conditions are satisfied. This is exactly the same thing. A trade union would expel a member from the society if that member went and worked at a particular shop or a particular works which was interdicted by the union. I do not see that there is really very much difference. F

am not talking on the merits of the case. I am only saying that I was surprised when my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, put forward this argument. Then, Sir, I was rather amused when my Honourable friend from the Punjab, who, I do not believe, has ever been to Assam, endorsed the view that the conditions in Assam were practically the same as slavery. In support of his argument, he read out a passage from the report of a Committee appointed by the Local Government to investigate the conditions of work in Assam. That passage, so far as I can remember, stated that the men were kept under very strict discipline. I thought, Sir, from what my Honourable friend said yesterday at question time that my Honourable friend himself is kept under very strict discipline by the leaders of his own party and I should like to know if he does not feel that he is also a slave. (Laughter.) I shall not at this hour of the day enter into the vexed question of the average wage of a labourer in Assam or of the average income of anybody in India, not even of the average income of a Member of the Legislature here. Those are very thorny questions. I do not pretend to have enough statistics on this subject. There has been a good deal of discussion already. The plain issue is: Has any one been really compelled to go to Assam and is a man free to go to Assam or not? The only restraint that is put now-a-days in Assam, so far as my knowledge goes, is under the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act and we have already promised to repeal that Act. If a man does not want to go to Assam there is nothing to compel him to go there. As I have said, I shall never be a party to preventing a man from going to Assam if he wishes to go there.

Mr. J. M. Turing (Madras: Nominated Official): Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Ramachandra Rao has requested me to speak on this subject as I have some knowledge of these Agency Tracts, to which he has made a reference. I have only to say that that scheme was a scheme for a very considerable development of the Agency Tracts. It was, however, dependent, as most schemes are, on the provision of funds. I will not say that that scheme has been abandoned, but at least for the time being it has been held in abeyance. It depends, as all other important Madras schemes depend, on the reduction in the provincial contribution, which depends, if I have understood the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett correctly, on the maintenance of the salt-tax at at least Rs. 2 per maund. This is a point which I trust my Honourable friend Mr. Ramachandra Rao will remember when he comes to vote on that point. (Laughter.)

Mr. President: Reduction moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Emigration—Internal' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 57,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Emigration—Internal'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 38-B --EMIGRATION--EXTERNAL.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 81,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Emigration—External'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 39—JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,32,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Joint Stock Companies'."

Dr. H. S. Gour: Sir, I should very briefly state the points I wish to make in connection with this motion.* Honourable Members are aware that during the last four years a very large number of Companies were floated in this country in which several hundred crores of rupees were invested. Honourable Members are also aware that a great number of shareholders and investors have lost their money. I wish, Sir, that the Government of India will consider the advisability of concerting some plan for the protection of these unwary shareholders and investors.

The other point I wish to make in connection with the Joint Stock Companies is that it is necessary that we should have in this country a Patents, Trade and Property Marks Registration Act. At present, so far as I am aware, trade and property marks cannot be registered in this country, and I think it is very necessary that we should assimilate the Indian law to the English law on the subject.

The third point is this. I have dealt with the investors on the flotation of companies and with the patents, but I wish now to deal with the actual management of companies by the Managing Agents. Honourable Members are aware that the shareholders in the various Joint Stock Companies live scattered throughout the length and breadth of this country. When the Managing Agents convene meetings of the Board of Directors the shareholders cannot attend. They are invited to attend but cannot attend. The Board of Directors therefore convene meetings and pass resolutions sometimes to the detriment of the mofussil shareholders. I want the Government to consider some means of protecting them against resolutions passed behind their backs and which might operate detrimentally to their interests.

