

24th September, 1924

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**THE**  
**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES**

**(Official Report)**

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**FIRST SESSION**

**OF THE**

**SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1924**



**SIMLA**  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS**  
**1924.**

1/2/24

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 24th September, 1924.

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

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

### TEMPORARY ASSISTANTS AND CLERKS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT.

2358. \*Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan : Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing :

- (a) Number of temporary assistants and clerks employed in each Department of the Government of India Secretariat, separately.
- (b) Total length of their temporary service.
- (c) Number of assistants and clerks who have been confirmed since the leave reserve system was enforced.
- (d) Total length of temporary service with the Government of India of the men mentioned in (c).

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman : (a), (b) and (d). The information is not readily available and Government do not consider that it would serve any useful purpose to collect it.

(c) 71 Assistants and Clerks have been confirmed since the leave reserve system was sanctioned.

### PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANTS AND CLERKS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT.

2359. \*Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan : (a) Is it a fact that men with greater length of service have not been confirmed, and the men with less temporary service have been made permanent ?

(b) If so, will the Government please give reasons ?

The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman : (a) and (b). The Honourable Member is referred to the reply which I gave to a similar question by Sardar V. N. Mutalik the other day (No. 2247).

### PROVISION OF FAMILY QUARTERS IN SIMLA FOR DAFTRIES EMPLOYED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT.

2360. \*Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan : (a) Is it a fact that the question of providing family quarters in Simla for the Daftries employed in the Government of India Secretariat is under the consideration of Government ?

(b) If so, will the Government please state since when the question has been under consideration, and when it is likely to be disposed of ?

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman :** (a) The answer is in the affirmative.

(b) The question has been under consideration for many years. But the matter has not been lost sight of, and Government are doing what they can with the limited funds available for the purpose. I understand that some additional quarters are now under construction, but it cannot be said definitely at present when the scheme will be completed. It depends to some extent on the question of the occupation of the permanent quarters at Delhi, as to which nothing has yet been definitely settled.

#### GRANT OF TECHNICAL AND OVERSEAS ALLOWANCES TO RAILWAY OFFICERS.

2361. **\*Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney :** (a) Will the Government be pleased to state whether technical and overseas allowances are permissible to the following class of officers :—To Railway officers with British training, British Railway experience, and British qualifications [A.M.I.C. (E)] entertained as such in India and confirmed in their appointments prior to April 1921 when the Rules controlling these allowances came into effect on Indian Railways ?

(b) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Government be pleased to state why these allowances are being denied to certain Railway officers, and in particular to some officers on the M. and S. M. Railway ?

**Mr. A. A. L. Parsons :** (a) As regards *technical* allowance, India recruited officers other than of the Traffic and Stores Departments possessing the qualifications stated are eligible on State lines for the allowance. The orders were, however, not brought into effect in respect to all officers from the same date.

As regards *overseas* allowance, the reply is in the affirmative provided their domicile is elsewhere than in Asia. Officers of the Stores Department are, however, not eligible for the allowance.

(b) The Honourable Member does not state to what particular officers he refers but the orders above referred to are applicable to State lines only and discretion to adopt them was left to Companies concerned.

#### GRANT OF HOUSE RENT ALLOWANCES TO THE CLERICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDIAN STORES DEPARTMENT.

2362. **\*Kumar Ganganand Sinha :** (a) Is it a fact that the Indian Stores Department move between Simla and Delhi along with the Government of India ?

(b) Is it a fact that members of the staff of the Indian Stores Department get neither house rent allowance nor free accommodation in Simla ?

(c) Are Government aware that clerks in lower grades find it almost impossible to secure a sanitary house on reasonable rent compatible with their emoluments ?

(d) Are Government aware that most of the clerks have to pay between 25 and 30 per cent. of their emoluments as house rent for private houses in Simla ?

(e) Is it a fact that the maximum rate of rent of Government quarters even in ordinary stations fixed by the Government is 10 per cent. as laid down in 45 (b) of the Fundamental Rules ?

(f) If replies to (a) to (e) are in the affirmative are the Government prepared to allot a proportionate number of Government quarters to the Indian Stores Department also or grant them house rent allowance in case no quarters are available ?

**The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee :** (a) The present arrangement which is purely temporary, is as stated.

(b) Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to the clerical establishment of the Chief Controller's office. It is true that they do not enjoy either of the concessions mentioned. I may state, however, that while at Delhi they get a camp allowance on the same scale as is granted to men of corresponding status in other attached offices.

(c) and (d). The Government have no information.

(e) The Honourable Member can himself interpret Fundamental Rule 45.

(f) Government do not propose to make any alteration in the existing arrangements, which are the same for the Indian Stores Department as for any other attached office.

#### STENOGRAPHERS IN THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS.

2363. **\*Kumar Ganganand Sinha :** Is it a fact that the services of stenographers are utilized in the Army Headquarters, if so, why are there no sanctioned appointments analogous to those of Civil Secretariat Offices ?

**Mr. E. Burdon :** The services of part-time stenographers are utilised in the Army Headquarters offices, on varying allowances in addition to pay of clerical appointments. In one office only is a full time stenographer employed. The conditions obtaining in Army Headquarters do not justify the employment generally of whole-time stenographers as in offices of the Civil Secretariat.

#### ALLOWANCES TO CLERKS WHO HAVE QUALIFIED IN STENOGRAPHY.

2364. **\*Kumar Ganganand Sinha :** Is it a fact that the departmental men who used to pass the test in stenography of the Education Department prior to the creation of the Staff Selection Board were granted an allowance as a compensation for their labours and for the maintenance of their speed. If so, why is this allowance not granted to the qualified departmental stenographers now ?

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman :** The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. These allowances were withdrawn in February 1923, in view of the fact that the strength of stenographers in each Department is now generally fixed with reference to the amount of shorthand work to be done. It was therefore considered that the payment of these allowances to encourage clerks to become proficient in stenography was unnecessary.

#### CASE OF MR. RAM SARAN DAS PUNJ, A CLERK IN THE PUNJAB EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, ON DEPUTATION TO THE INDIAN MUNITIONS BOARD.

2365. **\*Lala Duni Chand :** 1. (a) Is it a fact that one Mr. Ram Saran Das Punj, a clerk in the Punjab Education Department was taken in the Indian Munitions Board on Rs. 90 per mensem in November, 1917, retaining his lien for 5 years on his original substantive appointment ?

(b) Is it also a fact that after the expiry of 5 years, the P. E. Department refused to extend the lien any further and consequently the Chief Controller (Surplus Stores) permitted him to resign his substantive post on an undertaking of a permanent appointment having been given to him in the Government of India, Department of Industries or in the Indian Stores Department ?

(c) Is it also a fact that in pursuance of the arrangement above referred to Mr. Punj was given a permanent appointment by the Staff Selection Board on Rs. 140 per mensem from the 30th July, 1923 in the P. W. Branch of the Department of Industries and Labour ?

(d) Is it also a fact that only about a week after he had joined the permanent appointment, his services were dispensed with without any reasons being assigned ?

(e) Is it also a fact that on a representation having been made by the said Mr. Punj, the charge disclosed against him was that " he was responsible for the issue of anonymous petitions against Government officials " while he was serving in the Indian Munitions Board ?

(f) Is it a fact that for 3 years, after the alleged wrongful behaviour on his part, the said Mr. Punj was allowed to remain in service in the office of the Chief Controller (Surplus Stores), was granted promotions (rising to Rs. 200 per mensem from Rs. 90 per mensem on which he joined in November, 1917), and was permitted to resign his substantive appointment in the Punjab Education Department by the same officer who had charged him with writing anonymous letters ?

(g) Is it also a fact that no charge was framed against the said Mr. Punj and he was absolutely given no opportunity to disprove the charge ?

(h) Are the Government prepared to reconsider his case ?

**The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee :** (a) Yes.

(b) No. Mr. Ram Saran Das refused to rejoin his substantive appointment in the Punjab Education Department on the expiry of the period for which he was granted a lien on his appointment. No promise of a permanent appointment under the Government of India was given to him.

(c) and (d). No. He was given a temporary appointment in a leave vacancy in the Public Works Branch of the Department of Industries and Labour.

(e) Yes.

(f) It is a fact that Mr. Ram Saran Das remained in the service of the Government of India for a considerable period after the incident referred to, because it was not brought to the notice of Government earlier. As already stated, he voluntarily refused to rejoin his substantive appointment in the Punjab Education Department.

(g) Government are not prepared to reconsider the case.

#### MOVEMENT AGAINST THE PAYMENT OF THE CAPITATION TAX IN THE TAVOY DISTRICT, BURMA.

**Mong Tok Kyi :** (1) Has the attention of the Government been drawn to a press communiqué, dated Rangoon, the 19th September 1924, stating " movement to refuse payment of Capitation Tax has spread widely

in Tavoy District. Is it a fact that prosecutions having proved ineffective, Government have decided to declare more prominent Associations engaged in agitation, unlawful and to quarter additional police in villages where disturbance is expected" ?

(2) Are Government prepared to direct the Burma Government to suspend action in the matter ?

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman :** I have received information from the Government of Burma that Tavoy district is in a disturbed state owing to a serious movement to refuse payment of Capitation Tax, and of their intention to declare certain Associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment-Act. I have asked for a full report on the situation, and, in the absence of details, am unable to make any further statement.

(At this stage Mr. President called out Mr. Ranga Iyer's name, as there was a question for answer at short notice in his name. The Honourable Member was not in his place.)

**Mr. President :** The Honourable Member gave private notice of a question and asked me to waive the period of notice. He is not now in his place to ask it. I consider that that is not the proper way to treat either the House or the Chair or the Honourable Member of Government who is asked to answer the question.

#### UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER.

PAY, ETC., OF THE DEPUTY CONTROLLER, PRINTING CLEARING OFFICE.

470. **Lala Hans Raj :** (a) Is it a fact that the officer in charge of the Printing Clearing Office is in receipt of a grade pay of Rs. 750—50—1,000 per mensem in addition to a special pay of Rs. 150—50—200 per mensem ?

(b) If the reply be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state what the officer's duties are and the necessity for granting him special pay in addition to the grade pay ?

(c) Is it a fact that the officer in question was until recently a Superintendent in charge of an ordinary Branch in the Department of Industries and Labour ? If so, what were his emoluments as such ?

(d) What is the rate of pay drawn by the Superintendents of the Simla, Delhi and Calcutta Presses and how long have the incumbents of these posts held them ?

(e) What establishments does the Printing Clearing Office comprise compared with those under the control of the Superintendents of the three Presses named ?

(f) Is it a fact that in addition to the officer in charge of the Printing Clearing Office there are two other highly paid officers ? If so, what are their pays and is it a fact that one of these officers was a Superintendent of a Press in Simla ?

(g) What is the reason for granting the officer in charge of the Printing Clearing Office higher pay than that of Superintendents of Government Offices and of Presses ?

**The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee :** (a) Yes ; except that the rate of increment in the case of special pay is Rs. 10 and not Rs. 50.

(b) The main duties of the officer are the control of printing work and its distribution to the presses, and the control of the use of forms. The special pay has been given partly as compensation for the loss of

all Simla allowances to which the officer was entitled in his former appointment and partly to cover the extra responsibility involved.

(c) Yes. His emoluments as a Secretariat Superintendent were Rs. 600—40—800 *plus* the usual house rent allowance admissible under the Simla Allowances Code.

(d) The Superintendent, Government Printing, India, Calcutta, is in receipt of Rs. 1,250, *plus* exchange compensation allowance, and has held this appointment for eighteen years. The posts of Superintendent in Simla and Delhi have been abolished and the presses are in charge of Managers. The Manager at Delhi is in receipt of Rs. 770 and has held his post for eighteen months; the Manager at Simla is in receipt of 1,000 and has held his post for six months.

(e) The number of persons employed in the Printing Clearing Office is 16. The numbers employed in the three presses named are 374, 362, and 1,098, respectively.

(f) The Deputy Controller has two Assistants on Rs. 550—40—750 and Rs. 500—25—700, respectively. One of the Assistants was a Deputy Superintendent in charge of the Government Monotype Press, Simla.

(g) The pay is not based on the scale given to Managers of Presses, whose work is of an entirely different character. It is in excess of that given to Secretariat Superintendents because the post of Deputy Controller is one of greater responsibility and demands greater capacity.

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#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYS.

**Mr. President :** The House will now proceed to elect members to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. 29 members have been nominated for eleven seats. Instructions are printed at the foot of the ballot paper. Members will now come to the table and receive their ballot papers. I think it will be more orderly than it was on the previous occasion if they come in the order in which I call them.

**Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum** (North West Frontier Province : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, I beg to withdraw my name.

**Mr. President :** All I can do now is to ask Honourable Members to take notice that Sir Abdul Qaiyum does not wish to serve on the Committee. His name is printed on the ballot paper.

(The ballot was then taken).

**Mr. President :** I do not expect to be able to announce the result of the election before the end of to-day's proceedings. Therefore, the official announcement of the result will be made in the Gazette.

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#### PROPOSED PRESENTATION OF AN ADDRESS TO H. E. THE VICEROY *RE* THE NEXT SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

(Mr. V. J. Patel rose to speak.)

**Mr. President :** The Honourable Member (Mr. V. J. Patel) has given notice of his desire to move the presentation of a formal address



to the Governor General under Standing Order 74 in the following terms :

“ That a humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General requesting that he be pleased to summon the next session of the Legislative Assembly on some date after the expiration of four years from the time of the first meeting of the Assembly, so as to enable the Assembly to exercise its right of electing its President under section 63C (1) of the Government of India Act.”

The Honourable Member proposes to use a method which is not available. Standing Order 74 is not in itself an operative Standing Order, but only provides the means whereby communications, under other provisions of the procedure, shall be transmitted to His Excellency the Governor General ; that is to say, to give an instance, where this Chamber and the other Chamber fail to agree on a Bill and there is no other course of action open, then report is made to His Excellency the Governor General of the fact that there is no agreement. It is for that purpose and other such purposes that Standing Order 74 provides the channel, but not for the purpose of such a motion as this.

#### RESOLUTION *RE* ABOLITION OF THE COTTON EXCISE DUTY— *contd.*

**Mr. President :** The House will now resume the debate on the Resolution moved by Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai on the 20th March 1924 in the following terms :

“ That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to abolish the cotton excise duty as recommended by a majority of the Indian Members on the Indian Fiscal Commission and to be pleased to direct the Tariff Board to further examine the question of protection to the Indian cotton mill industry at an early date.”

**Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas (Sind : Non-Muhammadan) :** Sir, my right to speak on this subject arises from the fact that I myself have got a very vivid recollection of the occasion when this excise duty was imposed in the year 1896. I distinctly remember the shriek of indignation and horror that it evoked throughout the length and breadth of the country both amongst the Indian Press and the Indian public as also amongst some impartial Anglo-Indian newspapers. But, Sir, the history of the struggle between Lancashire and Indian industries goes far back. Now, Sir, the reason why a shriek of horror and indignation was caused in the country by the imposition of this unholy duty was that not only was it considered to be against the interests of the country that this duty should be imposed, but that there was a clear, unabashed admission on the part of the Government Members that it was so. It was at the dictation of the Home Government in the interests of Lancashire industries that this duty was to be imposed, otherwise there was no justification for it. But, Sir, if we go into the history of the struggle between India and Lancashire, for the matter of that, the struggle between India and England, over the cotton industry or piece-goods industry, we have to go somewhat far back. Lecky in his “ History of England in the 18th Century ” says :

“ At the end of the seventeenth century great quantities of cheap and graceful Indian calicoes, muslins and chintzes were imported into England, and they found such favour that the woollen and silk manufacturers were seriously alarmed. Acts of Parliament were accordingly passed in 1700 and 1721 absolutely prohibiting, with a very few specified exceptions, the employment of printed or dyed calicoes in England.”

Then it was said :

“ It is indeed very doubtful, had prohibitive duties not been imposed on Indian goods, whether the cotton mill industry in England could ever have made

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the progress which it did in the first half of the nineteenth century ; in any case, it is certain that owing to the political domination in India England was able to cripple very seriously the great hand-loom industry of India."

Having done so, the next stage to which I refer is 1874. For fiscal purposes it was found necessary to impose import duties on piece-goods coming from England, 3½ per cent. on yarn and 5 per cent. on piece goods. This naturally created a great howl in Lancashire and memorials were sent by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to Parliament to inquire into this. The Duke of Argyll, who was at that time the Secretary of State for India, sent these memorials to the Government of India for investigation and report. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce found a very opportune time here, because at that time Mr. Gladstone's administration, which was very unpopular, was tottering ; it was found that there would be an election very soon and the Lancashire vote would be a very valuable one ; and so it happened that lots of Conservative members promised their support to Lancashire and the result was that when the Government of India sent their report to the Home Government to say, in response to the Secretary of State, that really there was no justification for the abolition of these import duties, the Home Government insisted, with the result that Lord Northbrook, who was a very conscientious and just Viceroy, was obliged to resign rather than to submit to this dictation. Well, Sir, as you are all aware, Lord Northbrook was succeeded by Lord Lytton, who was of a different stuff altogether, and for his Finance Member he had Sir John Strachey, who was, according to him, a confirmed free-trader. Well, Sir, the long and short of it is that these duties were abolished. The next stage is when these duties were reimposed. But at the time of the abolition it was found that the Government of India did a great wrong to the people of India and to the piece-goods industry of India and also to the finances of India, because at that time there was a great financial stringency on account of the Madras famine and also on account of the Afghan war. So much so that one Member of the Executive Council made a very strong protest against this imposition. As a matter of fact, even in the Executive Council there was a majority of members against the abolition of these duties, but Lord Lytton overruled them under the powers which are now known as powers of certification in the interests of the peace and tranquillity of India. But, Sir, there is one significant remark made at the time by Sir John Strachey which is worthy of consideration. Before I come to this remark of Sir John Strachey I would like to refer to one remark of Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India at the time. When this discussion came up in the House of Lords, he made the following remarks in reply to those people who said that the interests of India should be looked into in the first instance :

" It is surprising to find the interests of the English manufacturers treated (in the debate) as matters of small account."

Then, Sir John Strachey said :

" We are often told that it is the duty of the Government of India to think of Indian interests alone and that if the interests of Manchester suffer it is no affair of ours. For my part, I utterly repudiate such doctrines ; I have not ceased to be an Englishman because I have spent the greater part of my life in India and have become a member of the Indian Government. The interests of Manchester, at which foolish people sneer, are the interests not only of the great and intelligent population engaged directly in the trade in cotton, but of millions of Englishmen. I am not ashamed to say that while I hope that I feel as strongly as any man the duties which I owe to India, there is no higher duty in my estimation than that which I owe to my own country."

So, Sir, here is a man who is not ashamed to state that, although he is a member of the Indian Government, he is quite prepared to sacrifice the interests of India to those of England, because that is his country. Now, Sir, I do not know whether there is any such statesman now who will be prepared to utter such remarks because I am quite sure he will be afraid of being jumped at by our Swarajists and being torn to pieces for making any such utterance. (*Honourable Members*: "He will be attacked by all.")

Now, Sir, I remember having read that at the time of his death young Pitt cried out "my country, my country". I think that is a very laudable cry, but I also think that Englishmen who reside in India and who are members of the Government in India, when crying like young Pitt "my country, my country", should mean India and not England. But I am sorry to say that the Englishmen who come here, whether officials or non-officials, find a very fleeting interest in India and sometimes do not care to look after the interests of India except when they are identical with their own interests. I remember a veterinary surgeon informed me that he had discovered a cure for the glanders and pharcy disease of cattle. So he reported to his chief, who said that he did not want that discovery because it would interfere with the trade of his countrymen in hides and skins. From this you will see the length to which this English patriotism is carried. And that is the reason why these duties were imposed at the time. It was said that, if such considerations had not weighed with those who were in the Government of India at the time, these duties would not have been abolished. That was the time when there was a question only of the removal of the duty that had been imposed upon imported cotton goods. The true history of these excise duties begins from 1894. First of all, a countervailing duty was imposed upon yarn in 1894. In 1894 it appeared that the exigencies of finance were such that it was very necessary to impose duties on imported piece-goods. But, in order to placate Lancashire, Sir James Westland also proposed excise duties on yarns produced in India. But Lancashire was not satisfied with this and the result was that in 1896 these excise duties were imposed. In fact, the summing up of the whole legislation comes to this :

"In 1879, cotton duties were surrendered. In 1882, all import duties, except on salt and liquors, were repealed. In 1894, import duties were reimposed, and an excise duty was imposed on such Indian goods as competed with Lancashire goods. But the surrender of 1896 went farther and deeper. It imposed an excise duty on all cotton goods produced in India."

Now, Sir, it was distinctly stated by Sir James Westland that it was not because this excise duty was considered to be good on its merits that the Government of India imposed it, but it was in obedience to the dictation from home and in the interests of Lancashire that it was done. But Sir James Westland at that time considered himself to be quite helpless.