Honourable Members have recently been in possession of revelations made in connection with the failure of the Alliance Bank. I venture to think that, if Government had taken timely action in the interests of the investors, this catastrophe might have been averted and the loss which the shareholders have suffered might have been minimized. I do not say that I am prepared with a cut-and-dried scheme for the purpose of protecting the shareholders and investors in public companies, but it has been stated that the wealth of India lies buried underground. I venture to submit, Sir, that for the development of trade and industries in this country, if this wealth is to be unearthed, the first thing necessary is to insure some measure of reasonable security to the investors, and I think, therefore, for the development of the country and the promotion of its commerce and industries, the Government should concert some plan for the protection of the people who invest in these concerns. On these grounds I move my motion.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Joint Stock Companies' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir Campbell Rhodes: Sir, my Honourable friend has spoken with very deep feeling evidently from the bottom of his pocket. I am also a fellow-sufferer from the boom and if he wishes to add to his collection of dud

* "That the demand under the head 'Joint Stock Companies' be reduced by Rs. 100."

shares I can, I think, meet his requirements at quite a nominal cost! I think he has referred chiefly not to Managing Agents but to mis-Managing Agents. I am absolutely at one with him that any protection we can give to the investing public is very desirable in the way of encouraging investment in sound companies. But I suggest that, when Dr. Gour entrusts any money to any person for any special object, he does it because he trusts that person. And I suggest that, whatever protection the law attempts to give to shareholders, one fact will remain to the end, that you cannot protect your money unless you entrust it to people or firms whom you can trust. Sir, the Managing Agent also wants protection from the investing public. The investing public is often a mere speculator demanding a high dividend in order to get a high market value for the shares and to clear out, leaving a disgruntled shareholder for the poor Managing Agents to face when dividends are not so large. As regards the non-attendance at meetings, I do not quite know what my Honourable friend referred to when he said that resolutions were passed discriminating against the mofussil shareholders.

Dr. H. S. Gour: Detrimental to their interests.

Sir Campbell Rhodes: Detrimental to the interests of the mofussil shareholder in particular. I have had mofussil shareholders at my meetings. I remember distinctly at the final meeting of the Tarkesar Railway Company, when I handed the Railway over to the Government, that a shareholder came down from Burdwan, and finding there were Rs. 5,000 over which we could not divide amongst so large a number of shareholders, and that I proposed to divide it half to the war fund and half to the poor of Tarkesar, he solemnly suggested that we might each take half. I would suggest with due deference, that any protection one endeavours to give to the shareholder should be done with very great caution so as not to impede the development of industries and the free flow of money into sound propositions, and I would point out to the Government that in the case for instance of prospectuses, when they are issued, if Government were to exercise any further control than they do at present over the issue of these prospectuses, they might incur odium for any failure of a company which was floated on that prospectus. It is therefore, Sir, very desirable that Government should not give any endorsement at all in support of a prospectus that is issued as it might give the investing public a feeling that perhaps the Government are behind it. It is a point which I have strongly urged in Bengal where Directors of Industries have, I consider, gone too far in making statements which have been incorporated in prospectuses. I would, therefore, while welcoming any protection that can be given to the investing public, sound a note of warning.

Mr. H. G. Cocke (Bombay: European): Sir, it is very easy to make the suggestion that steps should be taken to protect shareholders from losing their money. It is quite a different thing to give them that protection. Joint stock companies have been in existence now for very many years. The first important Act in the United Kingdom was passed in 1802, and the first Indian Act in 1882, and the law has been amended mainly for the protection of shareholders since then. But I am afraid no law can ever protect a shareholder from putting his money into worthless concerns. The regulations regarding prospectuses certainly go further in the United Kingdom than they do in India, and that is one direction in which the law here might be altered. I should very much like to know from Government whether there is any idea of setting up a new

[Mr. H. G. Cooke.]

committee to consider the Joint Stock Companies Acts with a view to bringing them up to date. I do not think you can protect the up-country shareholder. One piece of advice to the up-country shareholder, in order to prevent him losing his money, is not to put it into companies which have their registered offices far from his base. They have Post Office Cash Certificates, and they have got Government securities and they should be satisfied with the returns which these give.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Sir, the first point that Dr. Gour made was that during the last few years very many unsound companies have been floated in India and a great many investors have lost their money.