Now, Sir, the next stage in the history of this excise duty is that it went on until the year 1911 when a Resolution was moved by Mr. (now Sir) Maneckji Dadabhoy in the late Imperial Legislative Council. That Resolution was moved with the object of putting a stop to this excise duty. That Resolution was defeated; but it was distinctly remarked even by English publicists that, if the members of Government had been allowed to vote according to their conscience, that Resolution would have been carried by a majority. Next, Sir, comes the stage in 1916 when Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah moved a similar Resolution. At that time both the Finance Member, Sir William Meyer, and Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, made a

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kind of promise that the Members should refrain from pursuing that subject further, but they gave an assurance that as soon as the war was over and as soon as the financial condition permitted; this question would be taken up and the request of the people complied with. So much so, Sir, that Indian members, who were mill-owners themselves, like Sir Fazulbhai Currimbhoy, got up and asked Members not to pursue this question further. This is what Sir Fazulbhai Currimbhoy said then—

“ We feel encouraged that the Government of India is with us in this matter and is fighting our cause with all the weight of its position and authority. I would not embarrass such a powerful and earnest champion with ill-timed controversy over this question. Government has the moral support of the whole country. Our Congresses and Industrial Conferences have repeatedly demanded the abolition of this Excise Duty—non-official members of this Council have before now echoed the feeling of the country. When the war ceases, there will be no lack of opportunity to express once again our united opinion on the subject should such an expression of opinion be found necessary. I accordingly hold that no good purpose will be served by agitating the point now.”

That was, Sir, in 1916 and it is 1924 now and still we do not see any signs of improvement.

Well, Sir, it is said that “ promises like pie crusts are made only to be broken.” If this is the case in the present instance I have nothing more to say except that I had always thought that promises were made to be kept.

Now, Sir, there are cogent and palpable reasons why this excise duty should not remain. Government know those reasons and have admitted them. In the first place, the cotton industry of India works under a very great handicap. When an Indian mill is started, as compared with an English mill, in the first place the total debit of the Indian manufacturer stands close upon Rs. 70,000 yearly as against *nil* for the Lancashire manufacturer. Then, Sir, upon that you impose this excise duty of 3½ per cent., which totals another Rs. 1,50,000 per annum, swelling the debit of the Indian mill-owner to over Rs. 2½ lakhs recurrent annually. So the effect of retaining this excise duty is not only that you allow the competition that already exists very unfavourably against the Indian mills, but the unfavourable circumstance is enhanced by the imposition of the excise duty.

That is one consideration. Then there are various reasons which militate against this excise duty, namely, that in the first place it violates every principle of excise taxation. There is no other country in the world where a similar tax on any industry is imposed, unless such an industry is a State monopoly as the match trade in France and the manufacture of salt in this country. Besides, this duty is unfair and inequitable. It is against the latest declaration of Government in pursuance of the Fiscal Commission's recommendations to give protection to India.

Now, Sir, the two great objections raised against the abolition of this excise duty were summed up in the speech of Mr. Bell delivered last March when this debate was inaugurated. One is that a deficit of 2 crores would result, and it would be necessary to find those 2 crores. The reply to that is that it is very easy for Government to manipulate the finances in such a manner as to find these 2 crores. We are budgetting for 130 crores, of which, if you exclude railway finance estimated at 30 crores, there still remain 100 crores.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. The Honourable Member is embarking on a very large subject, and I think I had better warn him that his time

is drawing to a close. (*The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett* : "Hear, hear.")

**Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas** : Of course this would please the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett who shouts "Hear, hear", because he will not be able to reply to my arguments.

The other point made by Mr. Bell was that the hand-loom industry would be affected. That theory has been exploded by the Honourable Mr. Kasturbhai. As regards the 2 crores I said that that could be very easily adjusted. At any rate it is not a question which cannot be solved in course of time. I dare say if Government were good enough to abolish the excise duty, we could very easily come to some understanding. In the case of readjustments, there are sure to be some demands which are likely to lapse, as, for instance, the expenditure on new Delhi, which will shortly be done away with, and so on.

I will conclude now with only a short story lasting for one minute. There was a Professor in an Indian College who was lecturing his students on the immorality of any Government taxing the industries of its own country; and he also said that it was the duty of every Government to protect its own industries. Then a student got up and said: "But your Government of India is acting entirely contrary to that." The Professor hung his head and simply said, "My dear fellow, politics should not be discussed in a class room".

**Mr. President** : It will simplify the debate if I indicate to Members the course the debate should take. Honourable Members will observe that the Resolution itself is strictly confined to the fiscal treatment of a particular industry; therefore, practically, all Mr. Joshi's amendments are out of order, except parts of (b) which are a little difficult to disentangle from the rest.

The second half of Dr. Lohokare's amendment is also out of order. The part where it is proposed to reduce the excise duty is in order.

No. 3, Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan's amendment proposes to make a small change in wording, substituting the word "immediate" for the word "early".

No. 4, Mr. K. C. Neogy's amendment, is of the greatest substance, because it proposes to omit the second half of the Resolution and therefore raises not exactly a negative but an alternative suggestion to the Resolution.

The next amendment by Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan will be covered by the debate which will arise on Mr. Neogy's amendment.

The next will only arise if Mr. Neogy's amendment is defeated.

Mr. M. K. Acharya's amendment, proposing to raise the customs duty on imports by 5 per cent. all round is clearly out of order.

The same remarks apply to the amendments of Dr. H. S. Gour, Haji S. A. K. Jeelani and Seth Govind Das.

Honourable Members will realise that I cannot allow a debate arising out of a restricted Resolution of this kind to develop into a debate on the whole fiscal policy of the country, which would be the case if I admitted these amendments.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy** (Dacca Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That all the words after the words 'Indian Fiscal Commission' be omitted."

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

The House will realise that this Resolution raises two distinct issues. The first is about the abolition of the cotton excise duty, the second is an inquiry into the present condition of the cotton industry so as to find out whether it deserves protection, apart from the abolition of the cotton excise duty. Well, so far as the first issue is concerned, Indian opinion is practically unanimous in support of it, and there may be Members of this House who are prepared to support the first issue but may hesitate to give their unstinted support to the second. In this view I think that it will be better, in the interests of the main question that we are now discussing to circumscribe the scope of the debate and leave the second portion of the Resolution to be debated on some further occasion. I will therefore request my Honourable friend, the Mover of this Resolution, to accept my amendment.

I recollect Mr. Bell trying to make out a strong case in favour of the retention of the excise duty on the ground that it acted as a protection to the hand-loom industry. I believe his has been the only speech so far that has pleaded in favour of the retention of this unjust impost. I was therefore very much interested to read a copy of a letter which our late colleague, Mr. Bell, in his capacity as Director of Industries, Bombay, has addressed to another former colleague of ours, Mr. Manmohan Das Ramji. The letter is dated Bombay the 2nd May, 1924, and there Mr. Bell points out that it was not his intention to support the retention of these duties on the ground that they acted as protective duties so far as the hand-loom industry was concerned. This is what he says :

"I hope that my speech has not been interpreted as a suggestion that the 3½ per cent. duty should be retained as a protection of the hand-loom. I certainly hold no such view."

This statement of Mr. Bell's clears the ground very considerably. Now, Sir, so far as the hand-loom industry manufactures from fine and imported yarn, I do not think my Honourable friend Sir Charles Innes will contend that these duties act as a protective duty to that industry. And coming as I do from Dacca, I am in a position to state that, so far as the finer kinds of cloth woven with the help of hand-looms are concerned, they will not at all be affected by the withdrawal of these duties. Then as regards the coarser kind of cloth, which are manufactured by hand-looms, I believe Bihar manufactures a very large quantity of coarser cloth with the help of hand-looms, and I am assured by my Honourable friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh that that industry in Bihar will not also be affected if these duties were removed. We must remember that the manufacturers of the coarser kinds of cloth use very largely Indian yarn, the surplus which the Indian mills cannot consume for their own purposes, and in that view of the matter it will be seen that if, as a result of the removal of these duties the cost of production of the Indian mill yarn is reduced, the hand-loom industry in India, in so far as it utilises the coarser Indian yarn, will also be greatly benefitted. I yield to none in my desire to see the hand-loom industry established as a large cottage industry throughout India, and therefore I submit that Government should give their earnest consideration to the recommendations of the Fiscal Commission with regard to giving some direct protection to this industry. My Honourable friend Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai has already pointed out that, when we come to the tariff schedule, we find that the duties that are at present levied on the parts of machines which are worked by manual or animal labour, which of course include all parts which

are used for hand-loom, are subject to a high duty of 15 per cent., whereas the parts of other machinery, including the power driven cotton mills, are subjected to the duty of 2½ per cent. only. I think it is up to the Government to reduce the duty on the parts of the hand-loom machines. Furthermore they should consider the question of the abolition of the import duty on yarn, and in that way they can help the hand-loom industry a great deal. Now, Sir, I am aware that the main argument on the Government side will be that we are not in a position to sacrifice this large revenue that is at present derived from the cotton excise duties. The argument comes to this, that although this impost was initiated for other than revenue purposes, and although the continuation of this impost cannot be justified on economic grounds, this has got to be continued because my Honourable friend Sir Basil Blackett cannot afford to do without it. I thought that my Honourable friend was very anxious to investigate the incidence of taxation in this country and to find out whether any particular impost weighed unusually heavily on the poorer classes, and it was with that view that he initiated the taxation inquiry, about which we had a discussion only very lately. I therefore hope that my Honourable friend, when he finds that Indian opinion is unanimous in condemning this impost as unjust and iniquitous, will find no difficulty in abolishing these duties altogether.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett :** What is the substitute ?

**Mr. K. C. Neogy :** Substitute ? That is for you to find out, not for us. Well, I want to test this argument a little further. The Cotton Excise Act, in its all-pervading incidence, includes even that small, struggling industry, the cotton hosiery industry. I do not think my Honourable friend derives any very great revenue from that source, and yet what is the position ? There is a struggling cotton hosiery industry in Bengal at the present moment. I took some care to inquire into the history of this industry, and I find that in the year 1906 Bengal started this industry mainly for the purpose of manufacturing socks, but the industry died out in a few years. In 1915, taking advantage of the high prices during the war period, this industry revived and about 60 concerns sprang up in Bengal, out of which only 15 survive at present. The total capital invested in these concerns will not, I believe, exceed even 10 lakhs. Some of these are driven by power and some are worked by manual labour. We find that since 1922-23 the general tariff was raised from 11 per cent. to 15 per cent. and the tariff on cotton twists and yarn was raised to 5 per cent. from *nil*, with the result that this industry, which utilises imported yarn, as also imported cloth for the purposes of plaiting and other processes involved in the manufacture of under shirts and vests, has been handicapped to a very large extent. And on the top of that the cotton excise duty of 3½ per cent. was put on with effect from 1923-24. This is an instance of an unjustifiable system of double taxation, and what is the result ? We find that this industry is struggling hard to keep its head above water, but it cannot hold its own against the cheap imports from Japan. The competition is not at all with the British manufacturer because that is of a much better quality and commands a much higher price.

I find that in 1921 the total value of cotton hosiery imported into India was over 73 lakhs. In 1922 it was over 71 lakhs. In 1923 it

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was over 96 lakhs ; but out of this large amount the United Kingdom contributed in 1921 only 7 lakhs ; in 1922, 2,78,000 ; in 1923, 3,64,000 ; and Japan came in for 48 lakhs in 1921 ; 56 lakhs in 1922 and 78 lakhs in 1923. So with the imposition of this duty with effect from 1923-24 Government are only making things much easier for the Japanese competition and are helping to kill this infant industry in Bengal. I should like to know what is the net amount that Government derive from this source of revenue. Now, Sir, while talking of our revenue position I find that our former colleague, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, speaking at a Bombay meeting, observed as follows :

“ We shall be told by an agonised Finance Minister that the Government can ill spare a couple of crores and that he does not possess the purse of Fortunatus or the lamp of Alladin. If Sir Basil Blackett owes certain duties as keeper of the King's purse, he as member of the Indian Government owes other duties equally insistent to the people of this country. Even allowing in full for the paramount need of rupees, annas and pies, there would be a morality about a budget minus the excise duties which would be none the less an efficient budget, as it would swell the credit side of Government's prestige and save it from moral bankruptcy.”

I have no doubt that my Honourable friend cares for the moral aspect of his Budget quite as much as for the financial, and if I find my Honourable friend going into a different lobby than myself it will be because he has no option in this matter. And in this connection I may quote what Mr. Austen Chamberlain said to a Lancashire deputation :

“ You are not asking that you shall be preserved from a special disability imposed on you alone of British traders competing in India. You are asking that you shall have preserved to you a special position of privilege which has not been accorded to any other British trade. If to-morrow I gave the order that a counter-vailing duty be imposed, not only no Indian in the Legislative Council would vote for such measure, or abstain from voting against it, but no British official would vote for that measure, except as the result of instructions, because it was his duty and he was left no choice.”

If I find Government seriously contesting this Resolution I will conclude that they have no choice in the matter and that they have their instructions from abroad.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** (Commerce Member) : Sir, for the second time this session it is my pleasant duty to congratulate the House on a change of heart—I believe that is the correct technical term. A few days ago I had the pleasure of complimenting my Honourable friend opposite on his changed outlook towards the late Legislative Assembly. To-day I have the pleasure of congratulating the House upon their changed outlook in regard to this economic question. I had always understood, Sir, that the flame of India's indignation against this cotton excise duty burnt very fiercely. Sir, in March last that flame had died very low. Now, fresh fuel has been added to the fire. I will not offer any explanation of the reasons. It may be the propaganda which has been carried on by the Bombay Millowners' Association or it may be another cause ; but whatever the cause I am delighted to see that this House is now prepared to settle down and consider this very important question.

Now, Sir, I do not propose to go into the past history of this thorny and vexed question. I do not think there is any reason why I should occupy your time or my own in doing this. The history of this question is stated in the fullest detail in the Indian Fiscal Commission's Report. It has been repeated by the Honourable Mover of this Resolution. It has



been repeated by Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas. Therefore, Sir, I do not think I need travel over the ground again. But there is one thing I should like to say and it is this. I say that there is no Britisher in India who does not regret that this tax was ever put on, and I say with confidence that that is the feeling of every one of us on this side of the House. Also, Sir, I should like to say that we on this side of the House recognise that there is a natural desire on the part of Indians that the Cotton Excise Duties Act should disappear from the face of the Statute-book. But, Sir, I must safeguard myself. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I regret very much that this tax was ever put on because I believe that the tax has done us great political harm ; but I am not prepared to go further and say that I believe that this tax has seriously harmed the Bombay cotton industry. Let me give the House some statistics. I am aware that the statistics are familiar to this House, but at the same time they are necessary for the purposes of my argument. Also, Sir, I should be sorry to disappoint my Honourable friend, the member for the Indian Merchants' Chamber, who I see is at once beginning to take notice. The excise duty was put on in 1896. Between 1896 and August 1923 the number of mills in India increased from 167 to 323. The capital increased from 13½ crores to 43 crores. The looms increased from 37,000 to 145,000 and spindles from less than 4 millions to approximately 8 millions. (*Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta* : "It might have been more.") That, Sir, is a record of which any industry may be proud. I am quite well aware, Sir, that the Bombay Millowners' Association discount those figures. They say "it is perfectly true that this industry has progressed very much," but they go on to say "had it not been for this excise duty it might have progressed still further," and they ask us to compare with the progress of the industry in India the progress of the industry in Japan and China. Well, Sir, I shall have something to say about the progress of the industry later on. In the meantime what I say is this. This tax, this 3½ per cent. tax, is so small that I do not believe that it has hampered to any appreciable or material degree the progress of the industry. It might be different of course if the House were to say that had protection been put on earlier the industry would have progressed faster. That is quite possibly an arguable point. But the answer to that is this. The statistics that I have given you are proof positive that this industry did not require protection—and I think I am justified in saying that, until a few months ago, not even the Bombay Millowners ever asked for protection—that is certainly the evidence they gave before the Fiscal Commission. Moreover, Sir, the fact is this—unaided by protection and in spite of the slight handicap of this excise duty, this cotton mill industry in India has reached its present heights. It is the stronger and the better industry for having reached those heights without any aid from us. Protection, Sir, as the Bombay Millowners' Association themselves have said is a homœopathic medicine which should be taken in very small and discriminating doses. It is a bad thing in itself. It is a thing the use of which may be justified in certain circumstances.

Now, Sir, let me come to this Resolution. The first part of it argues that we should take early steps to abolish the cotton excise duty. The second part argues that there should be an examination of the need for protecting the industry. That is one elementary fact that I wish to point out, that is, that if the first part of the Resolution is accepted, namely, an early abolition of the excise duty, the immediate effect of it will be that

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you will increase the protection now enjoyed by the cotton mill industry from 7½ per cent. to 11 per cent ; and that possibly is the reason why the Honourable Mover of this Resolution will have no difficulty in accepting the amendment moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy ; that is to say, the Bombay millowners and the other millowners in India will certainly raise no objection if this House increases the protection they now enjoy from 7½ per cent. to 11 per cent. But, Sir, that was not the intention of the Indian Fiscal Commission when they proposed that the claims of this industry to protection should be examined by the Indian Tariff Board. What they suggested was that we should wipe the slate—I believe that we owe that phrase to my Honourable friend opposite—and abolish the cotton excise duty. They recognised that that would involve a sacrifice of something like Rs. 2 crores ; and therefore they suggested that after having wiped the slate we should refer the whole matter to the Tariff Board for examination, so that the Tariff Board might decide how much protection this industry required, and they then went on to say :

“ If the rate of duty thus determined is sufficient to meet the revenue necessities of the country no question of an excise duty will arise. If on the other hand the Government hold that their revenue requirements make it obligatory to levy taxation on cotton cloth in excess of this amount, it will be necessary for them to formulate proposals in accordance with the principles we have explained and to lay those proposals before the Legislature. That body will then be in a position to decide the real point at issue.”

They went on to say that they had the fullest confidence in the Legislative Assembly. If we required more revenue than the protective duty would give it to us ; they led us to understand that the Legislative Assembly would make no difficulty about restoring the excise duty. Well, Sir, that was the very attractive programme drawn up by the Indian Fiscal Commission. But we all know, Sir, that the roseate hues of early dawn fade soon away. Those roseate hues faded away when the last Legislative Assembly passed out of existence. Now, Sir, the storm clouds have come over and we have got another Legislative Assembly ; we have got a new race in this Assembly which knows not Joseph—I mean of course the stalwarts of the late lamented Democratic Party. If my Honourable friend opposite will not mind my saying so, this Legislative Assembly is not exactly distinguished for meeting the proposals of the Government in a spirit of co-operation and sweet reasonableness. That programme therefore of the Indian Fiscal Commission has passed into the *ewigkeit*—or at any rate out of the realms of practical politics. But I propose to examine this claim for protection on the part of the Bombay Millowners' Association. I do so for various reasons ; and one of them is this. The Bombay Millowners' Association in a published representation to the Government of India have made a formal application to us for protection. Now, Sir, if I may say so, I have the very highest respect for the Bombay Millowners' Association. They are a body of business men who stick almost entirely to their business, and if they do venture into politics, they generally do it purely for a business end. (Laughter.) Any representation which the Commerce Department of the Government of India get from the Bombay Millowners' Association requires the most careful consideration. Consequently, Sir, at the beginning of April, when by a surprising chance I had four days to myself, I devoted those four days to as careful a study as I could make of the claim for protection by the Bombay Millowners' Association and I propose, if the House will indulge

me so far, to let them have the results of my examination. I am afraid it will mean the House following me into some rather dull figures ; but this matter is a very important one, and I hope the House will listen carefully to what I have got to say. As the House knows the present position is this. The mill industry in India has a protection of 5 per cent. in yarn and 7½ per cent. in cloth. Now, Sir, I propose to take yarn first.

I have here statistics of the amount of yarn available for consumption in India in the three years ending 1914-15 and again in the year 1923-24, and I beg the House to remember that the year 1923-24 was a bad year for the Bombay millowners at any rate because they lost two months' work owing to a strike. I have calculated the amount of yarn available for consumption in India by deducting exports from production and re-exports from imports. The results are as follows : on an average of the three years ending 1914-15 the total amount of yarn available for consumption in India was 541 million lbs. Of that amount Indian production supplied 92 per cent.—imports only 8 per cent. In 1923-24 the total amount of yarn available for consumption in India was 613 million lbs. and of that amount Indian production supplied 93 per cent. and imports only 7 per cent.

Now, Sir, however high a tariff wall you may have you will never stop imports altogether. I put it to the House that when you have got your local mill industry supplying 93 per cent of the yarn used in this country it cannot be pretended that there is any very strong case for protection. (*An Honourable Member* : "What year, will you kindly say ?") The average for the three years ending 1914-15 and the year 1923-24—those are the years that I have selected for comparison.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai** : May I ask the Honourable Member whether the Bombay Millowners' Association have asked for protection in the case of yarn ? They have not.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** : They have asked for protection of the industry. But I wish to carry this matter a little further ; it may be that taking the question broad and large there is no case for protection in the case of yarn. But I want to carry it a little further into the different counts. Between counts 1 and 20 Indian mills have matters practically all their own way. In the last few years there is one noticeable feature of the position, and that is that Japan has been sending us a certain amount of yarn of counts between 16's and 20's. This import from Japan began in 1918-19 and in 1923-24 amounted to 12 million lbs. I admit at once that we in the Commerce Department have got to watch that. As I say it is quite of recent growth, this trade in 16's and 20's, and it has now reached 12 million lbs. and we have got to watch it. But the point to notice is that in these counts, 16's and 20's, the Indian mills produced 217 million lbs. and so there again you cannot say that there is any need for protection there. As regards 21's to 30's the position is exactly the same. Indian mills produced in 1922-23 209 million pounds. Imports were only 5 million pounds. It is between 30's and 40's that the Indian production and foreign production begin to compete and of course beyond 40's most of the yarn used in India is imported yarn. But the millowners themselves, as Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai very properly pointed out, at any rate in their evidence before the Indian Fiscal Commission, did not ask for any protection in yarn. On the contrary they rather objected to the imposition of any import duty on yarn on the ground that it might handicap

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the hand-loom industry. It was put to them that they had to meet competition above 30's, but they definitely went on to say that that was a question for the future and that as regards present Indian mills, many of them were not organised to produce counts of yarn above 30's.