The first point I should like to make in reply to that remark is that India is not the only country in the world where these unsound companies have been floated and where the unwary investor lost his money. In fact, the boom which succeeded the War extended over a great many countries with exactly the same result. At the same time I am inclined to agree with Dr. Gour that possibly we might do something in India to protect the investor against these unsound companies. I can assure Sir Campbell Rhodes at the same time that Government have not the slightest intention of making themselves responsible for prospectuses that may be issued by company promoters. But we have had this matter under consideration from a rather different point of view. Our attention was of course attracted to it when this boom was on. Our first idea was to copy the English law on the subject and to impose an *ad valorem* duty of $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the nominal capital of all companies registered under the Indian Companies Act. We thought of that definitely with the idea of preventing the flotation of unsound companies. We consulted commercial opinion about it all over India and we found that commercial opinion was exceedingly divided upon the subject. They thought that, while this expedient might not operate to prevent the flotation of unsound companies, it might to some extent hamper the flotation of sound companies. At any rate opinion as to the efficacy of the remedy was so divided that we decided to drop that proposal. And then we took up another proposal. It was suggested to us that the law should be amended so as to provide that the minimum subscription on which the Directors may proceed to allotment when a company commenced business should bear a reasonable proportion to the amount of the authorised capital. That suggestion was made because in 1918-1919 and 1919-1920 the figures given us by the Government of Bengal showed that the total nominal capital of companies floated in the Bengal Presidency increased by 80 per cent. and the paid-up capital only by 17 per cent. We communicated that suggestion to Local Governments and commercial bodies throughout India and there is considerable unanimity of opinion that that proposal is a very useful proposal and might well be incorporated in our Company law. We have not taken any action on those proposals because there were other proposals affecting the Indian Companies Act and we did not think it necessary, we did not think it wise, to take up the amendment of that Act piecemeal. But we have got various proposals for the amendment of that Act, and in reply to a question put by Mr. Cooke I may say that when opportunity serves and in due course we do hope to place before this Legislature proposals for the amendment of the Act.

Now, Sir, let me turn to the other question raised by Dr. Gour, namely, this old and vexed question of Managing Agents. I do not propose to spend much time in discussing that question, because Dr. Gour after all only indicated rather briefly that the question needed examination. I should just like to remind Dr. Gour, however, that the two principles which we have always followed in our Company law are these. The first principle is that direct interference by Government in the internal management and control of companies should be avoided. And the second principle is that the interests of investors and creditors should be safeguarded principally by providing for a full measure of publicity regarding the promotion and operation of trading companies. When our present Act was brought into force—I think it was in 1914 but I forget the exact date—the question of Managing Agents was very hotly discussed in the old Imperial Legislative Council. It was referred to a Select Committee. On that Committee there were three well-known protagonists against the managing agent system, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Mr. V. R. Pundit and Mr. Vijayaraghavachariar, and I should like to read to the House an extract from the report of that Select Committee on this subject of Managing Agents:

“While, on the one hand, we recognise that the protection of shareholders is a very important matter, on the other hand, it is obvious that any excessive restriction on the power either of Directors or Managing Agents, however laudable from that point of view, would certainly check legitimate commercial development. There is a point beyond which it is impossible for the ordinary civil law to intervene to protect persons who fail to exercise their powers as shareholders to control the conduct of the company of which they are members, but whilst fully recognising this, we are convinced that there is room for the imposition of wholesome restrictions in connection with the management of companies by Managing Agents in this country. We think that these clauses (i.e., certain clauses proposed by Sir W. H. Clark) provide a reasonable measure of publicity and secure to a reasonable extent the principle that the Directors should be independent of Managing Agents.”

Now, Sir, as a result of that Committee's Report, various amendments were carried out in the Indian Company law definitely in order that shareholders might get a reasonable measure of protection against Managing Agents who do not work properly; and I think, Sir, that this is a question in which there will be less and less need for any protection for shareholders as time goes on, because as I see—I read the company reports very often rather carefully—that shareholders specially in Bombay,—and I think my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas will bear me out here—shareholders are beginning to take more and more real interest in the affairs of the companies in which they have invested, and they do supervise very carefully the work not only of their Directors, but also of their Managing Agents of the companies. In fact, the whole theory of our Company law might be summed up in the Latin term with which Dr. Gour is no doubt familiar. “*Vigilantibus, non dormientibus, jura subveniunt*”, that is to say, our law can only help those who keep awake and do not go to sleep.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: Sir, as this matter is under consideration of the Government, I should like to ask the Honourable Member in charge to include within the scope of his consideration the question of newspapers. So far as I know, there is not in India one single newspaper which makes a practice of or is capable of giving a really good criticism of any impending flotation. I can quite sympathise with the newspapers, because it is a very dangerous thing to do so, no doubt, but, on the other hand, there are a considerable number of newspapers which have no hesitation in boosting up any company that may choose to advertise in their columns, and I am