Now, Sir, let me pass on to piece-goods. I have got some statistics here which I think will interest the House. In the three years ending 1914-15, the Indian mill production in piece-goods averaged 1,173 million yards. In the same period imports averaged 2,855 million yards. In 1923-24, the Indian mill production had risen to 1,700 million yards and the import had dropped to 1,466 million yards. That is to say the Indian mill production had increased by 45 per cent., and imports had decreased by 49 per cent. Again, taking the amount of piece-goods available for the Indian market, that is to say, the Indian mill production less exports plus imports less re-exports, on an average of the three years I have mentioned local production supplied 28 per cent. and imports 72 per cent. In 1923-24, the position was reversed. The local production supplied 52 per cent. and imports supplied 48 per cent. Now, I should like to include in these figures hand-loom production. Here, of course, we get more or less on to estimates, but it is comparatively easy to make a fairly reliable estimate of hand-loom production, if we proceed upon the assumption that one pound of yarn is equivalent to 4 yards of cloth—that is the basis adopted by Mr. Couborough. Now, we know the total amount of yarn available for consumption in India. If we convert that to cloth at one pound of yarn to four yards of cloth, and deduct from the total the known production of the mills, the balance represents hand-loom production. Now, taking the periods that I have been using, in the three years ending 1914-15, the total amount of cloth available for consumption in India was 4,917 million yards. The hand-loom production was 20 per cent. of that; Indian mills provided 22 per cent., and imports contributed 57 per cent. In 1923-24, the total amount available for consumption in India dropped to 3,711 million yards, and this is a very significant fact to which I shall have to refer. Hand-loom production contributed 20 per cent., Indian mills 41 per cent. and imports 38 per cent.

That is to say, local production—mills plus hand-looms contributed about 62 per cent. of the total amount of cloth available for consumption in India. Now, I would like to summarise these facts.

As regards yarn, the Indian mills supply 93 per cent. of the yarn consumed in India, Japan is sending a relatively small amount of the coarser counts and these imports require watching; but it is absurd to say that any general measure of protection is required. The imports come mainly from the United Kingdom and are of the finer counts. The mill-owners themselves pointed this out in their evidence before the Fiscal Commission and, so far from asking for any protection, rather objected to the imposition of a duty on yarn.

As regards cloth, the Indian mill production has increased by 45 per cent. since 1914-15, imports have decreased by 49 per cent., and Indian production now accounts for 62 per cent. of the total consumption.

As between Indian mills and imports, the proportion is now 52 per cent. for the former and 48 per cent. for the latter. But here, again,—and this is a point I wish to bring out—the position is very much the same as in respect of yarn. The imports come mainly from the United

Kingdom and these imports are of the finer qualities of cloth, in which the Indian mills do not ordinarily compete. This fact has been admitted several times ; it was admitted by Sir Vithaldas Thackersey in this House, and in his evidence before the Fiscal Commission, and it was admitted by the millowners themselves in that evidence. They said in their memorandum presented to the Indian Fiscal Commission :

“ From the preceding paragraphs it will be observed that India's chief competitors, both in the home market and elsewhere, are Japan and the United States of America.”

The fact of the matter is that, as between Lancashire and Indian mills, the field of competition is very small. Each has its own sphere. The spheres overlap to a small extent, but the field in which they compete is small. The main competition—and I think I am correct in saying that it is the competition that the mill industry in India fears most—is competition from Japan. The United States of America have practically dropped out and the only serious competition which we get in piece-goods, in the class of goods which the Indian mills ordinarily make, comes from Japan. Now, in 1923-24, the Indian mills supplied for consumption in India 1,535 million yards of cloth. Japan sent 121 million yards. Thus, as between Indian mills and Japan, the former supplied 93 per cent. of the consumption in India and Japan less than 7 per cent. That is why I say the position in regard to piece-goods is practically the same as in regard to yarn. In those classes of goods which the Indian mills produce, they have practically captured the whole of the Indian market. And it is only in those classes of goods that the mill industry in India has what is known in economic language as a comparative advantage. Therefore, Sir, it is difficult to say that even a *prima facie* case has been made out for protection for the mill industry in India. I have admitted that the matter requires watching in certain aspects and you may depend upon it that we shall watch it very very carefully. And I wish to safeguard myself in regard to one point. I reserve judgment as regards “ hosiery ”. Mr. Neogy devoted a lot of time to hosiery and I should like to tell him that we have that portion of the case under examination at the present moment. There is another point I have got to make. The House must understand that whether they accept Mr. Neogy's motion or whether they do not, I reserve the right in the event of this cotton excise being taken off or even earlier if necessary, to ask the Tariff Board to examine the whole of this case. Because you have got to remember this. The proper thing to do is not merely to take off the cotton excise duty but also to reduce the import duty. That is the only way in which you can bring any benefit to the consumer in India. And therefore that is a case which may require examination by the Tariff Board, whether in the event of the cotton excise duty being taken off, the import duty should be reduced, and whether, in any branches of the cotton trade, hosiery, particular counts, and so on, the industry requires protection. I may say that when the millowners gave their evidence before the Fiscal Commission, the only things for which they asked for protection were hosiery, cotton blankets, and calico printing. And they said that, as regards the last two—cotton blankets and calico printing—their request was a contingent one—contingent on the progress of the trade. Now, Sir, let me come to the cotton excise duty. In the public representation made the Bombay millowners say that Lord Hardinge publicly pledged himself to the necessity of the abolition of the cotton duties at the earliest possible date. That, Sir, is not a correct quotation. The matter is so important that I have brought an extract from the speech of Lord Hardinge in order

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to let the House know exactly what the assurance was. The exact words are :

“The excise duty should for the present remain at its actual figure and an assurance given that it would be abolished as soon as financial considerations permit.”

There is some difference between “at the earliest possible date” and “as soon as financial considerations permit”. Now, Sir, the Government of India are always being accused of finding some argument to justify the retention of the duty. The suspicion is always voiced that we are retaining this duty in the interests of Lancashire. I hope I have exploded that latter feeling by the figures I have just given. I have pointed out that there is practically very little competition between Lancashire and India either in the matter of yarn or in the matter of cloth. Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai said that official memory in the redemption of pledges is apt to be short. Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas said that the Government of India apparently regarded promises as—(*A Voice* : “Scraps of paper.”)—pie crusts made only to be broken. Well, Sir, I deny these statements absolutely. The fiscal history of the last few years shows how absolutely untrue these charges are. In the first place, the import duty was raised to 7½ per cent. in 1917 and to 11 per cent. in 1921 while the excise duty remained at 3½ per cent. That does not look as if we favour Lancashire, does it? Again, the House knows perfectly well that the period that has elapsed since Lord Hardinge gave that pledge has been almost uniformly a period of deficit budgets. Sir Basil Blackett, speaking in this House in his first budget speech in 1923, pointed out that for five successive years the Indian Budget had been in deficit, and that the accumulated total of these deficits was no less than 100 crores. Now, Sir, that period of deficit budgets in the Government of India coincided with a period of absolutely phenomenal prosperity for the mill industry in India. I have got the figures here.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai** : What about Sir Malcolm Hailey’s statement in 1922?

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** : I will come to that later. Between 1905 and 1914 (this is Mr. J. A. Wadia’s statement) both years inclusive, the mill industry paid an average dividend of 10½ per cent. on an average capital of 6½ crores. In 1915 to 1922 both years inclusive they paid an average dividend of 53 per cent. on an average capital of 12½ crores, and they paid away in the 8 years ending 1922 a sum of over 50 crores in dividends.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai** : May I know what the jute mills paid out in Calcutta?

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** : That has nothing to do with the question of cotton mills, Sir.

Thus, Sir, on the one hand, there were large deficits in the Government of India and on the other hand you have the mill industry undergoing a period of absolutely phenomenal prosperity. Would it have been reasonable for the Government of India to say in those circumstances : “Now the time has come to fulfil Lord Hardinge’s pledge. Our financial circumstances now admit of our taking off this tax”? If we had ventured to put that ridiculous proposal to the Indian Legislative Assembly, would the Legislative Assembly have considered it for a moment? Of course

they would not ; and what is more, they did not. In 1922 the whole question of cotton excise duty was open for discussion in this House. My Honourable friends opposite might have proposed that that cotton duty should be taken off, and had they carried that proposal, we would have been in great difficulties. But we could not stop them carrying that proposal. Sir, what happened ? Not a single non-official Member of this House ever suggested that that cotton duty should be taken off in spite of the fact that it was open to them to do so. Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas has been talking about our pledges being pie crusts, but he never thought of doing so. Sir Vithaldas Thackersey never thought of doing so ; Mr. Manmohandas Ramji never thought of doing so, and I claim, Sir, that in not taking off this duty up to this date, we have behind us the full support of the Indian Legislative Assembly.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** That is rather a good turn to it !

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** There has been reference to a pledge, Sir. I know the Indian politician dearly loves to hasten a pledge upon the Government of India. The other day, Sir, I had a very good example of this. I said that we required certain powers in reserve but that we had no intention of making use of them at present. An Honourable Member opposite, Sir, missed out all about the necessity of keeping those powers in reserve but read out what I said about having no present intention of using those powers and then said that the Government of India had pledged themselves that they would not use those powers. And when I said that I had not given any such pledge, he said that my promises were not worth much.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta :** That is not what I said.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** Well, Sir, this pledge of Lord Hardinge of course stands on an entirely different footing. It was a definite assurance. He said that when financial circumstances permitted this duty would be taken off, and naturally the Government of India must honour a pledge of that kind. But I beg the House to observe that since that pledge was made, circumstances have changed in two material respects. The first respect is that it is no longer within the power of the Executive Government to take off a duty. It requires the assent of this House and also of the Council of State. Secondly, since Lord Hardinge spoke, another question has come into prominence, namely, the question of provincial contributions, and I believe, Sir, that my Honourable Colleague on my right has said more than once that the finances of the Government of India will be ordered towards the reduction of these provincial contributions. Thus, when the day of a permanent disposable surplus arises, what will happen is this, the Government of India and this Legislature will have to decide between whether this disposable surplus should be devoted to the abolition of the cotton excise or to the reduction of provincial contributions.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** Not to reduction of import duties on piece-goods !!!

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** I do not propose to attempt to-day to decide that issue. I am getting too old a hand in this Assembly—(Laughter)—to commit myself or the Government to anything until the need arises. Otherwise, Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Jamnadas Mehta will read out what I have said and read into it what I did not say. So, I propose to be very careful. I am not going to prophesy. I am not going

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to say when my Honourable Colleague on my right will have this permanent disposable surplus, and therefore, Sir, I propose merely to balance the considerations which this House will have to weigh when the issue comes to be decided.

**Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar** : Not now ?

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** : I first put the case of the mill-owners as I see it. As I said just now, the Millowners' Association and the cotton mills generally have a strict eye to business. This is a very important matter to them because it means money, it means  $1\frac{1}{2}$  crores of rupees into the bargain. (*A Voice* : "Into their own pockets ?") Yes, into their pocket and the pocket of their shareholders, and being business men they put in the forefront of their case their strongest argument, in fact, I was nearly going to say, their only strong argument. That is to say, they make this appeal to political sentiment and political feeling. I do not wish for a moment to depreciate in any way the strength of political sentiment or the importance which should be attached to it in a matter of this kind. But I do wish to point out that to some extent at any rate this grievance, which I admit to be a real grievance, has lost some of its force in recent years. When there was a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. duty on imports and an equivalent excise duty undoubtedly the mill industry in India had a very real grievance. When it was a 5 per cent. import duty and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. excise duty, undoubtedly they had a grievance, but that material grievance has been diminishing and now the House has got to remember that there is a gap of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. between the excise duty and the import duty, and I think that even the millowners themselves will admit that they do not want more protection than  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I notice, Sir, that the millowners and their representatives in this House are apt to concentrate mainly on that ground just like Mr. Harehandrai Vishindas who devoted a great portion of his speech to the history of this question. I notice that these gentlemen are apt to shy off the economic grounds because they realise that they are on weak ground really. (*Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai* : "Not a bit.") Mr. Kasturbhai referred to a statement made by Sir Malcolm Hailey in this House. When we read that speech we find that that begins in the following way. He pointed out that the days are past when members of Government come down to the House and read out a carefully prepared and reasoned statement and that he was going to make some impromptu observations. Sir Malcolm Hailey was arguing in favour of a 4 per cent. increase in the excise duty and he did make that statement. But, Sir, I think my Honourable friend opposite has forgotten that since Sir Malcolm Hailey made those statements we have had a really authoritative exposition of the whole subject in the Fiscal Commission's Report. Theoretically the excise duty is sound enough. I would refer Honourable Members to paragraph 145 of the Report, page 84. What you have got to remember is this :

"In India, although about two-thirds of the cotton cloth consumed is locally produced, the imports are the main factor determining prices. This fact has been clearly brought out by Mr. A. C. Couborough in the tables and graphs appended to his Notes on the Indian Piece-Goods Trade. In the case of this commodity, therefore, the excise duty falls on the producer who is, however, able to meet it from the enhanced price that he obtains for his goods owing to the duty on imported cloth."

If the House will apply the financial canon quoted in paragraph 145 of the report, that is, the canon laid down by Adam Smith that "every tax



ought to be so contrived as to take out and keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible over and above what it brings into the public treasury of the State," you will find that there is a very strong theoretical justification for the tax and it is this. If you take off this tax to-morrow you will not reduce the price of piece-goods by one anna. The price of piece-goods will still continue to be determined by the import price, and the only result will be that the cotton excise duty will still be paid by the consumer in India but it will be paid to the millowners and the shareholders and will not be paid to my Honourable friend, Sir Basil Blackett. That is the difficulty that the House is going to be in when it comes to decide this question.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai :** Will you kindly give the table prepared by Mr. Couborough showing what is the difference between the price of imported piece-goods and the price of piece-goods produced by the Indian mills ?

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** I think that the Honourable Member has a right of reply later. I am aware that the Indian millowners and their friends in this House make statements that if the excise duty is taken off they will be able to reduce the price to the consumer. For instance, at this public meeting to which Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas referred, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy stated :

" Had there been no Excise, the Indian millowner would not have been put to the necessity of tacking this item on to his cost sheet and recovering it from the consumer, and in times of depression and high prices he would have been able to cheapen his cost by 3½ per cent. to the benefit of his poor client."

Well, Sir, I have had a lot to do with business men in my life, and I may say that I have received the greatest assistance from the business men in India, both Indian and European. Throughout my time as Commerce Member they have been my guides, philosophers and friends. At the same time I must say that when you are discussing with a business man a matter of business in which there is money going, well, I have learnt by experience to look after myself very closely indeed, and when, Sir, the Indian millowners and Mr. Kasturbhai tell me that if this duty were taken off, the millowners would promptly in a fit of generosity and justice reduce the price to the consumer, I take leave to disbelieve them. Statements of that kind must be received with a very strong pinch of salt. Let me prove that fact. I have devoted a great deal of time to this matter. I fear I have exhausted my time and I am afraid I cannot go into it in great detail but, Sir, in 1913-14 there were very heavy imports of cloth into India and when we began the war we had very heavy stocks in this country. The price of cotton was low, the price of cloth was low and it remained low till 1915-16. In 1916-17 the imports began to fall off, the price of cotton began to rise, the price of cloth began to rise faster. As time went on, the millowners got the position more and more under control. The imports fell more and more away. The price of cotton rose fast, the price of cloth rose very much faster still. The high water mark of mill prosperity was reached in 1920-21 and 1921-22. The imports were still small and the price of raw cotton averaged between 388 and 411 per candy, only a little over 30 per cent. above the price of raw cotton in 1913-14. But, Sir, the price of longcloth in 1913-14 was 10 annas and 3 pies a lb., and of *chaddars* ten annas per yard. In 1921-22 the price of longcloth was Rs. 1-13-4, or nearly three times the price of it in 1913-14. (Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai : " What was the price of cotton ?") It was 30 per cent. above the price in 1913-14, and the

[Sir Charles Innes.]

price of cloth was three times, and that gives you some measure (*Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai* : ' I challenge that statement<sup>(6)</sup> ') of the profits made by the mill industry in those years. Now, Sir, I brought out these figures so that the House may be under no misapprehensions about the statement of *Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai* and of the millowners generally that if you take off this cotton excise duty the price of cloth will go down. It will not, because it is not business and it would not be right that it should. I have no sentiment in this matter at all. The millowners are perfectly entitled to sell their cloth at the market price and their shareholders would call them to account if they did not. You cannot introduce sentiment into business. That does not alter the fact that if you take off this cotton excise duty and do not reduce the import duty, the excise duty will be paid all the same, but it will be paid to the millowners and not to the Government. I will not touch on this point any further. The other question which will have to be considered, is whether or not this House is going to bring about a reduction in the provincial contributions. We have been told recently in committees and elsewhere that diarchy is dead. I express no opinion on that point at all. But, Sir, if diarchy is dead, I hold myself that one reason why it is dead is that the Ministers had never had a fair chance. And why did they not have it ? Because they have never had any money to burn. It will be for the House to decide whether they should utilise the permanently disposable surplus whenever it occurs in reducing these provincial contributions in order that Ministers in the provinces may have money to spend on education, sanitation and the like or whether we should utilise this surplus in removing what I know is a grievance on which this House and India generally feels strongly, namely, the removal of these cotton excise duties. That, Sir, is the issue which will have to be decided when *Sir Basil Blackett* is able to say that he has this permanently disposable surplus.

**Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar** : I am unwilling to interrupt my Honourable friend. Is that the only alternative ? Can you not put a super-tax on the profits of companies ?

**Mr. President** : The Honourable Member has invited the Honourable the Commerce Member to trench on ground which is out of order.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes** : I have tried to state my case as fairly as I can and I have also refrained definitely from offering any opinion one way or the other, but I regret very much that I cannot accept this Resolution in its present form, because it goes beyond the pledge we gave. The pledge was that this duty will be taken off as soon as financial circumstances permit and I do not think it is right for this House to say that we should take it off now. The question is one that will have to be decided when financial considerations permit.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas** (Indian Merchants Chamber, Indian Commerce) : Sir, the House may have anticipated I rise to support cordially the Resolution that is before the House and also the amendment moved by *Mr. Neogy*. The Honourable the Commerce Member for once at any rate has spoken with approval of some Bombay merchants who attend to their business and do not mix themselves up in politics except when politics affects their business. May I, Sir, point out to the Honourable the Commerce Member, or rather remind him of those good old days

when the Bombay business men did not at all take part in politics and may I ask him to bring to his mind the result of that ? The result has been that commerce in British India is so much mixed up with politics and with such steps as the Government of India do take, not because the steps are good either for the commerce or industry of this country but because they are good for commerce and industry somewhere else. That opened the mind and the eyes of the Indian commercial community to the great necessity of men in commerce and industry taking part in politics and taking part in legislative assemblies like this. Sir, no better example of that can be cited than the one that is before the House. It is well known and it is admitted that as far as the Union Jack is concerned, it has always followed British commerce and British trade. In fact the East India Company which laid the foundations of British supremacy in India started in India, Sir, on commerce and on industry. But perhaps still better example as to why Indians in commerce and industry should take part in politics is given in a note by an *ex-Colleague* of my Honourable friend over there, the Honourable Mr. W. Stokes, who, writing in a minute on 13th March 1879, said as under :

“ The proposed exemption of cotton if made by a mere executive order will resemble what lawyers call a fraud on the power ; and there is, unfortunately, no Court of Equity to relieve the people of India against it.”

It is, Sir, this Court of Equity, the want of which men in business in India have felt acutely, that has made me take cognizance of all the political factors which may underlie any proposition. And I do not think that it is any humiliation or shame to admit that whilst I think commercially and whilst I devote myself to commerce and industry, I feel that I should be failing in my duty to my country if I did not take cognizance of the political factors which go side by side with commerce and industry and which must either develop it or tend to put it down. (Hear, hear.) I appeal to this House to-day as the Court of Equity which Mr. W. Stokes said in 1879 was absent for India: I plead before this House not in the interests of rupees, annas and pies; I plead before this House in the interests of justice for India and in the interests of the fair name of India and, if I may add with the permission of my friends opposite, in the interests of the dignity of the Government of India. It will be a long time still before we can call this Government the Indian Government. It still is the Government of India. But I am sure His Excellency Lord Reading and my friends opposite still retain their sense of self-respect and that they will not hesitate to say the excise duty must go first and we will side by side with our House look after the financial part as regards a substitute if required for financial purposes. I repeat what I said before the Fiscal Commission, clean the slate: take off the existing duty which was put on at the dictation of Lancashire, the most selfish and wicked step ever taken by any Government, even by the British Government. That must disappear from Indian financial statements, and then we will talk as to how to replace it. I expected that the Honourable the Commerce Member would have said that the Government of India are quite prepared to agree that this should go; and then the House might have said “ All right, if the Honourable the Finance Member wants a substitute for it, we will consider it in a committee.” (A Voice : “ Now the question should be put.”) (Laughter.)

Sir, the Honourable the Commerce Member referred all the time to the millowners of Bombay and the cotton mills of Bombay. I am sure he could not have meant it, but I think I would like to complete the full

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

names of the interests involved in this. It is the cotton spinning and weaving industry of India which includes not only Bombay mills but also those of Cawnpore, where I have not heard that a single Indian owns a cotton mill. It includes cotton mills in Madras and cotton mills in Calcutta. I think a good deal of prejudice which should have been avoided is being created by referring to the Bombay millowner who is alleged to be greedy and all the rest of it. I do not think there is any idea of giving this relief only to mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad from which latter place my Honourable friend on my left hails. It is, therefore, only fair to say that the whole question refers to cotton mills all over India, a very respectable part of which is to-day owned by Britishers also. But unfortunately Bombay many a time has got to do the spade work, and I assure the Honourable the Commerce Member that whether the millowner in Cawnpore and Madras joins the millowner in Bombay or not, the millowner in Bombay is determined upon not giving any rest to the Government of India until this obnoxious duty is off the Statute-book.