[Mr. W. S. J. Willson.]

certain from my own observation that a good deal of professional gentlemen's money is lost in that way.

Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Sir, I can quite sympathise with the Honourable Member from Bengal. He has put his finger upon a real difficulty in India, namely, that in India we have not got, as we have got in England, a very powerful financial press to watch and criticize the prospectuses of new companies, and that is precisely the reason why, departing from the English practice, we have taken up this question of amending the Companies Act. But I think that the Government of India will be extremely chary of attempting any sort of supervision of the newspapers in the matter of their examination of prospectuses issued by company promoters.

Dr. H. S. Gour: Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Honourable Member in charge, I wish to withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,32,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Joint Stock Companies'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 40—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,47,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Departments'."

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Northern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I am sorry my friend Mr. Das is not here to move the reduction of which he has given notice, that is, "that the demand under sub-head 'British Empire Exhibition' be omitted." But, as the British Empire Exhibition is included in these Demands for Grants, I consider it my duty to oppose this, apart from the general principle. Why do I oppose this? Why do we need this British Empire Exhibition? India at least ought to have no interest at all in this Exhibition. (*A Voice:* "Why?") Because, what is India now? India is the maid of the Empire. India has a most humiliating position in the Empire and the least that India should do is to throw out any suggestion of association with this Empire Exhibition. The object of this is professedly in the interests of Indian trade and industry. But at bottom, this is a political propaganda on behalf of those who are our masters. I have read a pamphlet which was a sort of introduction to what was going to happen when the Exhibition was held. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, I suppose, is the President of the Exhibition Committee, and it was stated in that pamphlet that this Exhibition was held for the promotion of industries in the Empire. That was, of course, one of the objects. But the chief objects stated there was to show to the world that the British Empire which was one in war is one in peace. That was the object. Is the Empire one in peace? It was one in war. India was made to be one with the Empire in war. But to-day India is certainly not one with the Empire in peace, because India is not allowed to be. And therefore, Sir, it would be derogatory to the self-respect of any Indian Member of this Assembly, whether he is an

official, a non-official, elected or nominated, or by whatever name he goes, —for any Indian to associate himself with this grant. Sir, I can only call him an accomplice of his own national humiliation. Therefore, I consider it my duty to oppose it wholeheartedly.

Mr. E. D. Ball (Bombay: Nominated Official): Sir, I should like to say just a few words in qualification of what my Honourable friend has said about the objects of this Exhibition. He is quite correct in saying that the sole object of the Exhibition is not the promotion of this Empire in trade. But, when he said that the object of the Exhibition was to show that the Empire is one in peace as well as in war, he did not state that object quite correctly. It is true, Sir, that the Empire was one in war, and not only the Empire but a great many countries outside the Empire. And the reason of that unity was that we had a common cause and believed in the justice of that cause. Now, as a result of the war, there were, as the House knows, certain movements. In the political sphere there was a movement which resulted in the League of Nations. In the industrial sphere there was a movement which led to various conferences which had the object of improving and rendering more uniform the conditions of labour in various parts of the world. It is not uncommon to hear scoffers at the League of Nations and at other movements of a similar kind, but after all, whatever criticism may be made as to the practical value of such organisations, the ideals behind them are high. Now, Sir, it was such an ideal which led to the first steps which were taken so long ago as May 1919 to promote the British Empire Exhibition.