Sir, there is a very dismal and a very sad history behind this cotton excise duty, which I am very glad the Honourable the Commerce Member has made it unnecessary for me to dwell upon, by saying that every Britisher in India now recognises that the duty was bad and unjustly levied. I only wish he had said that every Britisher in India is anxious that this duty should be removed as early as possible. To that extent I call the remarks of my Honourable the Commerce Member very disappointing even at this very late hour. Sir, The Honourable the Commerce Member referred to protection for the cotton industry. Where does the question of protection come in? How can the Honourable the Commerce Member talk of protection to the cotton industry when that industry is still groaning under the very obnoxious burden placed by this duty, which is unjust and inequitable, wicked, and all the rest of the adjectives that you can apply to it. We want no protection yet. We first want relief from this duty which was put on us not because the Government of India approved of it, but against the Government of India at the dictation of somebody else. I do not think the cotton mill industry want any protection until they are given what is their due and just relief. Sir, the Commerce Member also quoted figures, telling the House that they were very dry and difficult to be followed and still trying to make out a case that since the war broke out, the product of Indian mills has gone up and that imports have been reduced. I really wonder what is the inference that the Honourable the Commerce Member wants to be drawn from that statement. Do I understand him to say or imply that those figures show that the Indian cotton industry is in an ideal position? Surely if we have multiplied our mills, our spindles, and our looms from what they were before 1914, is that a thing which the Government of India look up to with any jealousy or with any disapproval? How much leeway has to be made up before India can supply all the demand in India for piece-goods, and if there is that leeway to be made up, is the Honourable the Commerce Member justified in complaining that despite this handicap of the excise duty, and despite the Government of India giving no encouragement to the Indian industry that the men engaged in the cotton industry have stood on their own and have built up the trade as they have? But, Sir, their progress does not remove their claim before this House to insist

upon what is due to them, for freedom from a tax which was wicked in its inception and which is wicked in its continuation.

Now, Sir, we have again got in this matter another of those tactics --and I use the word without meaning anything objectionable about it-- that we have seen used by the Government benches when such questions come up. The Honourable Member wound up, or very nearly wound up, his case by saying that when the Honourable the Finance Member is able to spare the money, he will put the subject before the House to decide whether they want the excise duty off or provincial contributions off. What connection, Sir, is there between the two? And may I ask if the House is prepared even to tolerate the idea of touching this tainted money of cotton excise duty? (Laughter.) It is tainted money--tainted without the least doubt--in spite of the Honourable the Commerce Member laughing it out, money which comes from the dishonour of the people of India and the dishonour of the Government of India, money which comes in spite of the Government of India saying to the Secretary of State "We will not have this money". Look at the speeches which are printed very profusely in this book. There is not the least doubt about it, and I am really surprised at any Member on the opposite bench saying that he would recommend to the House to barter between what is the just due of Madras, the Punjab and Calcutta and this wicked duty the immediate removal of which is the just due of the whole nation, of the people of India as a whole irrespective of provinces or irrespective of any other differentiation. But, Sir, is it not also this that this House should insist on the provincial contributions and remissions which can be done owing to the retrenchments which have been made and which should continue to be made? The other question stands quite apart. Here, I come, Sir, to another very dismal aspect of the financial part of the British Government in India. Sir, the liquor excise was put on in order to check consumption of liquor. The cotton excise is put on owing to dictation from Lancashire. Naturally, these duties go on increasing as population increases and as other factors contribute towards them. When Mahatma Gandhi says--and there has been agitation for it for years now--that consumption of liquor should be put down, we are asked to replace the revenue from it. We want to assert the claims of the people now that we have got this Assembly which is responsible to the tax-payer. I would like to point out to my friends opposite with regard to the financial part of the question that it is no use the Honourable the Commerce Member trying to set off Madras and Bengal against what he thinks is the interest of Bombay alone. But I may assure him that it is not Bombay alone. It is the whole of India. Does he expect us to fight for the removal of the excise duty amongst ourselves? Let me warn the Honourable the Commerce Member that we will not fight in that matter. I am sure Honourable Members on both sides of the House, both from Bengal, Bombay and the Punjab will say with one voice that this obnoxious duty must go first. And, then, if the Honourable the Finance Member says that he still wants money, I assure him that we will sit down and consider what methods can be devised in order to get the money. But we shall not retain this duty for the miserable rupees, annas and pies, which it brings into the Indian treasury and which, I repeat, is tainted money.

**Pandit Shamlal Nehru** (Meerut Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I suggest, Sir, whether extra money can be had by increasing the duty on imported cloth?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** Sir, the Honourable Mr. Neogy thought that the Government would not think of their prestige and would look at this question from the only aspect that the people of India can look at it, namely, the aspect of the national honour and, I repeat, the honour of the Government of India. But the speech delivered by the Honourable Member opposite, who presides so ably over the portfolio of Commerce and Industry, does not give one much hope that the Honourable Member himself proposes to look at it from that very correct and the only reasonable point of view which the people of India demand. I am afraid, Sir, the insistence on prestige may be asserted the wrong way. The fine sentiment of prestige may be worked in a wrong way if Government think that they imposed this duty on India in spite of their shrieks and in spite of the agitation in 1896 and they now propose to keep it there in spite of anything that may be urged, and that on one excuse or another against its removal. Sir, if this House claims to be the representative of the tax-payer and claims to be the protector of what is just and due to India, I submit that it can give only one verdict which will be that this duty must go first, that the duty cannot be considered on any other consideration and that those other considerations which any Honourable Member opposite may have to urge will be considered on their own merits when that duty is off our Statute-book.

I wish, Sir, to add one word regarding what my Honourable friend opposite thought fit to charge my Honourable friend representing the Ahmedabad Millowners here in connection with the greed of the cotton millowners. I wish to put to the Honourable the Commerce Member a very straight and direct question. Will the Honourable Member, when he gets up to reply, tell this House quite frankly how many merchants and how many industrialists during the war period have been found to be profiteering as badly, or at least equally, as the cotton millowners? The cotton millowners are not angels and they have never claimed to be angels. They are as human as anybody else. And, if anybody has taken them to be angels, he must be a very great simpleton.

The question is, will the Honourable the Commerce Member tell the House how many profiteers there are engaged in industries in India? I would remind him of one that I wrote to the papers about. Will he tell us how badly the jute millowners of Calcutta profited during the war period? The jute millowners bought their raw jute at 45 per cent. of the index number of the pre-war index, and sold their manufactures at a profit of over 200 per cent. (the figures are rough as I speak from memory). There could not have been a worse case of profiteering. Did the Government of India do anything to bring this under control?

**Mr. President :** Order, order. I cannot allow this debate to be made a competition between profiteers.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** I would not have referred to it at all, if the Honourable the Commerce Member had not referred to it himself. I would remind the Honourable the Commerce Member that if cotton industrialists did profiteer in India during the last war, there were many others who profited more. It is hardly fair to prejudice one particular class and not to mention others.

**Mr. A. H. Lloyd :** What about the export duty on jute goods?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas** : The Honourable the President has closed this discussion, otherwise I would have given you a reply, Mr. Lloyd.

I do not think this House, claiming as it does to represent the tax-payer, can afford to look at this question, in spite of any appeal which my Honourable friend opposite has chosen to make to this House, in any channel other than that of a great political wrong done to India. I still think it is not too late for the Honourable Member opposite to declare, on behalf of the Government of India, that the Government are prepared to take this obnoxious duty off. They may claim that they are acting under orders, and I will not quarrel with them for that, but I expect them forthwith to declare to this House that they agree that the excise duty must go. Then if they feel that they would want the money to be replaced, let them say so to this House. I for one am quite prepared to consider various alternatives that exist, a few of which I will detail and close my speech.

If you are so fond of an excise duty, you can have excise but on the decision of this House ; and then too not only on cotton but on silk, wool, leather, or any other articles you like ; but that excise can only be at the dictation and command of this House, and not at the dictation of Lancashire. You can have an increased duty on profits of industrial concerns if you choose to put further burdens on them. Last year the Bombay mills lost rupees one crore and seventeen lakhs and paid one crore as excise duty. Does he not think that at any rate is a burden from which the industry which is in his charge should be free ? I appeal to this House in the name of the national honour of India to pass this Resolution unanimously.

#### ELECTORAL ROLLS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer** (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions : Non-Muhammadian Rural) : Will the Government be pleased to state : (a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the interpellation in the meeting of the 11th September 1924 of the United Provinces Legislative Council regarding the amendment of Council of State Electoral Rules ?

(b) When and on what date the reference from the United Provinces Government was received by the Government of India ?

(c) Whether it has been disposed of by the Government of India ? If not, why not ?

(d) Whether it will be possible for the Government of India to dispose of the reference in question from the United Provinces Government before the end of this month or sometimes before the Council of State electoral rolls now published for objections in the United Provinces are finally printed ?

(e) Whether the Government are aware that the subject in question affects the legal rights of members of four universities of the United Provinces ?

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman** (Home Member) : The answer to (a) is in the affirmative. Government have seen a newspaper report of the interpellation in the United Provinces Legislative Council referred to by the Honourable Member.

[Sir Alexander Muddiman.]

(b) The reference from the Government of the United Provinces was received by the Government of India on the 28th January, 1924.

(c), (d) and (e). Although the letter from the United Provinces Government was received in January last, the Government of India postponed its consideration pending receipt of similar references from other Local Governments in regard to defects in the various electoral rules. As, however, the Honourable Member appears to attach particular importance to the question we will examine it now separately from the other questions which have been raised and will endeavour to arrive at a decision at an early date. We have not, however, regarded the question as one of urgency as it is possible under rule 9 (6) of the Council of State electoral rules to amend the Council of State electoral rolls now being prepared any time before the next election to the Council of State.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Twenty Minutes Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Twenty Minutes Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

#### RESOLUTION *RE* ABOLITION OF THE COTTON EXCISE DUTY— *concl'd.*

**Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao** (Godavari *cum* Kistna : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, the Honourable Sir Charles Innes made a very comprehensive speech reviewing the history of the subject from 1896 and set out various conclusions based upon statistics of imports from and exports to this country, and the manufacture of cotton goods in the mills of this country. With his main conclusions, Sir, I have no quarrel. The Honourable Sir Charles Innes said that my Honourable friend, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas entered politics strictly with a view to business. Sir, so far as I am concerned, I represent a constituency of agriculturists who are interested in seeing that their wants are supplied with as little cost to them as possible. Therefore from that standpoint I am convinced that a remission of this duty will not necessarily be followed by a reduction in the prices of cloth, and therefore to that extent I am in agreement with the conclusion of my Honourable friend, Sir Charles Innes that, unless the present duty on imported cloth is reduced, the prices of cloth in this country will not be brought down. Sir, after expressing my agreement with that conclusion, I am still of opinion that the political aspect of this question, to which reference was made both by the Honourable Sir Charles Innes and Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, cannot be ignored. It is a question as to whether the financial arrangements of this country should be dictated to suit the requirements of Lancashire. Whatever may be the force of the argument of my Honourable friend, Sir Charles Innes, namely, that the evil effects of this duty have to some extent been minimised by the differentiation in the rates of duty on imported goods and of the excise duty on cotton manufactures, we are still of opinion, Sir, that this duty has been put on at the dictation of Lancashire, and for that reason it is our unanimous desire that this duty should disappear as early as possible, as stated in this Resolution. Sir, reference has been made to possible alternatives, should there be a surplus at the end of this year; and Sir Charles Innes expressed the opinion that the Ministers had not been given a fair chance and that the question of provincial contributions will have to be borne in mind in a consideration of this problem. Sir



Charles Innes apparently wants to place us on the horns of a dilemma in case there should be a surplus ; he has actually asked us, " Assuming there is a surplus would you have the scheme of provincial contributions given effect to or would you like to have this excise duty remitted ? " I do not propose to answer that question at present. I am perfectly certain, Sir, that if my Honourable friend will place before us those proposals which may eventuate in the alternatives which he has suggested, he may rest assured that this House will give its best consideration to this question in the spirit of co-operation which my Honourable friend so ardently desires. He made a reference to the late lamented Democratic Party and expressed his belief that he did not see in the present Assembly that spirit of co-operation which he got in the last Assembly. Sir, I will at once say that I plead guilty to that charge. I have no hesitation in saying that if co-operation means wholesale acceptance of proposals placed by the Government before this House, without any consideration and solely with a view to facilitate the schemes of Government without any thought as to the wishes, aspirations and sentiments of the people, my Honourable friend may rest assured that he will not have that co-operation. But I would ask my Honourable friend at the same time whether he has any ground for complaint, seeing that at least in two important matters, namely, the Steel (Protection) Bill and the separation of Railway Finance, we have shown very considerable co-operation with the Government. I think therefore nothing will be gained by constantly telling us that we are not co-operating with the Government. I trust that if co-operation means that active association of both parts of this House in evolving any scheme, either of finance or legislation or administration, he may rest assured—I say with great diffidence also of my Swarajist friends—that we also shall not at all hesitate to co-operate with the Government.

Having said so much on this.... (Mr. V. J. Patel : " Speak for yourself.") My Honourable friend says that I should speak for myself. I never spoke for him or his party. But I venture to think that I see now and then proposals emanating even from my friend, Mr. Patel, constructive proposals for the modification of legislation and also on other matters which show that they desire to do their work in this Assembly in the same spirit in which I am doing mine. I do not wish to develop any quarrel with my Honourable friends on this side. I wish to state that we are not anxious, Members on this side are not anxious, to put money into the pockets of the millowners of Bombay, Cawnpore or Calcutta (An Honourable Member : " Or of Madras.") Or of Madras, certainly. My Honourable friends also recognise that there are very few mills in Madras and very little of the profits will get into our hands, at any rate. If after abolishing the cotton excise duty it becomes necessary to formulate proposals involving financial burdens, we are perfectly willing to look at those proposals of the Honourable the Finance Member. So far as I am concerned, I am willing, speaking for myself, to examine his proposals. The only way in which he could make up the revenue would be by some kind of additional burden on all those who are making profits in industrial concerns. I do not wish to go further than that. We are not anxious to line the pockets of millowners and, if Government can bring forward proposals which, while unconditionally accepting the abolition of cotton excise duty, would if necessary make up the revenue thus lost by further taxing the profits of all industrial concerns, we may be willing to look at them.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett** (Finance Member) : Sir, I have been invited so often to-day to make proposals for increase of taxation that I really hardly know where I am. I remember only two days ago the very thought that a Committee to inquire into our existing taxation might possibly make proposals for new taxation so frightened this House that they proceeded to vote that the Committee be dissolved. It is true that they went on to say that another one with much the same terms be established in its place, but they voted that it be dissolved for fear that it might suggest increased taxation. Now, from all quarters of the House I am being asked to invent new taxation to take the place of the cotton excise duty. (*An Honourable Member* : "Effect more retrenchment.") I will come later to your retrenchment. Now, the cotton excise duty is a tax for the history of which I have not a word to say. It was, I think, a tax bad in its origins, bad in its incidence when first imposed, and, when the Taxation Committee comes to inquire into it now, I think it will very likely say that it is a tax which even now is not altogether desirable in its operation. It is true that it is less undesirable now than it originally was because it has now no true protective effect as regards Lancashire as it had when introduced. With the duty at 11 per cent. for imports, an excise duty of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on cotton goods produced in this country does not add to the cost of cotton cloth for the poor people. That is to say, it does not take money out of the poor people. It is import duty that does that. It merely takes money out of the pockets of the— I will not say Bombay millowners, but I will say the millowners who are represented by the Honourable Member who moved this motion. The effect of my Honourable friend the Commerce Member's speech on the Honourable Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was very interesting. He dropped all pretence that this was anything but politics. He said it was a tax that was bad in its origin and that it was tainted money and without any question of rupees, annas and pies the Government of India ought to abolish it. I should not be averse to being the Finance Member in whose period this historic wrong was righted. But that is not to say that the present is necessarily the moment at which it can or ought to be done. The effect on the Honourable Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was to make him even more vigorous in his method of speech than usual. He thumped the table, he spoke of tainted money, he said that it would be a most wicked and selfish step if we did not now abolish this duty. He was very indignant because it was suggested that the Bombay millowners were profiteers. But he was warned by the Chair that it was undesirable to enter into competition with others in the matter of profiteering. But let me grant all his arguments that there are other profiteers. What do they prove ? They prove that business men are business men and that if this duty is abolished every penny of it will go into the pockets of the millowners.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas** : That has to be proved.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett** : If none of them are the angels with wings I cannot see, it is quite sure that none of them will, if they can help it, allow any of this to go anywhere except into their own pockets, with the one possible exception that they may allow a little of it to go a little further on political grounds.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas** : Have they no competition at all amongst millowners in India ?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett** : That is to say, if the jute millowners are all that Sir Purshotamdas claims they are. Sir Charles

Innes has clearly made out his case that the abolition of this duty at the present moment means the taking away of 1½ crores from the Finance Member—the angel on this side of the House to give it to the angels who represent Bombay.....

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** Will it go only to Bombay ? Will it not go to Cawnpore ?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett :** ...and it will still be paid by the agricultural labourer whom Mr. Ramachandra Rao represents. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Ramachandra Rao have accused us of trying to put them in a dilemma—between provincial contributions and this duty. Sir, it is not we who are putting them in a dilemma. The dilemma is there. It cannot be avoided. This Assembly has a responsibility in the matter, and it is a responsibility which it cannot avoid. Mr. Neogy said that it was for me, not for him, to provide a substitute. It is undoubtedly for the Government of India, when the time comes, to suggest a substitute if necessary. But it will be the responsibility of the Assembly to choose. I remember that when we were discussing provincial contributions just before last year's Budget, the House eventually decided that rather than recommend an immediate reduction in provincial contributions it would prefer to adjourn the discussion because it was afraid that if it recommended an immediate reduction of provincial contributions, it might encourage the Finance Member to suggest additional taxation for the purpose of meeting them. But now the House is apparently prepared to recommend the immediate abolition of the cotton excise duty and at the same time to recommend that we should find some substituted taxation. It will not be in order for me at the present moment to go fully into the question of substituted taxation. I have heard several suggestions. Mr. Shamlal Nehru interjected a suggestion that we should increase the import duty on cotton. Since that would simply increase the charge on the agricultural labourer and put additional sums into the pockets of the millowners, I am sure that I have only to put the suggestion to be rejected. Another suggestion that I have heard put forward—it is quite an interesting one—is that we should impose some special duty—a sort of corporation profits tax—that is what it comes to—on the profits of all companies registered in India. We are not in a position to-day to discuss the merits or demerits of that suggestion, but I note it. One of the advantages of the cotton excise duty is that it is a comparatively certain and stable revenue which does not vary with the profits.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai :** It varies with the price of cotton.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett :** It does not vary to the extent a duty on profits varies.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai :** It varied from Rs. 50 lakhs in 1917 to Rs. 2 crores and odd lakhs in 1921-22.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett :** I wish the Honourable Member would retain his interesting remarks for his later opportunity of speaking. It does not vary in the way that duty on profits varies. Another alternative which might be considered would be a small annual tax on the capital of all companies in India. I shall be interested to hear how these suggestions are received by the country at large. But another suggestion is made that it be met by retrenchment, and I do want to put before the House the position therein. As I explained in my budget speech this year we are faced with an initial deficit of 2 crores of rupees at the beginning

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of next year on the basis of this year's figures—I do not say that we shall not be able to avoid it, but we shall have to find an increase of revenue or a reduction of expenditure to the extent of two crores before we balance at all next year. In addition, we have got something like over 9 crores of rupees of provincial contributions, that is to say, we have got to retrench to the extent of 11 crores or we have to get out of improved revenue from our existing taxes an extra 11 crores before the Government of India budget balances without the provincial contributions. In those circumstances, it is quite obvious that this question whether the excise duty has to go first or the provincial contributions are to be begun to be reduced first comes before us in the form of a dilemma which we cannot avoid. There is no hope next year, or the year after next, or the year after that that we shall be in a position both to get rid of the cotton excise duty and to give up the provincial contributions. There must be a choice between them unless as I say we are to take some additional taxation from some other quarter to make good the cotton excise duty. It is not a dilemma that the Government are cleverly putting before the House. It is a dilemma that exists and cannot be avoided. When we do come to consider that, I think the House will have to consider whether we are justified in making this moral gesture the value of which I do not underestimate of getting rid of a tax which historically had an origin which is not defended but which has now probably comparatively little to be said against it—unless you were simultaneously, as my Honourable friend, Sir Charles Innes said, to reduce the import duty so that the poor man would really get the benefit of the relief—we shall have to consider whether that tax which is an old tax should be got rid of simply on political grounds because it is tainted money which I noticed Sir Purshotamdas did not in the least object going into the pockets of the millowners.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas :** It ceases to be tainted money then.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett :** If I find a rupee on the road, it goes into my pocket even if it has a nasty spot and I do not regard it as tainted, but I should be inclined to warn a friend if he took it that it might be carrying disease. Sir, all I want to put before the House is this. We are to-day asked to pass a very definite Resolution recommending that early steps be taken to abolish the cotton excise duty. We are not in a position to-day to consider it really on its merits other than its political merits. We are not in a position to-day to consider on its merits whether it is the first tax that in the interests of the people of India ought to be got rid of, or whether it is desirable to get rid of it and put another tax in its place. We are not in possession of the facts, nor would it be in order to discuss that sort of question in full here. We are asked therefore on political considerations to tie ourselves to a point of view which it is impossible for us to discuss fully and which I do urge this House to consider may not be in the interests of the people of India as a whole. We were discussing only two days ago the economic condition of the masses. Is this crore and a half more likely to help the economic condition of the masses if it is put into the pockets of these millowners who will not regard it as tainted, or if it is devoted to the reduction of the provincial contributions and improving the education of the masses? These questions are all before us and we cannot get rid of them by saying that we are voting solely on political grounds. I do not for a moment contend that on political grounds there is not a great deal to be said for this Resolution, but I do say that there are

many other grounds on which it ought to be considered, and neither I, as the Finance Member, nor you as the Assembly, are justified in making a moral gesture at the possible expense of the people of India as a whole even if it is for the benefit of particular individuals.

**Colonel J. D. Crawford** (Bengal : European) : I wish to emphasise one point which has been brought forward by the Government benches and Government benches alone. I have listened to the fierce, I might say almost indecent, advocacy of the millowners in this House for the removal of the cotton excise duty. I will admit.....

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** : I rise to a point of order. Is the Honourable Member entitled to use the word " indecent " ?

**Mr. President** : Did the Honourable Member use that word ?

**Colonel J. D. Crawford** : Yes.

**Mr. President** : Then the Honourable Member must withdraw that word.

**Colonel J. D. Crawford** : I beg to withdraw the word " indecent " and to substitute the word " improper ". I will admit the desirability of the withdrawal of this excise duty on cotton on political grounds, but I have one suggestion to make and that is that the money thereby obtained shall go to the people. I listened to the brilliant speech which has come from the Commerce Member and I waited longing to hear the representatives of the people get up and insist that this money shall go into the pockets of the people of India. Not one word has been said. On the last occasion when the debate on the Taxation Committee took place my friend Mr. Patel told us of the horrible condition of millions of Indian masses in this country, conditions which we all know, and which we all realise but when the case comes to be put to the practical test he is not ready to stand up in this House and demand that this money instead of going into the pockets of the mill-owners shall go to the masses. I trust Mr. Chaman Lall will stand up in this House and repeat the facts which he told us on this point, about the deplorable condition of the workers in the Indian cotton mills which are Indian-owned. I trust Mr. Joshi who is the only Indian Member, so far as I know, who has realised the necessity of getting this money for the benefit of the people in India will also rise and support me in saying that the excise duty on cotton will be removed only if measures can be found to place it in the hands of the people. The Honourable Mr. Neogy said that the popular voice of India was behind him in demanding the repeal of the cotton excise duty. I contend that there is a different tax the repeal of which will probably receive more support in the country than even the repeal of the cotton excise duty. That is the repeal of the income-tax. This is not a debating society. We are here to provide revenue for the administrative work of the country, and if we suggest the withdrawal of one tax it is up to us to say how we intend that the revenues of the country shall be made up. The question is one really of general expediency. The injustice, it will be admitted, which was done has been made good by the increase of the import duty on cotton and we are now asked to consider the question of its withdrawal quite apart from the question of other taxation which is placed on the country. I hold that it is not a separate question. If we consider the withdrawal of this duty, we must consider what other duties have a right also to be withdrawn, and I say that some

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of those duties which have recently been put on with a view to balance the budget are those which call for primary consideration. I feel also, that one of the great needs of the country to-day is the reduction of provincial contributions, so that we may have money for the education of the masses and for the improvement of the conditions under which they live. These are questions which to my mind come before the withdrawal of this particular duty on political grounds. I stand here somewhat disgusted, that the so-called representatives of the masses have not urged, as the Government Members have urged, that if this duty is repealed the benefit shall go, not into the pockets of the millowners, but into the pockets of the people. On these grounds I beg to oppose the Resolution.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : One of the punishments to which Indian Members of this House are subjected, amongst others, is to listen to discourses on their duties and to receive chastisement for sins for which they are not responsible. Members of Government and some other Honourable Members get up to tell us what our duties are, and to remind us that we are not doing our duty here. Well, Sir, I wish that every one who has spoken in this debate and every Member of this House would pin himself to the consideration of only one question which arises in this debate, namely, is the repeal of the cotton excise duty which is recommended by the Resolution for the good of the people, or is it not ? I pin my faith to that proposition. If it can be established in fair argument that the repeal of the cotton excise duty is not demanded in the interests of the people I will oppose it with all my heart in spite of all that my capitalist and millowner friends urge. But I ask that the facts should be looked straight in the face. There are two aspects of the question : one is the political aspect, the other the economic aspect. The political aspect has been dwelt upon a little too much and I do not mean to emphasise it beyond saying that there never was a duty imposed on any people which had less justification and which could be more strongly condemned than this cotton excise duty. I do not wish to dwell any further upon that. I wish to dwell upon the economic aspect of the case, and that embraces two points ; one is the aspect of the development of national industries : the second is the incidence of the tax upon the consumer. First, so far as the development of industries is concerned, every sensible man, every school boy, will recognize that, after food, the people required clothing. The people of India may do without machinery, they can do without a good many other things, but they cannot do without clothing. Clothing is needed and will be needed, it was needed in the past, it will be needed in the future. Cotton is grown in plenty in the country. The people ought to utilise all the cotton to clothe themselves. They are not able to do so. The cotton industry in India is not the property or the perquisite of the millowners alone ; the millowners are a part of the people, they work for the people, they belong to the people. Unaided by the Government of the country, unassisted in the matter of finance, unhelped in the matter of protective duties, placed under a most unjustifiable burden by reason of the cotton excise duty, the millowners of India, the Indian millowner has struggled to build up the cotton industry to what it is, which has extorted the admiration of the Member for Commerce. Has he done so for his own selfish ends only ? He has not. He is a part of the community ; he belongs to the people ; he has worked for the good of this

country, for the good of the people ; and because he has done so he is able to supply a considerable quantity of cloth to the people. That is his greatest reward, that is his greatest satisfaction, and to enable him to produce more, it is the duty of Government and of the public to render him all the assistance which the people and Government honestly can. Instead of that assistance being given him, how has he been treated ? He has been burdened with an impost for which there can be no justification, for which there can be no parallel found in any civilised country, except when you go back to England in the old days of Pitt, when there was such an excise duty proposed for a short time only to be removed as soon as the people raised a clamour against it. That is the position. Economically, then, from the national point of view, it is of importance that this industry should grow ; and how is this industry situated now ? This impost was not placed upon the Indian cotton industry in order to counter-veil against the duty imposed upon the cotton imports of England. The Honourable the Member for Commerce has told you that the import duty has now been raised to 11 per cent.—the import duty on cotton—and that this cotton excise duty is therefore less undesirable, the Finance Member also told us—than it used to be. He has looked at the question in an entirely misleading manner. I regret to think that the remarks of the Honourable the Finance Member also are misleading in that connection. What is the truth, Sir ? Was this duty imposed because the cotton piece-goods of Lancashire were in danger of competition by Indian mills ? Did Indian cotton piece-goods really compete at the time with the cotton piece-goods of Lancashire ? It has been admitted throughout that they did not. This duty was imposed simply at the bidding of Lancashire, because Lancashire could not bear to think that the Indian cotton industry should be allowed to grow healthily under the ægis of the Government of India. I challenge anybody to say that there was any justification for this duty being put on. Times out of number Englishmen, very honourable Englishmen, some of them occupying higher positions than many of those who advocate the retention of this duty, have said that this duty was imposed upon the Indian cotton industry merely at the dictation of Lancashire, that the fact constituted a most shameful piece of history in the annals of British administration. Therefore, Sir, the raising of the import duty to 11 per cent. does not affect the question before us. The question is, was there any justification for putting this 3½ per cent. duty on the cotton piece-goods produced in India ? If there was no justification for it initially, how is its retention justified now ? Not in order to benefit the Indian cotton industry, not in order to place the Indian cotton industry at a less disadvantage have you raised the duty on piece-goods imported, but because of the revenue necessities of the Government. Therefore, this enhancement of the import duty does not affect the question.

Now, the second aspect, the aspect which is of national importance is this, that if the mill industry grows it will benefit the people. Could there be anything more melancholy to imagine than that the people should have been reduced to the greatest hardships and privations during the period of the war because the country could not produce sufficient cloth for them ? Can there be a greater shame for the Government of this country and for the people than that huge quantities of our cotton should be taken away by Japan to be manufactured in Japan and to be brought back here ? Is it not the duty of the Government and the people to combine to develop this cotton industry, so that every single ounce of cotton produced in the country could be manufactured in

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the country to meet the demands of the people of this country in the first instance? Is it not the duty of the Government even to see that more cotton should be imported from outside, if need be, in order to supply Indian made cloth to the people of this country? That is the direction in which the Government and the people ought to work, and that demands that the cotton industry should be helped, that this unjust and unjustifiable burden should be taken off its shoulders, that it should be developed and assisted in every way in order that it may grow until all the cotton produced in the country is utilised by it.

Now, I come to the second question, the question of the burden on the consumer. Is the consumer going to be benefited by reason of this duty being taken off. It has been assumed in the debate by some speakers that he will not be. The Honourable Member for Commerce was asked by the Honourable Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai to quote the comparative figures of the prices of imported piece-goods and of the piece-goods produced by Indian mills during the last ten years or so. He said he left it to Mr. Kasturbhai to quote these figures. By the courtesy of my friend Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai I place these figures before the Assembly. They will show how little justification there is for the proposition which has been urged by the Honourable Member for Commerce, and the Honourable the Finance Member that the consumer will not benefit if this duty is taken off. In 1909-1910 the price of imported piece-goods was as. 2 p. 5  $\frac{3}{4}$ . The price of Indian goods as calculated from excise duty paid was as. 1 p. 11  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the difference being 6 pies. In 1910-11 the difference in favour of Indian goods was 9 pies. In 1911-12 the price of imported goods was as. 2 p. 9  $\frac{1}{4}$  and of Indian goods as. 2 p. 0  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the difference being 9  $\frac{1}{4}$  pies.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** May I interrupt the Honourable Member? Would he explain what these figures are? What is the unit of comparison and whether he has taken the prices of different kinds of cloth? I entirely fail to understand his figures.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya :** I will hand over to my friend the Government publication from which these figures are taken. He will find all the details there.

I wish to go on with the figures which I was giving to the Assembly.

Year.	Price of imported piece-goods.		Price of Indian goods.		Difference	
	As.	Ps.	As.	Ps.	As.	Ps.
1912-13	2	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1913-14	2	10 $\frac{5}{10}$	2	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	8 $\frac{5}{10}$
1914-15	2	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	1	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1915-16	2	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
1916-17	3	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1917-18	5	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
1918-19	6	11	4	6	2	5
1919-20	7	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	4	7	3	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1920-21	8	11	7	1	1	10



Now, Sir, this will show that the statement of the Honourable the Commerce Member that the prices of imported cloth determine the prices of Indian cloth is not to be accepted without a qualification. This will show that the Indian mills have not fixed their prices merely by a consideration of the prices of imported cloth. And there is another very important point which is to be borne in mind in this connection. The price of cloth has gone up and the consumption of cloth has gone down. The people of this country are unfortunately very poor. The people of this country were using 18 yards of cloth per head before the war. That consumption went down to 9 yards per head. It is now rising to something like 11 yards per head. That will show how much loss has been inflicted upon the people of this country by the rise in the prices of cloth. How is that rise to be brought down? If you keep up this duty, who will say that this duty is being paid by the millowner out of his own money. It is being put on the head of the consumer. The consumer has to pay it. When the profits are very high, it will come out of the profits of the millowner. But when the profits are not high and are normal, the duty is paid by no one except the consumer. The millowner is not so foolish as not to take this duty into account in determining the price at which he will sell his cloth. This fact has been recognised by all sensible critics whether English or Indian. I will quote only one opinion which ought to suffice in this connection. It was published in the *London Times* of the 5th March 1917. Writing on this subject the *Times* said :

“The Indian cotton excise duty has always been politically, economically and above all morally indefensible. It has made a grave breach in the moral basis of the British control of India. It was deeply resented from the outset and has remained an open sore. At the bidding of Lancashire, the Hindu peasant has had to pay more for his clothing for twenty years because, although it is made in his own country, it is subject to an excise duty.”

Every fairminded Englishman will recognise that this duty falls upon the consumer, and it is absurd for anybody to try to persuade us Indians here that the duty does not fall upon the consumer, that if it is taken off, the money saved will go into the pockets of the millowner. The millowner is a business man. If the Government of India recognised the wisdom of having a pice post-card and thereby made a large income, the millowner knows that if cloth is cheap it will find a larger market, a very much larger number of people will use it. And in normal conditions in his own interest, apart from any humanitarian or patriotic considerations, the millowner will have to sell his cloth as cheap as he can. He has so far not been able to sell it as cheap as I wish he would, because the price of cotton has gone up. But the price of cotton is going down, and I expect, that as the prices go down, the millowner of India will be able to sell cloth at cheaper rates.

Now that being so, I submit that it is not right to say that if these duties are taken off, the money will go entirely to the millowners. It must be recognised that at least a part of it will remain with the consumer; that in the long run there is a greater chance of the consumer being benefitted than the producers. If the present state of things is allowed, if you do not take off this duty, it only means that Japan will make further inroads into the markets of this country. Japan, only a few years ago, in 1919-20, sent to this country 2,000 lbs. of yarn. Now I find that the imports from Japan have risen to twelve million pounds. The Japanese imports are steadily growing.

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The late Sir Vithaldas Thackersey sounded a note of warning in his speech in the Legislative Assembly in 1922 when he said :

“ The principal competitor in the Indian market is not Lancashire. It is Japan. With their bounty-fed freights for importing raw materials both from India and America and sending out their productions in their bounty-fed boats ; with their home markets fully protected where they can sell their goods at a higher rate in order to enable them to dump goods in India and elsewhere ; all these reasons make Japan a great competitor of India.”

The quantity of imports which come at present from Japan is an index of what is likely to come in the future, if we do not help the Indian millowner to earn more money and to manufacture more yarn and cloth in this country. It is in the interests of the people therefore that the millowner should be helped and encouraged to increase his manufacturing power so that he can manufacture all the cotton that may be available in this country. It is in that way alone that you will help the people to clothe themselves with Indian-made cloth. For these reasons I strongly support the motion which is now before the House, and I hope that it will be carried unanimously with the support not only of the Indian Members but of those European Members also who look at this question from the right point of view, without any political prejudice or economic bias.

**Dr. L. K. Hyder** (Agra Division : Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I have only two comments to make on this Resolution. One refers to the question of justice and the other to that of incidence. As regards justice, I think it has been admitted that originally this cotton excise duty was a duty which ought not to have been imposed. I ask you to consider when the duty was put forward. It is now 30 years ago, and in the course of these 30 years the cotton industry in India has expanded, so that it is now in a flourishing state in spite of this impost. The industry has readjusted itself to this impost and in the cotton industry that has happened which is known to medical men as “ tolerance ” that is to say, that when a hurt is inflicted on a body, the body adjusts itself to the hurt which has been inflicted ; so that after 30 years the expansion of the cotton industry is not hindered by this impost. Further I ask you to consider this question of justice in connection with a fiscal maxim. It was a Frenchman who said that “ every old tax is good, every new tax is bad, but the new becomes good in course of time.” When you come to vote on this question I ask you to bear this fiscal maxim in mind, when you decide to vote for or against the Resolution.

As regards the question of incidence, it is plain that the man who pays is the consumer, so that the question resolves itself into this, whether it is right that the money that now goes to the collective purse, to the purse of the State, should go to the purses of a few individuals. It is not the question whether the consumer will be benefitted, the only question is whether this transference of money from pockets which are very narrow, which are very empty, which are torn, whether this transference of money should take this direction, from the collective purse to the purse of a few individuals. I think if the issue is made clear like this, perhaps the Members of this Assembly will have no hesitation in coming to the decision that on the whole it is better that what is obtained from the people should be spent for the benefit of the people (*An Honourable Member* : “ Is it ” ?). If you decide it the other way, it will come to this, that you are transferring money from relatively poor people to relatively rich people. I have no more comments to make on this, Sir.

**Mr. H. G. Cocke** (Bombay : European) : Sir, I desire to support this Resolution and I do so mainly on two grounds. I do not want to dwell on the historical aspect of this question, which has taken quite sufficient time to-day, but I think it has been admitted from the benches opposite that the day that this duty becomes expunged from the Statute-book will be a very good day for everybody. It will deprive this House of a very interesting subject for debate, no doubt, but on every other ground I think we shall all be pleased to see the end of this tax owing to its objectionable associations. But I oppose the tax mainly on the ground that it is a tax on production, and a tax on production of an article which is in use by the masses. We have been told, and it is not disputed, that the cloth which our mills manufacture is the cloth which is mainly used by the masses, and therefore on that ground I say a duty on the production of an article of this sort is a bad tax. If you have got to have an excise duty on production, then I think it should be at a smaller percentage and it should be much more widely spread. It would not be difficult to name other industries in India on which a tax on production could be imposed, and if the rate were more moderate it would obviously make it easier to deal with and easier to collect.

I wish also to say a word about the argument which has been used from the Government benches, that if this tax is removed to-morrow, the whole amount will go into the pockets of the millowners. That may be very good as an election cry, but I do not think it is a sound argument to put forward in this House. It is obvious that, if at the present time when your mills are making a loss, you take off this duty, that will in the first place remove that loss, and we will assume no profit and no loss will be the result. To a mill to-day which is not making a loss and not making a profit, but is just paying its way, it is obvious again, that if you take off this duty, you will be allowing a small profit to be made and possibly a small dividend to be paid. In that sense the amount goes into the pockets of the shareholders, or it may go to the reserve, which is much the same thing, although the shareholder may not perhaps think so. But take the case of a mill which makes half an anna per lb. margin on its cloth. After all mills deal in margins, for they have got to work for a margin between the sale price and the production price. They have got to try and keep machinery running at full swing and they have got to dispose of their total production. If they are now making a margin of half an anna a pound, it is obvious that, if you take this duty off, you are going to give them a bigger margin, and the result of this must be a tendency to a reduction of prices. They are going to be able to compete with the Japanese article more easily, and that is going to help to keep the mills further to work, and it is going to enable them gradually to reduce the price of their cloth. I do not say that if you take this duty off, the immediate effect will be that the consumer will get the benefit of the whole of it. But I do say there must be a tendency in that direction and that must be the result in the end. The question of Japanese competition has been referred to, and the Honourable Sir Charles Innes, I was glad to hear, stated that it was being watched very carefully. I am very glad of that because it is certainly a menace and unfortunately the competition between the Indian mill and the Japanese mill does not seem a very fair competition. In a speech made by Captain Sassoon in Bombay a short time back he spoke as follows :

“ When we realise that Japan has 48 lakhs spindles against our 79 lakhs and yet consumes the same amount of cotton as we do, roughly 2 million bales, I must point out that they work 22 hours a day, in two shifts, whereas our Indian mills are

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restricted to a working week of 60 hours, and I might here mention that though Japan has agreed to ratify the Washington hours of labour conditions, they have not to date done so, but keep on putting the world off with an excuse. Besides the advantage of these long hours, they have been using cheap female and child labour against our male labour, they have a high protective tariff which enables them to dump their surplus into India at a low rate, backed up as they are with favourable freight rates through the subsidies paid to Japanese lines."

The Japanese competition is a very important factor at the present time and I am glad to know that it will be watched.

If this duty is removed it will, it is true, give the Indian mills a greater protection than they now have over the imported article, but I am not quite sure, in view of those remarks of Captain Sassoon, whether it is not desirable that that additional protection should not be given, certainly so far as Japan is concerned.

Sir, you have ruled that we must not go into other questions of taxation to any extent, but the matter has been debated to some extent and the Finance Member this morning suggested that if we were going to support the abolition of this tax we should be prepared to suggest substitutes. He has named this afternoon two or three. He did not refer, however, to any regrading of the income-tax. It seems to me if the masses of this country are so poor that they cannot stand a very small extra charge for their salt, and so on, then we shall have to leave the masses alone. This question will be subjected to the investigation of the Taxation Inquiry Committee, but if that is proved to be the case, that we cannot tax the masses, we shall have to consider the question of taxing the smaller incomes. I refer to incomes, we will say, of Rs. 500 upwards, because it is obvious that additional super-tax in this country is going to yield you very little. The number of incomes liable to super-tax is very limited, and you have got a great mass of humanity earning very little. We are told you cannot tax them at all. We are told they cannot bear the salt tax, which is one remedy for the abolition of this excise duty, and therefore to my mind you will have to consider the question of regrading the income-tax. At present no income under Rs. 2,000 pays any tax and the tax on an income of Rs. 3,000 only pays Rs. 78 or Rs. 6|8 a month. That is another method of taxation. I know the income-tax is as unpopular as any other tax but you have got to get money somewhere. We must have this cotton duty removed and we must have the provincial contributions attended to at the earliest possible time. I am not going so far as to suggest that the removal of this duty necessarily comes in the forefront of everything else. That is a matter for the Taxation Inquiry Committee and a matter for this House; and it may be that in view of the fact that the import duties have gone up and the excise duty has remained the same, it will be desirable in the interests of the country generally to keep the excise duty at the figure at which it now stands for another year or two; but that does not prevent me from supporting this Resolution to the effect that it should be removed,—that the Governor General should take early steps to abolish it; and I hope it will be possible for him to take those early steps and at the same time take steps to remove or alleviate the provincial contributions by a general amendment of the taxation system of the country.