It was recognised by a number of people—you may call them idealists or by any other name you choose, but it was recognised by a number of people—that the example which the war had set should not be lost altogether and that some effort should be made for giving the Empire an opportunity to realise certain ideals which were common to all parts of it, so that, if any one is not acquainted with any other part of the Empire, this Exhibition provides him with an opportunity of finding out what he has in common with strangers and even antagonists, and when you find out what you have in common with others, you go a long way towards an amicable settlement of differences. In that sense, Sir, it is true that the British Empire Exhibition is the result of a political movement, but a political movement in the highest sense of that term, and that its object is not entirely the development of industry and trade. Looking at it in that way, it seems to me at the present time to be entirely in the interests of India to participate in the Exhibition. A very notable Indian, on his recent return from a world tour, said to his fellow-countrymen in Bombay, as the result of that tour, that it was time that Indians recognised that they were not the only nation in the world, and he added to these words that there was work to be done outside India as well as inside India; and I would add to these words a comment which was made quite recently in the London "Times" that for India at the present time there is probably more work to be done in London than in this country.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: Sir, I understand that no motion for reduction has been moved and that Mr. Jaminadas Mehta was, so to speak, merely letting off steam. In the circumstances, the House will perhaps excuse me if I treat the matter somewhat briefly. The first consideration I should like to place before the House is that a democratic Assembly inevitably inherits from its predecessor certain obligations in the matter of

[Sir Charles Innes.]

policy. Now, in everything that we have done in regard to the British Empire Exhibition, we have had the Indian Legislative Assembly behind us. On the strength of the votes and the Resolutions passed by the last Legislative Assembly, we have entered into commitments and contracts, and it would not be in accordance with the honour of India if by withdrawing at this stage the money necessary for carrying out our obligations in regard to this Empire Exhibition, we were unable to honour our contracts. That is the first and most material ground which I have to place before the House. For the rest, I would only express my profound disagreement with everything that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta said, and my conviction is that in all that he has said he has taken a wrong-headed attitude and view. I believe that India would have done herself incalculable harm if she had stood out of this Exhibition. I believe, Sir, that, if India adopted in regard to a matter of this kind an attitude of non-co-operation, she would injure herself not only with the British people but with every other part of the Empire. After all, the complaint which is so often made by India is that she is misunderstood, that when her people go abroad they are thought to belong to a nation which is not fully civilised. Could there be any better opportunity of dissipating these foolish suspicions or these foolish views than by participating in an Exhibition of this kind and showing to all the world what India can do in the way of art and in the way of industry? Sir, as I have said, there is no motion for a reduction before the House. I wish that there was one, for I believe that the House would adopt my view and unhesitatingly reject that expressed by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya: I am sure my Honourable friend, Sir Charles Innes, will withdraw the word "wrong-headed" which he used in criticising the views of my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I substitute the word "wrong" for that.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya: The question which has been raised by my Honourable friend, Mr. Mehta, is not so easy to dispose of, rather it would not be so easy to dispose of if we had a full House. The view that the Honourable Sir Charles Innes has put forward is a view entitled to consideration, but the other view is also entitled to consideration. Unfortunately, as the matter stands now, I do not think that any good will result from a discussion of the view which has been advanced by Mr. Mehta because there is no definite proposal before the House. But I wish to say in regard to what Sir Charles Innes has said regarding the opportunity now given to India to show what she possesses and what she stands for, that such opportunities have been abundant. Such an opportunity has not availed it in the previous exhibitions. Such an opportunity has not availed it in the fields where its gallant sons gave a proof of their valour. It has not availed India in the fields of civilisation, of spiritual knowledge, of the knowledge of arts, crafts and other industries of which India has given the world many exhibits. And it has not availed India in the Imperial Conference where the best talents of India have shown that they can measure their strength intellectually with the best Premiers of Europe. I do not think that India is going to get much benefit from this Exhibition, but, as I have said, the proposal is not in a definite form before the House and there is no use in discussing it. I only wish Sir

Charles Innes to know that there is another side to this question, and that there are many who feel that, if they had any power, they would abstain from sending anything of India to this Empire Exhibition in order to make known throughout the Empire the grievance which India has that even within the Empire His Majesty's fellow-subjects will not treat us as equals. They have refused to treat us as equals and I wish we could show to those who have done so, that we do not regard them as equals even for the purposes of an Empire Exhibition.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Does the Honourable Member think that the Bombay Council has been foolish in accepting a motion to that effect?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Halley: The Honourable Member has used a very apposite expression.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Then, Sir, I have been "foolish" in very good company.