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer** : I move that the question be now put.

The motion was adopted.

**Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai** (Ahmedabad Millowners' Association : Indian Commerce) : Sir, Mr. Neogy's amendment desires me to drop the

latter portion of my Resolution dealing with the protection to the textile industry. Although I would much desire an investigation by the Tariff Board to devise some means to afford protection to the industry against the inroads of Japan, which is selling yarn and piece-goods in the Indian market below the cost to the Indian manufacturer, I accept Mr. Neogy's amendment rather than allow Government to use the Tariff Board as a peg whereon they can hang the considered decision of this House and defer action as they have done in the case of bounty-fed African coal.

Sir, it has been a painful surprise to me to listen to the defence which the Honourable Sir Charles Innes has ventured to put forward in favour of the cotton excise impost. The tax had not so far been defended on merits by any responsible official from Sir James Westland to our ex-Finance Member, Sir Malcolm Hailey. It has been condemned by Prime Ministers in England, representing three different schools of political thought, namely, Conservatives, Liberals and Labourites, the last among them being our present Premier. Viceroy after Viceroy from the time of Lord Curzon onwards have also condemned it; and it would have been more consistent if the Honourable Commerce Member had cared not to go back on the considered opinions of all these personages. In fact when he laboured the point of showing the percentage supply of yarn and cloth by Indian mills to this country, I could not persuade myself to the thought that I was listening to the Honourable Member in charge of the commerce of this country whose sole interest, I believe, should be the advancement of the commerce and, if I may say so, of the industries of India and India alone.

Sir Charles tried to prove that Indian cotton mills supply about 90 per cent. of the local demand for yarn and have little to fear from foreign competition in this line. But in arriving at that percentage, he has conveniently forgotten to mention that the cloth produced by Indian mills and hand-loom from this 90 per cent. of yarn represents only about 60 per cent. of the country's normal requirements. Sir Charles Innes has also referred to the profits of cotton mills. It would have been more illuminating if he had given us comparative figures of profits made by the textile industry elsewhere, e.g., England, America, Japan and so on, during the same period. I think the House would have been glad also to have figures of profits made by jute, woollen and such other concerns in India during the war time. I ask, Sir, have cotton mill profits been higher than those of jute, which declared 130 per cent. dividends during the war period? I venture to submit that taking a number of normal years the profits of Indian cotton mills have not been more than 10 per cent.

The House is familiar with the position of the last and current years in which cotton mills were made to pay the excise impost on cloth production in spite of losses. Without dilating further upon this point, I need only remind the Honourable Commerce Member of what his Colleague, Sir Malcolm Hailey, said in 1922. He observed :

"We realise that our conduct in regard to the Bombay and Ahmedabad mill-owners must be one of caution..... Allusion has been made to the profits made by them.....but they have earned these in fair trade and no one need grudge a business man the profits earned by industry and enterprise. We least of all grudge them."

I may also be permitted to say, Sir, that while the profits earned by the Indian textile industry have returned to the community in one form or another, those which our foreign competitors made were simply a drain

[Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai.]

on India. The phenomenal progress of the industry was also referred to. Percentages in such cases are misleading and in spite of all Sir Charles Innes may say the fact remains that while during the last 28 years in which the industry has been burdened with an excise impost, the increase of spindles in America has been 2 crores and 74 lakhs, in England one crore and 11 lakhs, in Japan 43 lakhs, (working night and day, i.e., 86 lakhs), in India it has been 41 lakhs only. In looms also we continue to remain in the background in the same manner. America increased its looms by 3 lakhs 82 thousand, England by 1 lakh 88 thousand, Japan by 58 thousand, (working night and day, i.e., 1 lakh and 16 thousand), while this country could only add 1 lakh and 9 thousand to its looms in all these years. I leave it to the House to judge for itself whether the progress could be at all deemed satisfactory when we consider the resources and the needs of this vast country.

It was suggested that the continuance of the duty is not a grievance as it is low and that in 1922 nobody asked for its repeal. It is sufficient to quote Sir Malcolm Hailey again who said during the course of the discussion on the Finance Bill in 1922 :

“ Both Lord Hardinge and Sir William Meyer gave expression to the sentiment which I still feel and my colleagues, I am sure, still feel that the cotton excise duty in itself *qua* countervailing duty was undesirable and that it ought ultimately to be removed.”

Where was the necessity of this apologia by the Finance Member if there was no grievance against the duty ? The Government desired to raise it and had ultimately to keep it at its original level, not because people did not want its repeal then, but merely as a compromise for the time being, i.e., pending the considered verdict of the Fiscal Commission which was then sitting but which has now condemned the tax unequivocally.

Sir, we are told that, before the Fiscal Commission, the Bombay Millowners' representatives did not ask for protection to cotton textile mills. As stated in my speech, the present difference of 7½ per cent. in the import and excise duty is illusory. We have to pay duties on machinery, stores and in some cases on yarns from which the foreigner is exempt. I find, moreover, that the Bombay Millowners' Association in its written statement emphatically asked for protection and added that, while adhering to that policy, it did not approve in theory or practice of the imposition of excise duty in the case of any article with the possible exception of spirituous liquors. The millowners' point of view has been clearly expressed in the latter half of paragraph 168 of the Fiscal Commission Report and by the majority of the Indian members of the Commission in paragraph 20 of their able minute. The recent representation of the Bombay Millowners is also in the hands of Government, which shows what their present views are. I may add that Mr. J. A. Wadia, who is an authority on this subject, urged in his last year's review of the cotton mill industry for a protective duty of 22 per cent. on foreign cotton goods. This is not more than what Japan and America have done and India may well take a chapter from their books in this case.

It has been said, Sir, that cloth prices in India are regulated by the foreign imports. The statement given by the Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya should prove to the satisfaction of the House that the prices of Indian piece-goods are not controlled by imported piece-goods but by the internal competition.

Sir Charles Innes has tried to make much of the expression "financial considerations" used by Lord Hardinge while assuring this country of the Government's intention to repeal the cotton excise impost. This assurance, Sir, bears a strange, yet close, analogy to a similar assurance given in 1877 by Lord George Hamilton, Under Secretary of State for India, and the Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury, to the textile manufacturers of Manchester to repeal the import duty on cotton goods as soon as the *financial condition of India would permit*. That assurance was given in spite of the unanimous and considered verdict of the Fiscal Commission of 1874, which was, that the low import duties then prevailing on cotton yarn and piece-goods were fair and equitable and that the contentions of Manchester regarding their supposed protective nature were without foundation.

Lord Northbrook's Government was also opposed to its repeal. But none of them were listened to and the assurance to Manchester was given effect to partially in the next year, 1878, which was one of adverse finance and fully in 1882, again in the face of a deficit budget and famine.

But what is the fate of the assurance given to the Indian textile industry in 1916? It hangs fire on one ground or another. The year 1924 opened with a balanced budget accompanied on the other hand by widespread depression and consequent unemployment in the textile industry. If I read the revenue figures correctly for the current year, I feel that Government may be expected to earn at least about 3 crores of rupees over their estimates in customs duties alone. In fact, the last five months returns are already Rs. 3 crores above that of the previous year and the highest so far recorded in the same period at any other time. Railways are expected to bring in at least a crore of rupees more than the budget estimates. Exchange, which has been calculated at 1s. 4½d. for the purposes of the budget has remained higher by about three-fourths of a penny in the year so far; and to my mind, there are no signs of its going down. This may give an extra crore or two to the Government. Revenue estimates in respect of other heads are not also wide for the mark, and I have no hesitation in saying that if Government will it, the time is opportune to redeem their solemn pledges to the indigenous industry. I contend, Sir, that even if no surplus were available and if revenue is required, there can be no justification for discriminating the cotton textile industry from others such as jute, silk and woollen mills for the imposition of an excise tax. Why do not Government spread the burden equally over all industries if revenue is indispensable?

The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett referred to the profit tax and said it was not desirable as it varies. Sir, the variation in cotton excise duties has been from Rs. 50 lakhs in the year 1917 to Rs. 2 crores and odd lakhs in the year 1921-22.

Sir, the cotton excise impost has been resented in this country from its inception; the whole country excluding a Chamber or two interested in the import trade is at one in asking for its immediate repeal to-day, and before I close I may be permitted to sound a note of warning that India would not placidly submit to step-motherly treatment in the matter of this tax any longer. She is not going to accept the unhappy position that assurances given to English manufacturers alone are enforceable while those given to Indians are a mere scrap of paper. It is up to this House, Sir, to see that the indigenous manufacturer is not denied his natural and just rights in his own native land.

**The Honourable Sir Charles Innes :** Sir, I do not propose to keep the House very long. In fact, I do not think there is any need for me to do so, because, in spite of the long debate we have had, I have not been able to discover that my arguments have been seriously challenged by any one. Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai has accused me of grudging the mill-owners their profits during the war. Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai had no right to make that statement at all. What is the history of this matter ? In his opening speech Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai stated that in regard to pledges, official memory was short. He has just now stated that we regard these pledges as a scrap of paper. I had to take up that point, and in order to meet it, I compared on the one hand our deficit budgets and on the other hand the profits made by the millowners during the war. I never said that I grudged them those profits and I do not grudge them those profits for a moment. But if the millowners and their representatives in this House make statements of that kind, they must not be surprised if these profits of theirs are brought out into the light. He seemed to me to be unduly sensitive about it.

While I am on this matter I should like to make an apology to my friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. He accused me of referring all through my speech primarily to the Bombay millowners. I am afraid I did and the reason why I did so was this. I regard the Bombay Millowners' Association as the Association which is entitled to speak with authority for the whole of the cotton industry in India, and when I referred to the Bombay millowners I hope, Sir, the House will recognise that I was referring in short terms to the Bombay Millowners' Association which as I say is the recognised authority on all matters connected with the cotton mill industry. Let us get back to this matter. I have been accused of having tried to place the House in a dilemma. I assure the House that nothing was further from my thought. As the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett has pointed out, we did not create the dilemma, the dilemma is there. It has been suggested that this tax is to be kept on for the benefit of Lancashire. Surely, the House must realise that a statement of that kind is absolutely untrue. We have a measure of fiscal autonomy in India. That fact is proved by the Steel (Protection) Act which we passed last July, and the House may take it from me that, when this question does come to be considered, if this House and the Government of India arrive at an agreement the Secretary of State will not interfere nor will Lancashire. The whole question will be decided, and must be decided, solely with reference to the interests of India. That is why I ventured to bring out in my speech the economic aspect of this question. If the question is one merely between the Indian tax-payer and the Indian producer, surely this House and the Indian people are robust enough to look at the matter purely from the economic aspect with reference to what they consider to be the interests of India. I have no doubt that they will take into account the unhappy history of this matter. I myself, speaking personally, would be glad to see the Cotton Excise Duties Act off the Statute-book if only for the reason that then I should not have to engage in these very acrimonious debates. But if I defended the tax I defended it solely in order that when the House does come to consider the question it may consider it purely in a dispassionate manner. The Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya may talk as much as he likes, but he cannot alter economic facts, nor Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, nor Mr. Cocke. The economic fact is, and it has been brought out in the report of the Fiscal Commission,



that the price of piece-goods in India is governed mainly by the import price. That is the difficulty we shall be up against. If you take off this tax you will not reduce the price of cloth. The excise duty will still be paid but it will be paid to the millowners and not to the Government. That is a fact which will have to be borne in mind when you weigh the claims of this tax for abolition and those of provincial contributions for reduction. There is no good blinking that fact. There is no good trying to cloud the issue, trying to take this question away from the economic sphere altogether and bring it back to the political one. This House has got to stand up to its responsibilities to the people of India, and Sir, when the question does come to be decided I have no doubt but that they will. That, Sir, is all that I have to say.

**Mr. President :** The original question was :

“ That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to abolish the cotton excise duty as recommended by a majority of the Indian members on the Indian Fiscal Commission and to be pleased to direct the Tariff Board to further examine the question of protection to the Indian cotton mill industry at an early date.”

Since which an amendment has been moved :

To omit all the words after the words “ Indian Fiscal Commission ”. The question that I have to put is that that amendment be made.

The motion was adopted.

**Mr. President :** The question is that the \*Resolution, as amended, be adopted.

The motion was adopted.

#### RESOLUTION *RE* APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO INQUIRE INTO THE CAUSES OF RECURRING FLOODS.

**Mr. Bhubanananda Das** (Orissa Division : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to move the Resolution standing in the name of my friend Mr. Yusuf Imam. It runs as follows.....

**Lala Duni Chand** (Ambala Division : Non-Muhammadan) : I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Mover, Mr. Yusuf Imam, is not moving the Resolution, and in fact he is absent. He has given no authority to the Honourable Mr. Das or asked him to move the Resolution on his behalf. I pray the Honourable the President to give a ruling.

**Mr. President :** I am afraid the Honourable Member from the Punjab is speaking without his book. I have received authority from Mr. Yusuf Imam to call upon Mr. Bhubanananda Das to move his Resolution in his absence. I do not know why the Honourable Member interrupted.

**Mr. Bhubanananda Das :** Sir, the Resolution runs as follows :

“ This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that a committee of experts be immediately appointed to inquire into the causes of the recurring floods all over India and to advise the Central and Provincial Governments on the best remedies against such floods.”

Sir, I gave notice of the original Resolution in the Assembly and I am happy to find that I am now moving the same Resolution in this House and by the time I finish moving this Resolution I hope I shall get the

\* “ That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to abolish the cotton excise duty as recommended by a majority of the Indian members on the Indian Fiscal Commission.”

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support of the House in the proposition that I put forward in this Resolution. It has always been taken for granted that floods are due to providence, like epidemics, famine, etc. But floods are due mainly to human factors. Members of the Treasury Benches may not agree with me but I hope by the time I have finished I shall convince them that it is the hand of man that is responsible for these floods. In the February session of this Assembly I had the temerity to ask a question in this House which was as follows :

“ Have Government inquired into the causes of the floods which are happening in several parts of the country ?

Are Government aware of the popular belief that the ravages of the floods are due to natural waterways being blocked up by railways which have failed to provide sufficient bridges and culverts ?

Have the Government made or do they propose to make a full inquiry into the matter ? ”

Mr. Butler, the former Secretary in the Agricultural Department replied :

“ The Government of India are not aware of the popular belief referred to in the question and have no information justifying any such idea. In individual cases where a flood has been proved to be partly due to the insufficiency of waterway in the railway embankments the necessary addition waterway has been provided as early as possible.”

I am glad the Department of Meteorology was not asked to reply to these questions. The Agricultural Department is concerned with the after effects of floods. They are not concerned with the causes that bring about so many floods. I wish the former Secretary of the Agricultural Department had replied that it is the sun that is responsible for the floods, because the sun heats the water, clouds come and thereby floods are caused. But of course the Honourable Mr. Chatterjee was saved from a reply to those questions and they were thrust on the Agricultural Department. (*The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee* : “ I was not aware even of these questions.”) We on this side of the House asked a series of supplementary questions that created quite a furore in the Anglo-Indian press. Sir, none of us believe that the Government of India, spending the rainy season on the heights of Simla, can ever imagine that floods happen in the country. I know occasionally there are landslides in Simla that sweep away the poor huts inhabited perhaps by some poor member of the staff of the Secretariat. But I do not think the Treasury Bench can realize the troubles and disasters of floods. Sir, since then my very assiduous friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Sinha has tabled interpellation after interpellation quoting chapter and verse from Government reports and proving that railway and similar embankments are the reasons why there are so many recurring floods in India. At last, only this session Government had to admit that the facts were as they were stated and that railways were partially responsible for floods in India. Yet it is curious of the mentality of the Treasury Bench that to a question of Mr. Gaya Prasad Sinha in the Delhi session about the causes of floods my Honourable friend Sir Henry Monierieff Smith replied that it was a question for Local Governments to decide and it was a matter in which the Government of India had very little interest. Sir, the waterways, rivers as they are commonly known to the people of India, are the natural courses of drainage of rain water to the sea. India has many mighty rivers extending over thousands of miles, running from east to west, north to south or west to east, depending upon

the watersheds of these rivers. These waterways did shape their course taking the natural path of low level flow to the sea. In the formation of the topography of our country, as in the geological formation of land in any other country, rivers were the natural drains of surplus rain waters. There was little obstruction from man. Embankments were raised at places. But people took advantage of high-levelled lands to build their towns and hamlets centuries ago. There were few roads and those that existed had sufficient waterways. There was little obstruction to waterways and rivers flowed merrily to the sea. If floods there were, water subsided after a few days of floods.

With the advent of the British rule, not only rivers were forded, but almost all rivers and streams were banked, leading to the raising of river-beds above the surrounding lands. Modern civilisation has brought also a great hankering for roadways. (*The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee* : "Are you objecting to roads?") No, Sir. I do not object. I am showing you how floods come. India is interlaced to-day with roadways. Honourable Members who come from districts may testify to this hankering among district board and local board members to run roadways from their town to their villages. Sir, this process is going on every day and the topography of the country is intersected and interlaced into small areas, which are lakes in the rainy season and dry beds in the dry season. The irrigation works of the State, now provincial departments, added their quota to such impounding. Canal embankments where they exist, go on obstructing natural drainage of waterways of India. Besides, they tap the water from a river from a certain point, thereby diverting the course of the old natural drainage—the rivers. Rivers have flow of water only during rains and this process has raised the beds of rivers still higher above the surrounding locality and river beds are now silted up with sand and mud.

Lastly, came the Railways with their embankment, sledge hammered lines, running mostly parallel to the many waterways in India. These Railways first came to exist under the guaranteed system. Their engineers had charters from the Secretary of State or the Government of India. Little did they pay attention to the occasional complaints of the Provincial Governments or to the comforts of the children of the soil. I can quote extracts here to show that such objections had been taken by different Provincial Governments. Some of these quotations are from the District Gazetteer of Rajshahi and Dinajpur districts. Their Governments complained—it has been stated—that the floods had been due to the railway embankments of Bengal in those years. The great floods in Northern Bengal in 1922, floods in Bihar and in my own province, Orissa, in the same year, disastrous floods in South India, the Punjab, Rajputana and the United Provinces have again crystallised in men's mind that some inquiry must be made into the causes of floods. Dr. Meghnad Saha, that renowned mathematician of Bengal, instituted such an enquiry under the auspices of the Bengal Flood Relief Inquiry Committee and wrote a very precise article in the *Modern Review* of November 1922. He quoted eminent authorities, specially Dr. Bentley, the Director of Public Health of Bengal, confirming the views that railway embankments are a good deal responsible for flood disasters. After that, the Railway Board also appointed an inquiry committee and appointed Rai Bahadur Ralla Ram, retired Engineer in Chief of the Eastern Bengal Railway, to that Committee. That gentleman also submitted a report

[Mr. Bhubanananda Das.]

to the Government confirming similar views and recommending that certain waterways of railways should be expanded. Rai Bahadur Ralla Ram has also mentioned the very valuable report of Dr. Maghnad Saha and though stated that it was quoted in the appendix the Government publication department has expunged the same valuable report.

My own considered opinion on the subject is that the hand of man in erecting these embankments of railways and of canals and highways without taking into consideration the general waterways of the country is solely responsible for these ever-recurring floods, recurring disasters to millions of the teeming population of India. Epidemics, cholera, malaria come in the wake of the floods—they attack people when all their little hoard of grain has been washed away. People die like rats. Who is responsible for this great calamity, a permanently inflicted calamity on the people of India? I admit Government have made grants but what is the use of granting relief. Why not remove the causes of these floods? It was reported in the papers that in the other House there was an interesting speech made by the Member for Revenue and Agriculture in which he said that the Government of India are granting one crore of rupees to the Madras Government. The Honourable Member is reported to have stated that Government have a soul and are sympathetic. If the Government have a soul and have considered it necessary to make a grant, why should they not consider some means by which the causes of these floods may be removed. What's the use of throwing crumbs of bread to the sufferers of the floods? What's the use of famine codes and famine funds? Remove the causes of floods.

Who is responsible for this great calamity, a permanently inflicted calamity on the people of India? Not the Railway alone—I absolve my Honourable friend Mr. Hindley from the complete charge, but all classes of engineers—the road engineer, the canal engineer and the railway engineer. Sir I myself am an engineer. It is no pleasure to me to accuse my own profession. Yet I maintain, the short sightedness and lack of foresight of my profession have brought the country to a land of famine, floods and epidemics. The Chief Commissioner of Railways will tell us what a great amount of money is spent on the maintenance and replacement of Railways in India per annum. He may, if he pleases, enlighten us and every member of districts knows what money is spent on replacement and repairs of roads and canals. What about the maintenance and repairs of nature's highways—the drainage outlet of nature's surplus water. You have too long interfered, blocked and obstructed such waterways. Has the State any waterway engineer to look after proper drainage? No. Canals and roads are provincial subjects. How can you co-ordinate their work? In the United States of America great engineering works have been undertaken and in some cases completed for preventing the ravages of floods. We have no department in the Government of India for such preventions and precautions. Yet the land revenue of India is about 40 crores of rupees. Nearly 90 per cent. of the people live on the land as agriculturists and labourers. No money is spent to maintain waterways which bring the Central and Provincial Governments crores of income and which is the source of maintenance of 300 millions of people.

Your Railways only bring in a nett revenue of 5 to 6 crores to the central exchequer. You spend crores on maintenance of railways, while

you neglect maintenance of the waterways of India which bring you such a large income and is the source of maintenance of nearly 300 millions of agriculturist people of India. There is something wrong, very wrong. Let there be a committee to inquire into this. Let there be representatives of Railways, P. W. D., Irrigation, and the representatives of the agricultural classes in it. That is my submission. I hope the Government will recognise the mischief and neglect done to the people in not maintaining waterways and will accept my Resolution and take early steps to avoid famine, starvation and epidemics in India. I hope Government who pose as the *ma-bap* of the teeming millions will recognise this obligation to the teeming millions and will accept my Resolution without a murmur.