Mr. K. Venkataramana Reddi (Guntur cum Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I want to ask one question: I had read, Sir, in the "Daily News" that a member of the House of Commons drew the attention of the Secretary of State to the fact that attempts were being made to secure Lama dances for the Exhibition at Wembley, and the Under Secretary of State answered that he was in communication with the Government of India in this matter. I want to know, Sir, how the matter stands.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I will answer that question at once. We did get information to that effect. We wired at once to the Political Officer, Sikkim, to find out whether there was any objection. As far as I know, we are waiting an answer to that.

The Honourable Mr. A. O. Chatterjee: I understand that there is no definite motion of reduction on account of the British Empire Exhibition, but my Honourable friend opposite is suggesting the throwing out of the whole demand. I wish to point out to the House that this demand No. 40

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am not going to a division.

The Honourable Mr. A. O. Chatterjee: I am glad to have that assurance. I was just going to point out to the House that this demand No. 40 includes not only the British Empire Exhibition on which there may be, I do not say there ought to be, a difference of opinion, but it also includes the Indian Stores Department to which I believe a very large number of Members of this House attached some importance. It also includes the Department of the Controller of Patents and Designs which has been completely Indianised and also the Department of Explosives which is very important, if my Honourable friends want to be saved from sudden death while travelling in railway trains and so forth.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,47,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Departments'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 41—CURRENCY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 37,58,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Currency'."

Mr. Jammadas M. Mehta: Sir, the hour is drawing near and I cannot make all the observations that I desire to make on the question before the House; but I want to point out, and I am sure the Honourable the Finance Member will admit, that this Currency Department is being used as the milch cow by the Government of India in order to enable them to balance their Budget. But for the income of this department and also the manner in which it is manipulated the Finance Member would have been compelled to admit for the seventh time that the normal revenues of this country are not sufficient to balance his Budget.

Well, Sir, there are three important matters on which I should like to have some reassuring statement made by the Finance Member. One is that, although there is a specific provision in law that the interest on the securities of the Paper Currency Reserve should be used for the purpose of reducing the securities created by the Government of India, that provision is not being followed. The second is that the excess in the Gold Standard Reserve of 40 millions is again not being used for the purpose of reducing the created securities but for revenue and the third is that the so-called Gold Standard Reserve has not any gold in it. On these three things the Indian public are very greatly exercised not because they have anything particularly to object to with regard to this procedure in normal times, but here we are in a peculiar financial condition; the currency operations of the Government of India during the last four or five years have not inspired confidence and when such is the case they ought to treat the currency question in a manner which will not rouse opposition or suspicion. Are they doing it to-day? The answer would be "No." Instead of reducing the created securities they are taking credit of the interest to revenue which is to some extent, as has been repeatedly said, not fair to the people who hold these currency notes. In normal times that would be all right. If our currency question was not full of trouble, if our revenues and expenditure normally balanced themselves, then perhaps I would agree that there is no harm in taking credit to revenue of the interest in the securities, but to-day the currency policy of the Government of India does not inspire confidence and under the circumstances it is not desirable, to do so, particularly without the sanction of the Legislature. If the Finance Member had come to the House and told us "Here you are, gentlemen, for the seventh time I am not able to balance my Budget. Will you help me by allowing me to take credit to revenue from this?", then the whole world would have known that Indian finances are still unbalanced. But to-day the impression is created that this very great financier from England has worked a miracle, that after six years of continuous deficits, and within 12 months, he has brought about an era in which he is able to say, "The unbalanced budget is no more". That wrong impression, I think, Sir, has been created as a result of the Finance Member's action in not coming to the Assembly first, obtaining its permission, showing his difficulties, and then taking credit to revenue of the interest from this Currency Reserve. That would have created the right impression in the country about the position of the Budget. But to-day a very false impression exists that Sir Basil Blackett has been fortunate

enough to balance the Budget. Similarly the same line of criticism would apply to the excess of the Gold Standard Reserve over £40 million which is still credited to revenue.

There is one thing more, Sir. I think the main objection he has in reducing the created securities is that it would cause a deflation of currency. As a matter of fact it need not. If Sir Basil Blackett will take power to advance to the Imperial Bank more monies on the security of the internal bills, then, without deflating the currency, he can reduce the amount of created securities. I would request him to attempt that. I was told that even these 12 crores are not digested by the trade. If that is so, I would not press him, but I would ask him still to make an attempt to increase the number of internal bills, so that without deflating the currency, of which he is afraid, it may be possible to reduce the created securities in the Paper Currency Reserve.

Well, Sir, the last thing is that in order to help the circulation of currency, we have off and on to coin rupees; and for that purpose silver is purchased in England. That is a question which has been long and bitterly discussed, and the demand of the Indian public has been that this purchase of silver for minting our currency should not be made in England. The history of the last 40 years' purchase has created an impression in the mind of the Indian public that the purchase of silver is undertaken by the Secretary of State at a time when the price of silver is at its highest, and that the vendors and the brokers in London being identical persons in most cases, it is to their interest to create practically a monopoly and charge the highest rate to the Indian Government when they are in need of silver; and therefore there has been a long-standing desire of the Indian public that the purchase of silver for currency purposes should not be made in England but should be made either in Bombay or in Calcutta by open tenders from all countries, so that the Indian people will get the minimum rate of current prices and not the maximum monopolist rate as they get in London. I suppose if the Finance Member can do that, he will achieve much greater good for the people of this country than by the method by which he has "apparently" balanced the Budget, which is really not balanced.

Mr. W. S. J. Willson: Sir, I have one very small point to make so that the Honourable Member may reply to it. In introducing his Budget, he explained to us that the amount of Treasury Bills outstanding on the 31st March, 1922, was 54 crores, and that the amount would be reduced to Rs. 2 crores by the 31st March next. I should be glad if the Finance Member would kindly explain to us where that money came from, and how the reduction has been brought about.

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: Sir, I will begin with the really outrageous charge that was made by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta in regard to the purchase of silver. Without any facts or figures or any evidence he has stated (*Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta*: "5 o'clock is nearing") wildly that for a long period the Indian Government or the British Government or some British authorities have been deliberately making a profit for the city of London by buying silver at the highest possible price at the expense of the Indian tax-payer. That is the sort of charge that makes one tired.* The Honourable Member knows that he would never say a word of that sort of any one individual among us or assert that we would be a party to that, yet he says, the Government of India or the British Government or some person unknown, who is known as the Government of India in its corporate

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capacity, is capable of doing that sort of thing. It is a charge which ought not to have been made and I am sorry to see it made here. So far as the purchase of silver is concerned, the Honourable Member should not forget that there have been no purchases for the last four or five years and there is no probability of any immediate purchase. Therefore, that improper charge was entirely irrelevant to the discussion.

Then, the Honourable Member says that the Budget is not balanced, because we are taking to Revenue the interest on the Paper Currency securities. I would point out to him first of all that there is a surplus of 336 lakhs on the figures that I have given and that, if we do not take the interest on the Paper Currency Reserve to Revenue, the surplus would still be, I think, 2 or 3 lakhs, so that the statement that it is not balanced . . .

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: And the excess of the Gold Standard Reserve.

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: The Honourable Member's statement referred entirely to the Paper Currency. He went on later to complain about the Gold Standard Reserve. My first answer to him is that the Budget is balanced. If he likes to be a purist in finance and demands that the Budget should be balanced without the Paper Currency Reserve, I will not stand in his way if he is prepared to vote for the salt tax at Rs. 2-8-0 a maund in order to balance the Budget. He goes on to say that the Budget has been introduced in this form without the House being informed that this was being done, and that it might be proper if it was done with the prior assent of the Legislature. The matter came up last year and a clause was included in the Finance Bill empowering the Government for the year 1923-24 to take as revenue the sum in question. A similar clause is being included this year. It is in the Finance Bill as circulated to the House.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It has not yet been passed.