**Mr. Mahmood Schammad Sahib Bahadur** (West Coast and Nilgiris : Muhammadan) : Sir, in supporting this Resolution I shall point out how the floods are in a great measure due to railway bridges and railway and road embankments. The part of the country that is worst affected on account of the floods this year is Malabar and the adjacent districts of the West Coast, which I have the honour to represent. Now, I will explain to you with reference to the West Coast what happens during heavy rains and floods, how the railway lines are responsible for the floods. The West Coast is made up of the districts of South Kanara, North Malabar, and South Malabar. It is a narrow strip of land lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. Its breadth is from 10 miles to 50 miles. The coastal strip is a low-lying land consisting of paddy flats and cocoa gardens. There are nearly 100 short and fast running rivers and streams which traverse this low land originating from the Ghats in the east and emptying their waters in the Arabian Sea, in the west. The railway line runs along the coast from one end to the other, south to north. But as this part of the land is very low, they had to make high banks for the railway line which not only has narrowed the breadth of the rivers but has also altogether blocked all minor streams. Formerly, whenever there was excessive rain and floods, all the water used to be emptied soon through all these rivers and streams ; and if there was still more water it was overflowing and passing along the low flats by the river side also. But now the high banks prevent all that and as it is not possible for all the water to pass through the few waterways kept in the middle of the rivers, all the country round is inundated and all these catastrophes happen.

Therefore while asking this House to support this Resolution, I shall also request the Government to make some contribution to the flood relief of South India, chiefly Malabar.

**Maulvi Abul Kasem** (Bengal : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, at this fag end of the day and fag end of the session I do not like to take up the time of the House ; but I feel it my duty to impress on this House and the Government a particular matter. In the speech which introduced this Resolution made by Mr. Das, he referred to the reply given by the Government that the prevention of floods was a provincial matter, and should be dealt with by Provincial Governments. I submit, Sir, that the Provincial Governments are not in a position either to make sufficient inquiry or to take effective measures for the prevention of floods. It has been said with justice that floods are becoming too numerous these days, and when they come my countrymen suffer by the hundreds.

[Maulvi Abul Kasem.]

The Provincial Governments cannot do it because a river passes through various provinces, and the steps that have to be taken for the prevention of floods have to be taken at the catchment area and not on the banks of the river. We cannot prevent the floods by embankments on both sides ; it has to be done by control at the catchment area of all hill-fed rivers. But, Sir, the railways are to a very large extent responsible for these floods because they have waterways, culverts and bridges only where they are needed for the maintenance of the railway system, and they do not look into the condition of the other areas or of the agricultural population and see that the water passes freely. It has been clearly stated that the bed of the river has risen higher and the reason is that the flow has been obstructed by railways and by the irrigation canals that have been opened. I fully realise the importance of irrigation canals, but at the same time I think the natural channels and waterways should be maintained and should not be neglected. And, Sir, I may inform this House that, before the introduction of the Reforms, and before the Provincial Governments were entrusted with responsibilities, a big scheme of irrigation and prevention of flood was drawn up by the Government of India under the supervision of the Director General of Irrigation about the floods of the Damodar and two other big rivers in Bengal. A model was drawn up and much money, several lakhs, were spent on it, but immediately the Reforms came in, that was given up, because the Government of India said it was for the Provincial Governments to do it. The Government of Bihar and the Government of Bengal are the two Governments who are concerned with these schemes, and neither of them are taking any interest in the matter because their resources would not permit them and besides that, unless the Government of India move in the matter, the Provincial Governments can take no steps, and neither do their resources enable them to do so, and the railways are not under their control. Therefore I submit, Sir, this is a Resolution which affects the agricultural population. We have had enough of heroics and of politics ; this proposition moved by my friend is a practical proposition to benefit the agricultural population and for the national welfare of the country, and I hope the Government will treat it sympathetically and not throw it out, as they usually do others.

**Mr. Amar Nath Dutt** (Burdwan Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, coming as I do from a flooded district, namely, the district of Burdwan, I think it will not be proper for me to record a silent vote in support of the Resolution moved by my friend Mr. Bhubanananda Das. Now, Sir, what has been the effect of the floods in my district and the adjoining district ? The whole of my constituency is in the Burdwan district. If one takes the trouble to go through the districts of Burdwan and Howrah, he will see thousands of villages which have been devastated by these floods during the last 30 or 40 years. I remember in my younger days villages which used to yield harvests and where the peasantry was happy and contented, and the gentry had not to go out of their village but could maintain themselves in their own villages. Now when I pass through those devastated tracts, I find solitary houses left uninhabited by the people, and a few fields only here and there cultivated. This has been all due to the railway embankment by which the river Damodar has caused the right bank of the river to be devastated. So I think it is high time an inquiry was made and a committee appointed to investigate.

**Kumar Ganganand Sinha** (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Santhal Parganas : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I would first support the Resolution and then briefly refer to my amendments as apparently they are of an explanatory character. Sir, it has been said in this House times out of number by almost every speaker who has preceded me that for the last few years we have noticed that floods are a matter of common occurrence. A heavy monsoon is always attended by floods in some part of the country or other. Look back upon the past three years. In the first year we had floods in Bengal, in the next we had heavy floods in Bihar, and yet in the third, this year, we have had very very heavy floods in Madras, not to speak of small areas all over the country that are visited by floods almost every season unless it happens to be a very dry one. Speaking for my own constituency, Sir, I must enlighten the House that a large part of the country drained by the Kosi and the Ganges is year after year suffering from floods for the last seven years. Other gentlemen who have preceded me have said that such is the case in their part of the country too, and I am sure those who will follow me will also bear testimony to this very fact by citing the example of their own part of the country ; and if all this information is put together I feel sure that it will go a great way to substantiate the urgency and the necessity of the adoption of the motion before the House.

Now, Sir, I need not tell the House what these floods mean to the country. Not only do untold miseries attend when floods visit the country but also when they go away they are followed by famine and pestilence, and further they are followed by financial embarrassment of the sufferers whom it takes years to regain their normal way of life which they lose by floods. Now, Sir, the Government gives them relief at the time of distress. I do not blame them for that ; but I must say that they do very little to mitigate the people's sufferings. They do very little to prevent the recurrence of these floods. The Central Government shift the burden on the Provincial Government and the Provincial Governments say they have no means to do anything. Here is my friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Sinha whose voluminous questions on floods are printed in the pages of the proceedings of this Assembly, and if you look at the replies given to him you will find that he has very often been referred back to the Bihar and Orissa Government. And here is the authoritative administrative account of the Bihar and Orissa Government entitled " Bihar and Orissa in 1923 ". I crave the indulgence of the House while I read a passage from this book which is pertinent to the question. At page 33 in the paragraph dealing with the effects of embankments on floods, it says :

" The problem, however, is one which it is not possible to solve completely by any local action. The only method by which floods can be completely controlled is by constructing retarding basins at a sufficient number of places in the upper reaches of rivers to enable a flood to be spread over a long period, which will allow the channels to carry off the drainage without overflowing their banks. The cost of this method of flood protection would be altogether prohibitive in a small province. Whatever action is taken in the lower reaches of a river can only be palliative. The channels of all rivers adjust themselves to carry the normal discharges, and any sudden increase above the normal can only be met either by continuous embankments or by allowing the rivers to spill over their banks. The construction of continuous embankments is attended by three dangers. The beds of embanked rivers tend to rise, owing to there being no exit for the sand brought down ; secondly, the intensity of flood low down is increased, and lastly, when breaches do occur, the damage is much more serious than when the river is allowed to spill over its own banks. The solution of the problem, therefore, lies in the provision of adequate spill-ways and careful

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control over the construction of railway and private embankments likely to interfere with the natural drainage."

Where are the people to go ?

This Resolution, Sir, is a very modest one as it only wants an inquiry, the first step toward a scheme for the prevention of the occurrence of these floods. My amendments supply some of the details. My first amendment is that the following be inserted after the word "experts" :

"possessing special knowledge and experience of the physical features of the different parts of India."

The effect of the amendment is only to qualify the word "experts". Experts may be brought from England having knowledge of the physical features of European countries but they cannot be of much use to us here ; and it is only proper that they should be qualified in such a way as to give us the right men for the work intended to be done.

My second amendment runs as follows : That the following be inserted after the words "all over India" :

"with special reference to Railway embankments."

There is a general feeling among the people, Sir, that railway embankments play an important part in bringing about such calamities. Government deny it. We ask for an inquiry to let us know where we are, and whether the suspicions of those who have no technical knowledge have any ground. For the technical wisdom of the amendment I rely on my Honourable friend, Mr. Bhubanananda Das, who is an engineer, and he says that I should not press this amendment for technical reasons. I accept his advice as that of an expert.

Further, I associate myself with the Mover of the Resolution and those who have followed him in asking the House to adopt the Resolution. I represent here millions of suffering humanity and I beseech the House on behalf of them to give unanimous support to the Resolution as amended by me. With these words I move my first amendment.

**Mr. C. D. M. Hindley** (Chief Commissioner, Railways) : Sir, I am rather sorry that my friend, Kumar Ganganand Sinha, has withdrawn his amendment which included in the Resolution special reference to railway embankments. Because of the withdrawal of that amendment I feel that I am rather out of place in dealing with this Resolution. I was hoping to be able to thank him for bringing in that reference so as to justify my standing up here on behalf of Government to deal with this Resolution. I suppose he would not like to move it now ?.....

**Kumar Ganganand Sinha** : I would like to have the statement of Government on that matter.

**Mr. C. D. M. Hindley** : I wish to say on behalf of Government, Sir, that the Resolution as placed on the paper is opposed not because Government have no sympathy with the objects of the mover of this Resolution. Government have the very greatest sympathy for the sufferers from these floods, regarding which we have heard so much during the last few weeks. I would like to say here, Sir, that I repudiate altogether the suggestion made by Mr. Bhubanananda Das that Members of the Government Benches here have no knowledge of the effects of floods on the country and on the people of India. Mr. Bhubanananda Das's picture of the Government sitting perennially on the heights of Simla, watching an occasional



trickle of stones down the sides of the hill and saying "I wonder how that has affected the people down below" is really rather ridiculous when it is applied to people like myself and other Members sitting on the Government Benches who have spent most of the working years of their lives among the people of India. I, Sir, have spent the best part of 25 years working on the plains of India and have never spent more than five or six days in any hill station until last year, and I do claim to speak with a certain amount of local knowledge—not only local knowledge but actual practical knowledge extending over a very large area in India, and I think extending over a considerably larger space both of time and of distance than the knowledge of Mr. Bhubanananda Das, my fellow engineer in this House. I am very glad to hear from Mr. Bhubanananda Das that he has studied the matter as an expert, but I can tell him that the engineer who has to build and maintain a railway embankment across country with difficult drainage problems gets to know intimately far more of the effects of embankments on the diversion of drainage than anyone can ascertain either by casual inspection of village fields or by reading text books.

I think, Sir, it is rather unfortunate that the Resolution is couched in such wide terms because there is apt to be considerable confusion of thought in dealing with such words as "floods". This description, this word "floods" is applied indiscriminately to cases varying from a small interference with agricultural operations which may extend to the loss or impairment of a crop on the one hand, and at the other end of the scale to such vast cataclysms as that which occurred recently in South India, both on the west coast and on the east coast, and the terrible floods that have occurred on the borders of the Indus. There is really very little connection between these two classes of floods and it is extraordinarily difficult to connect together the vast range of natural phenomena which occur between these two limits. Primarily speaking, these floods, whether large or small, whether the damage is very great or comparatively negligible, primarily speaking, these may be put down to excessive rainfall. Now, I know that that is an expression which is very often scoffed at because people say "But, what is excessive rainfall" and then we turn to the figures given to us by the Meteorological Department and see that the average has been so much, the maximum has been so much and the minimum has been so much, during the last year, and the rainfall in question is greater than anything which has been recorded by our Meteorological Department. Well, so far as our experience goes, such a rainfall is an excessive rainfall and it leads us, I think, to this, that, with the comparatively limited knowledge of the history of rainfall we have in different parts of the country, we are to some extent limited in the measures which can be taken to foresee and to prevent the effects of rainfall far above the maximum which has ever been recorded. Until human knowledge and the result of observations is extended a great deal further, I think it will be agreed everywhere that it will be impossible to foresee, even with the very best arrangements which can be made by the Meteorological Department the effects of excessive rainfall. I am presuming that the Honourable Member in moving the Resolution does not intend to refer to such an extension of scientific activity as would lead us in the early future to understand how to predict, say, the course of a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal. That may seem at first sight to be rather far-fetched in regard to this matter, but is an instance of one of the causes of serious floods I should like just to refer, while speaking on this subject of excessive rainfall, to the disaster which occurred in the neighbourhood of Waltair and the southern districts

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of Orissa last year. That disaster, Sir, due, as far as possible be ascertained, to the course of a cyclone which started somewhere in the centre of the Bay of Bengal and could be followed up, by the observations of the Meteorological Department, until it crossed the coast somewhere near Waltair. Its direction at the time of crossing the coast was known and it could be predicted to some extent where it would travel. Instead, however, of travelling in a straight line after causing very severe damage at Waltair and Vizianagram, it proceeded in a slightly northerly direction and remained in the neighbourhood of the hills lying to the north-west of Vizianagram for a considerable period for 12 or 15 hours—and during that time it gave an enormous amount of rainfall in those hills. As far as I can remember, there was no actual record because there was no station which recorded that particular rainfall. There was therefore no actual record of the amount that fell, but judging from the amount of water which came down the rivers along the coast there, it must have been a most abnormal rainfall. Those rivers which lead from the hills to the sea across a fairly flat piece of country became flooded and in the course of a few hours the floods spread out over the banks of the rivers and the whole country was inundated on a front of something like 50 miles. The floods near the coast came in contact with the railway embankment. Now, Sir, looking at that picture of the hills in the background and the flat piece of country running down to the sea, looking at it on a proper scale, you can see that the railway embankment was a mere thread across the country and it had practically no effect at all upon the onward march of the flood. As a matter of fact, the railway embankment was almost destroyed for a distance of between 80 and 100 miles. I am giving that as an instance of the impossibility of being able to guard against or prevent floods which are quite obviously due to excessive rainfall.

Now, Sir, as Mr. Abul Kasem has pointed out, the effect of rainfall on localities depends very largely on the amount of rain which falls in what he called the catchment area. I gather what he meant was that there may be comparatively small rainfall at the place where you are living at the time, but owing to very excessive rainfall elsewhere, you may come in for the serious effects of flooding. Those members of this House, Sir, who come from the South of India will understand what I mean when I refer to the floods which recently occurred in the Tanjore district and round about Trichinopoly. The rain which caused those floods fell primarily in the Anamalai Hills, the Palni Hills and the hills lying to the west of the Presidency, somewhere between 150 to 200 miles away from the place where the damage occurred. I am mentioning this as one of the causes of floods and as illustrating the extraordinary difficulty of ascertaining accurately what the causes of floods are. Another instance which again brings me to Mr. Abul Kasem's mention of catchment areas would be the recent floods in the Muzaffargarh district in the Punjab, where I have read that the Indus rose to a height of something like 50 feet above its normal level. Now, where did that water come from? If Mr. Abul Kasem's contention is correct, the authority which controls the catchment area should take care that these floods do not occur by providing impounding works and seeing that the flood is properly regulated. I do not know, Sir, whether the authority which controls the sources of the Indus would be likely to meet the requirements of the case by coming to an amicable financial arrangement with this House with regard to the cost of such works.

Now, Sir, I have dealt with one of the many causes of floods, namely, excessive rainfall. There is another cause which I think Mr. Bhubanananda Das perhaps will understand, but I am rather doubtful if any other Members of this House will readily follow me as far as I should like to go. In the first place, there are known to be gradual changes in the beds of rivers from time to time and extending over very long periods for which so far we have very little definite scientific explanation. We know from observations that silting takes place and a gradual change of the course of the river takes place through obscure causes. A study of large scale survey maps from the earliest times down to the present day would give Mr. Bhubanananda Das a very interesting amount of information with regard to these changes. There are, for instance, marked on the survey maps such things as the old bed of the Ghaggar or Hakra in the south of the Punjab. Can any one readily explain why there should be an old deserted bed of a river running right across a stretch of country which but for the operations of the Irrigation Department would be an arid plain. This particular case has nothing to do with the advent of what is called the British rule in India ! Such old river beds exist in various parts of the country and I am not sufficiently acquainted with geology to know their exact origin, but they indicate how the rivers as we now know them used to run in one period of their history and we cannot predict how they are going to move in the course of, say, 30 or 40 years. Every one who has lived near one of the larger rivers of India will know that there are cases where rivers have changed their course unexpectedly and with very serious losses to localities. I know one case myself in the Monghyr district where the Ganges as shown on the earliest maps available was something like 16 miles north of the point where it runs now. No railway embankment, no canal embankment, no road, not even the District Board road, is going to interfere with the course of the Ganges. The Ganges at that point in the monsoon is sometimes as much as 13 miles wide and of unknown depth and no human agency is going to interfere with it.

At that particular place I speak of it has changed its course during the last 70 or 80 years from a position 16 miles north of its present position to its present course. These great changes of the great waterways of India result possibly from changes beneath the surface of the earth and are things which no human agency can affect. In regard to silting up and changing of courses of rivers, of course as Mr. Bhubanananda Das will remember a very large amount of scientific work has been done to ascertain the causes of changes. As an illustration of one of these changes occurring which might quite easily have been considered by the local inhabitants to be due to the existence of a railway bank, I would like to mention a case where I had under my own charge a railway line running across an island between two branches of a very large river. Over the two branches of that river we had bridges of something like half a mile in length. It was a very large river indeed, dry most of the year but a raging torrent during the rains. The river bifurcated five miles above the railway and went down through these two bridges, the bridges being ample to carry all the water that came down year after year. In the centre of this island, there was a small flourishing village. One year for no reason that I could ascertain—Mr. Bhubanananda Das might possibly have ascertained it—the river took it into its head to run down the centre of this island. It washed away the village. It burst through the railway embankment between the two bridges and caused a very great deal of destruction to cultivated land. That is a case where

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the people in the locality would undoubtedly consider that the railway embankment was much more to blame for their disaster than the hand of God.

Now, Sir, I wish to refer to one or two other natural causes of floods and these will interest Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh and those who come from the province of Bihar and Orissa and feel so acutely with regard to the shortcomings of the Bengal and North Western Railway. There are cases, and many cases, where there are what we call confluences of large rivers. There are the Gogra, the Kosi, the Gandak, and many others which run into the Ganges and form confluences, that is to say, the running together of two rivers. Now the piece of country between two rivers at a confluence is every year flooded. Whether there is a railway embankment or not, for generations that piece of country between two rivers must have been flooded. The flood is sometimes higher on one side and sometimes higher on the other depending on the amount of water coming down one river or the other river. One of the particular cases which Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh has most persistently questioned me about was the case of a railway embankment, a very high railway embankment, running along a watershed between two rivers forming a confluence. That, if I have made myself clear, will indicate the difficulties of dealing with a problem of the kind which he has referred to. He complains that the country is flooded on both sides of the embankment and sometimes more on one side than on the other. Now the country in that particular place would be flooded in any case. If the Ganges gets the better of the other river and spills over into the area of the other river and similarly if the Bur Gandak spills over towards the Ganges, that is to say, has to bring down more water than the Ganges is bringing down, then it will certainly spill over the intermediate country and cause floods. The railway embankment has been placed on the most suitable line between these two rivers and although there may be a difference of level between the water on one side and on the other, the presence of the embankment is generally to the benefit of some of the landholders for the water is held back to its natural area rather than allowed to flow across the country. Now Sir, we come to artificial causes. I have mentioned several of the natural causes which we are quite unable to control. I would now just refer briefly to artificial interferences. First of all, Sir, I think it is not generally recognized that agricultural operations themselves do interfere very largely with the flow of water across the country. Those Members of this House who come from rice-growing countries will know that interference with natural drainage is of the very essence of the most elementary forms of agriculture. The man who has to divert and direct the water into his rice field is interfering with natural drainage. He gets water where he can, and instead of leaving it to flow by its natural watercourse into a river and so sweetly on to the sea, as Mr. Bhubanananda Das desires, he stops it on the way and uses it for growing his rice. Incidentally he uses it for breeding mosquitoes.