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett: The question whether it is passed is as irrelevant as a great deal else of what the Honourable Member has said. The proposal was made directly and clearly and openly in the Finance Bill and the suggestion that it has been hidden has the same sort of foundation as some of the other suggestions that he made. The Honourable Member went on further to talk about the undesirability of using this money for revenue, and he said it ought to be used for reducing the created securities. He went on to say that it was desirable that the Government of India should take some steps to increase the amount of paper currency which they can create during the busy season in order to prevent stringency in the money market. I would like him to explain to himself first, and then when he is capable of doing that to other people, what use possibly could be made of this interest other than the use we are making of it, if it is not used to contract the currency. The provision in the Currency Act of 1920 is that for the time being the interest on these securities should be used to contract the currency, that is, a sum of money should be paid from our balance with the Imperial Bank for the cancellation of notes. At a time when we have just passed an Act enabling us to lend 12 crores to the Imperial Bank against *hundis*, the suggestion that we should follow up that action by contracting the currency at the same time by 5 or 6 crores is entirely contradictory. I do not understand how the Honourable Member would do it. He will see that his suggestions at the beginning and at the end of his

speech involve two entirely contradictory things. I ask him to consider where the Gold Standard Reserve came from. What does it represent? It represents the balance of the profits not pocketed by the accused person unknown on the purchase of silver. That 40 million sterling has been created entirely out of the difference between the value of the purchased silver and its value in the form of silver rupees. It represents the total of the profits thus secured *plus* the accumulated interest on the securities in which

5 P.M. they were invested. I have no time to say more. I have answered, I think, most of the points that were raised by the Honourable Member.

(It being Five of the Clock Mr. President proceeded to put the Questions.)

Pandit Shamlal Nehru: May I, Sir, ask a question as to where this Gold Standard Reserve is kept?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member is just 5 seconds too late.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 37,58,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Currency'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 42—MINT.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,93,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Mint'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 43—CIVIL WORKS—INCLUDING EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,39,69,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Civil Works—including expenditure in England. (Under the control of the Public Works Department)'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 44—FAMINE RELIEF.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Famine Relief'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 45—SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS—INCLUDING EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 29,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Superannuation Allowances and Pensions—including expenditure in England'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 46—STATIONERY AND PRINTING—INCLUDING EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 48,38,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Stationery and Printing—including expenditure in England'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 47—MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 48,22,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Miscellaneous'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 48—ADJUSTMENTS WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 22,65,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Adjustments with Provincial Governments'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 49—REFUNDS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,76,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Refunds'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 50—NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,09,38,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'North-West Frontier Province'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 51—BALUCHISTAN.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 26,14,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Baluchistan'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 52—DELHI.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 31,52,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Delhi'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 53—AJMER AND MERWARA.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,96,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Ajmer and Merwara'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 54—ANDAMANS AND NICOBAR ISLANDS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 39,62,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Andamans and Nicobar Islands'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 55—RAJPUTANA.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,67,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Rajputana'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 56—CENTRAL INDIA.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,44,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Central India'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 57—HYDERABAD.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,97,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Hyderabad'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 58—EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 23,88,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Expenditure in England under the control of the Secretary of State for India'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 59—EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 47,39,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Expenditure in England under the control of the High Commissioner for India'."

The motion was adopted.

Expenditure charged to Capital.

DEMAND No. 60—RAILWAYS AND IRRIGATION WORKS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 29,97,61,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Railways and Irrigation Works'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 61—CAPITAL OUTLAY ON TELEGRAPHS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,73,95,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Capital Outlay on Telegraphs'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 62—DELHI CAPITAL OUTLAY.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,42,97,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Delhi Capital Outlay'."

The motion was adopted.

Disbursements of Loans and Advances.

• DEMAND No. 63—INTEREST-FREE ADVANCES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,90,89,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Interest-free Advances'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 64—LOANS AND ADVANCES BEARING INTEREST.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,15,26,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1925, in respect of 'Loans and Advances bearing interest'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 17th March, 1924.