And this brings me to Dr. Bentley. Now Dr. Bentley has written a good many pamphlets and propounded very emphatic views that railway embankments are the cause of poverty and distress and malaria in Bengal. I have never been able to understand on what lines of reasoning Dr. Bentley,

who is a public health officer, not an engineer, has arrived at this conclusion. I can only imagine that his mind worked in the same kind of logical way as it did when he propounded the theory which he considered to be a certainty that on the opening of the Panama Canal India was to be infected with yellow fever. He raised the battle cry in Bengal against the stegomya mosquito and the Government of Bengal was very nearly pushed into carrying out an enormously expensive campaign against this poor little insect, millions and millions of whom inhabit peacefully the rice-fields of Bengal. The little stegomya mosquito, according to Dr. Bentley, if it once got infected by yellow fever brought by ships coming through the Panama Canal, would spread yellow fever all over India, and that, said Dr. Bentley, would be the end of British rule in India. I do not know whether my friends on the opposite side of the House have considered this as a possible course for their future activities. So much for Dr. Bentley. Agricultural operations interfere with drainage from the work of the agriculturist on his rice-field to the work carried out by the Punjab irrigation engineers which interfere with the natural flow of the water down the five rivers of the Punjab, much to Mr. Das's sorrow because the water cannot go on flowing down to the sea. It is taken off in canals and used for irrigation purposes with fairly satisfactory results. That also is an interference with natural drainage. The other causes of interference with natural drainage we come to now are road embankments, canal works and my own particular subject, railway embankments. Now, Sir, I can well understand and have always understood with a good deal of sympathy the feeling that railway embankments do interfere to some extent with natural drainage. But I do think it is necessary for me to explain quite clearly that from the very earliest times of railway construction the very greatest care has been taken by construction engineers to secure that as far as possible natural drainage shall not be interfered with. It is assumed sometimes that the interests of railways and the interests of agriculturists are not the same. I would like to point out that they are very much the same. If a flood occurs which can damage fields and villages, it is also going to damage the railway. The greatest danger that a railway can have is a flood that may carry away an embankment or root up a bridge. Some of the most terrible accidents that have occurred have been due to this cause. Now the very greatest precautions therefore and the utmost scientific care is taken to see that adequate waterway is provided when a railway is constructed. I do not think that I need read the section, but it is the custom in this House to get an Act and read a section out of it. But I will content myself with saying that section 11 of the Railway Act makes it incumbent on a railway administration to make and maintain the necessary accommodation works for waterways and other public requirements. In connection with that, I would like to explain the actual procedure which is gone through when a new railway has to be constructed. At the time of the survey, the engineer who surveys the line has very strict instructions that as soon as he has decided on the waterways in the embankment which he is going to recommend, the whole of the scheme, the plans, sections and all his calculations, are to be submitted to the Local Government and the Local Government is asked to send any remarks it has to make to the Railway Board. The Railway Board, therefore, always has available the opinion of the Local Government, which no doubt consults its local officers, before deciding finally on the waterways which are to be allowed to be made in the railway. That, Sir, to my knowledge, is a live matter and a matter which Local Governments do

[Mr. C. D. M. Hindley.]

not overlook; particularly in provinces where they have a highly developed Public Works Department and have engineers who can study these projects. We in fact usually have a considerable amount of discussion and argument before finally settling in concert with the Local Government the amount of waterways to be provided.

I do not think it would be quite fair for me to take the House into the lengthy calculations which are gone through by an engineer when he has to construct a bridge in order to ascertain the amount of waterway to be allowed. Mr. Bhubanananda Das probably knows the formulae. We have laid down for many years past in our instructions to engineers making surveys the exact amount of detailed information which shall be obtained at the time of making the survey, in order that the calculations for the waterway shall be as accurate as possible. We have, therefore, the first stage when the engineer makes the survey and makes his calculations, the second stage when the Local Government and the local officers are consulted as to the amount of waterway required and we have a third stage as well. Before the line is actually opened for traffic the Senior Government Inspector satisfies himself and satisfies the Railway Board that the amount of waterways provided are sufficient for public safety. That, Sir, is the actual procedure which indicates that the matter is not haphazard and that the railways are not driven with a sledge hammer force, as I think an Honourable Member has suggested, across the face of the country without reference to natural drainage. I should like again to refer before I come to my last point to the Local Government's position in the matter. It is not correct to say that Local Governments have no redress and are unable to move the Government of India to effect improvements where improvements are indicated in the waterways. There have been many cases in recent years where Local Governments themselves have held inquiries as to the sufficiency of waterways in particular districts, and in such cases the Government of India have generally at the same time appointed either a Committee or a special officer to inquire into the matter and to submit a technical report on the particular case at issue. In fact, wherever a *prima facie* case of inadequate waterway is made by the Local Government to the Central Government, I may say that the Railway Board make local investigations at once by expert engineers. I would refer to certain cases of this kind probably within the memory of some Members of this House, to the investigation made by Sir Robert Gales in 1917 on floods at Manse-Pasraha on the Bengai and North Western Railway, to the Committee which was appointed by the Government of India in 1921 on the flood damages near Amroha and to the investigation made by Rai Bahadur Ralla Ram on the Northern Bengal floods in 1922. That, I think, Sir, meets the point which Mr. Bhubanananda Das made when he indicated that no action can be taken by the Local Governments to induce the Central Government to look into these matters.

Now, Sir, I come to my last point. My friends who have moved and supported this Resolution will want me to say, if we do not agree to appoint a Committee, what steps we propose to take. My view and the view of the Government is that where cases occur and where there is a local feeling that a railway embankment or a road embankment or any other work designed by the hand of man are interfering with natural drainage causing damage to land and danger to the lives of the people, then it is the

business of the Local Governments primarily to take up the investigation. This is a very large subject if it is looked at from the point of view of the whole of India. It is a very large and very important and very serious subject. But it is primarily the duty of the Local Governments to look after the rights and property of the people. And it is the Local Governments who should institute an investigation in the first instance. It is not a matter in which we wish to throw the responsibility on to somebody else. Under the constitution it is one of the functions of the Local Governments and it is their duty and it is a duty which they would not wish to evade. Now, with regard to our connection with this matter, that is to say, where railway embankments affect drainage, we are perfectly willing at any time to assist Local Governments in their inquiries by lending them special officers and engineers and by appointing a committee. We are perfectly willing to investigate any case which is brought to our notice by the Local Governments, and there I think the duty of the Central Government as regards investigation really ends. The duty of investigation and examination lies first with the Local Governments and only secondarily with us. We are perfectly willing by means of our expert officers to assist in arriving at proper decisions as to any alterations that may be necessary. I gathered from some remarks which fell from the Honourable Members who spoke in favour of this Resolution, that they expected to have very serious opposition from the Government in regard to this Resolution. I do not however in the least object to this matter having been brought forward. In fact, I very much welcome the opportunity that it has given to the Members of this House to let us know what they think about the subject and also the opportunity it has given to me of letting those Members know what I think about it. It has been a useful discussion. I hope my friend who moved this Resolution will agree with me that I have to some extent established the case for the care with which the Government and the Railways deal with these matters when they are brought to their notice. I would like to suggest that the matter be left with us for the present and we will look into it generally to see whether it is necessary to address Local Governments, with an invitation that we should assist them in any particular case in which they may be concerned. I am perfectly willing to do that and suggest that if those gentlemen who have moved and supported this Resolution have sufficient confidence in me to leave the matter where it is, they might perhaps withdraw their Resolution.

**Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao** (Godavari *cum* Kistna : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways has made a most interesting and instructive address to us both on the natural and artificial causes of floods.

With regard to this matter the Honourable Member proceeded to state that the removal of the causes of floods is essentially a matter for Local Governments, and that the Government of India would be willing, when a case was brought to their notice, to investigate the case lending their officers, and to take such other steps as may be necessary to remove the grievances of the people in this respect. I think, Sir, that the two departments that are concerned in the matter are the Public Works, and the Railway Department.

In regard to the first of these departments, it is clear that irrigation is a provincial subject, and to the extent that floods are caused by deficiency of proper drainage arrangements, this matter is within the sphere of the local administrations, but to the extent to which floods

[Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao.]

are caused by defects in railway embankments, it seems to me that it is essentially the duty of the Government of India to take measures to prevent them.

The Honourable Member very rightly pointed out that under section 11 of the Railway Act accommodation works have to be provided for. May I point out to him that under section 7 enormous powers have been given to railway administrations and to railway companies for the purpose of altering the courses of rivers, streams, water-courses, etc., for the purpose of providing tunnels, bridges, passages, etc., and to divert and alter the course of rivers, streams, etc. It is true that this provision has been made for accommodation works under section 11, but I would like to point out that many of the railways in the country were constructed by Government several years ago when there was no public opinion in the country, and the provision of accommodation works and suitable ways had been altogether inadequate. I cannot cross swords with an expert like Mr. Hindley as regards what provision should have been made for the drainage of the country; but there is no doubt that the general feeling throughout the country is that the railway companies as well as the Government of India have not made sufficient provision for drainage.

The Honourable Member made some reference to-day to the floods that occurred in the northern districts of the Madras Presidency. I believe that the Government, when they restored the line again, went to considerable expense to provide additional culverts for passing the drainage of the country across the Railway embankments. May I ask the Honourable Member if I am right.

**Mr. C. D. M. Hindley** : That is correct. Certain additional waterways have been made.

**Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao** : That is exactly my point. The East Coast Railway was constructed in 1892. Many other lines were constructed several years ago. Our contention is that sufficient consideration has not been shown in the way of providing adequate waterways across the railway lines.

The Honourable Member then proceeded to refer to Dr. Bentley. Dr. Bentley is an expert and my friend is an expert and each is wedded to his own theory. I knew Dr. Bentley years ago. I met him at one of the All-India conferences.

I may also point out, Sir, that there was another gentleman, who was the editor of one of the most influential newspapers, Mr. Motilal Ghose, who as a delegate to one of these All-India Conferences, traced the present position in Bengal in regard to malaria mostly to want of insufficient provision for the drainage of the country. I wish the Honourable Mr. Hindley would peruse some of those papers because Mr. Motilal Ghose was not an expert, nor was he wedded very much to the mosquito theory. But however, so far as the general feeling is concerned, it is thought that the railway companies as well as the Government of India were more intent to have their schemes put through as cheaply as possible and very very little consideration was shown to the people who are affected. Speaking from memory, I think there are adequate provisions in the English Railways Act which require that, when any big scheme for the construction of a railway



is made, the scheme has to be published in the locality and objections invited. That is a statutory provision for the protection of the people. May I ask if there is anything in the Indian Railways Act to protect the people who are affected by alteration in the course of rivers and streams? There is no statutory provision either for publication or for invitation of objections. Sir, I feel that the railways are very influential corporations, and the Government of India and the railway administrations have had it all their own way hitherto and we believe that much of this present trouble is due to insufficient attention to the drainage needs of the country. Sir, my Honourable friend would find considerable support for what we have urged. I therefore think that this matter should be sympathetically considered. I am not at all satisfied with the reply the Honourable Member has made that the matter should be left entirely in his own hands. We have confidence in him, but there is this question which we have to face, that floods have occurred in various parts of the country, and there is this volume of opinion that a portion of this is due to artificial causes which can be removed by the provision of suitable waterways. I only wish to say one word with reference to the floods in the South of India. I see the Honourable Mr. Hindley's theory is that there was a good deal of rainfall in the Anamalai hills and that the floods which resulted in three or four districts is due entirely to this excessive rainfall on the Anamalais....

**Mr. C. D. M. Hindley** : I did not say "entirely." I do not know my geography of Southern India as well as the Honourable Member does, but I believe some of the branches of the Cauvery river start from the Anamalai hills.

**Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao** : My remarks with regard to the general cause of floods apply equally to Southern India, and I do not know that the South Indian Railway constructed its waterways with such consideration for the people and their requirements that it should be taken out of the general remarks I have just made. I believe Sir, it is very necessary, at any rate at the present, to call for some information as regards the causes of these floods, and then to undertake investigations in various parts of the country where these floods have occurred and if the railway administration, as we contend, is responsible. Some portion of the very ample funds in the hands of the Railway administrations should be devoted to providing additional waterways for carrying off the drainage of the country.

**The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee** (Industries Member) : Sir, I do not happen to be an engineer like the Honourable Mr. Hindley or the Honourable Mr. Das, but unfortunately for the House I am at the present moment in charge of Irrigation and Roads and Buildings so far as the Central Government's functions extend in those directions. The debate has been an exceedingly useful one, and personally speaking I am very glad indeed that a subject of this description has engaged the attention of this House.

As the Honourable Mr. Hindley has already stated, Government are in great sympathy with the object of the Resolution. He has also explained that it is not much use appointing one committee to go into the causation of floods all over the country. I do not think a committee of that nature will terminate its labours for the next 25 years and in the meantime a great many floods will occur and will remain unremedied. Mr.

[Mr. A. C. Chatterjee.]

Hindley has given the assurance that the matter will engage the attention of Government. I would add this much, that we shall communicate with Local Governments. After all, as Mr. Hindley has pointed out, it is the Local Governments who are primarily interested in the matter, and unless they make the first move it is very difficult for the Government of India to find out where floods have actually occurred, and where special investigations are necessary. We do not disclaim responsibility for any damage that may have been occasioned by railway embankments. If we suggest that the Local Governments should first move in the matter, it is not in order to disclaim responsibility on the part of the Government of India in cases where the damage has been occasioned by railways. My Honourable friend Mr. Ramachandra Rao has admitted that so far as irrigation is concerned it is the concern of Local Governments. I may in passing mention with reference to what fell from Mr. Amarnath Dutt and Mr. Abul Kasem that the Damodar and the Ajai projects in Bengal had been initiated by the Government of Bengal and not by the Government of India, and it was the Bengal Government which abandoned those projects and not the Government of India. The remedy of both Mr. Abul Kasem and Mr. Amarnath Dutt is in the Bengal Legislative Council and not here. Mr. Ramachandra Rao seemed to suggest that the people who built the railways in the early days did not really take much interest in the welfare of the country through which the railways passed. I do not think that that is a very fair assumption because after all the railways live on the prosperity of the country, apart from the fact that if there is a heavy flood and the railways are breached the railways themselves sustain very heavy pecuniary loss. I do not wish to detain the House. I think we have given enough assurances to satisfy the House that the matter is receiving the attention of the Government and will continue to engage the attention of the Central Government in consultation with Provincial Governments. In view of these assurances, I hope that after this very useful discussion the motion will be withdrawn.

**Mr. Bhubanananda Das :** Sir, I am glad that the debate on the Government side was led by such an eminent engineer like the Honourable Mr. Hindley. I wish Mr. Hindley had not been so very partial to his own subject of railways and had not forgotten other artificial causes of floods like the canals and roadways. I wish also that his observations had not been so much blurred by political considerations. However, I am glad to have the assurance given by my Honourable friend Mr. Chatterjee, that the Government will investigate into the causes of floods. I maintain that such investigations as this inquiry must be undertaken by the Central Government and not by the Provincial Governments. I desire co-ordination of work between all the Provincial Governments and the Central Government. Provincial Governments generally are henpecked by the Central Government and the Central Government's engineers (*The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett* : "What about the provincial contributions?") boss over the Provincial Government engineers ; so naturally the Government engineers in the Provinces and the Provincial Governments cannot look after the welfare of the agricultural population unless the Central Government, who look after the interests of the whole of India, institute such an inquiry—whether by a departmental committee or by an outside committee matters little. However, I am glad of the assurances given by the two

Honourable Members on the Government side and I hope they will keep this subject in view and not let it drop. With these remarks I beg leave to withdraw my Resolution.

The Resolution was, by leave of the Assembly withdrawn.

**Mr. President :** I have to acquaint the Assembly that the Select Committee on the Soldiers Litigation Bill which has been set down for to-morrow at 12 noon is now postponed until further notice, which I presume will be some date in winter.

RESULT OF THE ELECTION TO THE STANDING FINANCE  
COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYS.

**Mr. President :** I am in a position, contrary to expectation, to announce the result of the election to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways ;

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas,  
Maulvi Abul Kasem,  
Mr. M. S. Aney,  
Mr. W. S. J. Willson,  
Mr. V. J. Patel,  
Mr. Darcy Lindsay,  
Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer,  
Maulvi M. Samiullah Khan,  
Mr. K. C. Neogy,  
Mr. Jamnadas M. Metha, and  
Mr. K. Rama Aiyangar.

MESSAGE FROM H. E. THE VICEROY PROROGUING THE SESSION.

**Mr. President :** Message from His Excellency the Governor General :

(The Members of the Assembly stood during the reading of the Message.)

*" In pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 63D of the Government of India Act, I, Rufus Daniel, Earl of Reading, hereby prorogue the Session of the Legislative Assembly on the conclusion of its business on Wednesday, the 24th of September, 1924."*

SIMLA :

(Sd.) READING,

The 22nd September, 1924.

Viceroy and Governor General."

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## APPENDIX.

### I

Mr. M. E. Makan \* (Bombay Northern Division: Muhammadan Rural) :

جناب عالی

صحیح افسوس ہی کہ میں انگریزی زبان سے ناواقف ہوں اسلئے میں آپ سے درخواست کرنا ہوں کہ آپ مجھکو اس ملک کی دیسی زبان میں تقریر کرنے کی اجازت دیں۔

جناب عالی - بجٹ کی تفصیل سے کسی شخص کو اتفاق ہو یا نہو لیکن جس قابلیت اور محنت سے اورنریبل فائننس ممبر صاحب نے بجٹ کو تیار کیا ہی اس کی تعریف کئے بغیر میں نہیں رہ سکتا۔

اگرچہ بجٹ میں آمدنی و خرچ دونوں کو برابر کرنے کی اورنریبل وائٹنس ممبر نے بہت کوشش کی ہی لیکن ایک کاروباری آدمی کی نظر سے جب میں بجٹ کو دیکھتا ہوں تو میں خیال کرتا ہوں کہ خرچ پھر بھی آمدنی سے زیادہ ہی - کوئی کاروباری فرضی اور غیر مستقل آمدنی کی امید پر خرچ کا چٹھا نہیں بنا سکتا - جو کوئی فرضی آمدنی کے بہرے پر زیادہ خرچ کرتا ہی - اوسکو ایک نہ ایک روز بہت نقصان اٹھانے کا اندیشہ رہتا ہی -

صحیح افسوس اس بات کا ہی کہ اورنریبل فائننس ممبر صاحب ہندوستان کی غریب رعایا پر سے کوئی ٹیکس دور نہیں کر سکے - جب تک خرچ میں اور زیادہ کفایت نہ کیجائے گی ٹیکسوں میں کمی نہیں ہو سکتی - ہندوستان کی غریب رعایا ٹیکسوں کے بوجھ سے دبی جاتی ہی - لاکھوں آدمی ہمارے ملک میں ایسے ہیں جن کو چربیس گھنٹوں میں ایک مرتبہ کھانا نصیب ہوتا ہی اور لاکھوں ایسے بھی ہیں جنکے بدن پر سواے چھوڑنے کے کچھ نظر نہیں آتا - ایسے ملک کے واسطے ایک سو کورڑ روپے سے زیادہ خرچ کا بجٹ پیش کرنا زیادہ تعجب کی بات ہی -

فوج پر جو ۶۰ کورڑ سے زیادہ خرچ کیا جاتا ہی - وہ ملک کی آمدنی سے بہت زیادہ ہی - ہندوستان کے آدمیوں کے پاس تو ہتھیار تک نہیں - نہ انکو لونا آتا ہی اور دوسرے ملک سے بھی کوئی لڑائی کا اندیشہ نہیں ہی - ایسی حالت میں فوج پر ۶۳ کورڑ سے زیادہ روپیہ خرچ کرنا سراسر ملک پر فضول بار ڈالنا ہی -

وزیرستان اور دوسرے سرحدی مقامات کو قبضے میں رکھنے کی کوشش سے فوج پر اتنا روپیہ خرچ کرنا ہوتا ہے۔ اگر یہ مقامات جسے کسی قسم کی آمدنی نہ تو ہوتی ہے اور نہ آئندہ ہونیکی امید ہے افغانستان کی گورنمنٹ کو دے دئے جائیں تو ہمیشہ کا جھگڑا ختم ہو جائے۔ اور فوجی خرچ آدھے سے بھی کم ہو جائے۔

مجھ کو اس بات سے خوشی نہیں ہوئی کہ پٹرول کا محصول کم کیا گیا ہے۔ اس لئے کہ پٹرول صرف امیر آدمیوں کے استعمال میں آتا ہے۔ اور غریبوں کو سستا ہونے سے کچھ فائدہ نہیں ہوگا اس کے بجائے اثر کپڑے پر سے محصول کم کیا جانا یا نمک کا محصول بالکل معاف کر دیا جانا تو صحیح زیادہ خوشی حاصل ہوتی ہے۔ اب میں چاہتا ہوں کہ نمک کا محصول سوا روپیہ کی شرح سے کر دیا جائے۔ اور جن روپیوں کی بچت ہو وہ سوائے اس کام کے کسی اور کام میں نہ لگائے جائیں۔

اگر گورنمنٹ کو ضرورت ہو تو میری یہ رائے ہے کہ افیم اور مسکرات پر محصول اور کچھ زیادہ بڑھا دیا جائے تاکہ نمک کا محصول معاف کر دیا جائے۔ اسلئے کہ نمک آدمیوں اور جانوروں سب کے استعمال میں آتا ہے اور موقع پر بطور ”کھاد“ کے بھی کاشتکاری کے کام میں استعمال ہوتا ہے۔

میں افسوس کے ساتھ دیکھتا ہوں کہ تجارت کا کام بہت مدت سے مدہم ہو رہا ہے جن ٹیکسوں کی وجہ سے ملکی تجارت کو نقصان پہنچ رہا ہے انہیں سے ایک دم محصول دور کرنے کی ضرورت ہے۔

ملک میں تمام شورش اور جوش زیادہ تر بیکاری اور افلاس کی وجہ سے ہے۔ گورنمنٹ کا سب سے بڑا فرض بیکاروں کو کام سے لگانا اور افلاس کو دور کرنا ہے۔ اسلئے اس بات کی ضرورت ہے کہ فوج میں اور دوسرے صیغوں میں بجائے انگریزوں کے ہندوستان کے آدمی لگائے جائیں۔

گورنمنٹ کی قوت اور وقعت رعایا کے دلنکو ہاتھ میں لینے سے ہوتی ہے نہ کہ توپ اور ہوائی جہاز کے ذریعہ سے۔ اگر برٹش گورنمنٹ اپنی قوت اور نیک نامی چاہتی ہے تو اسے چاہئے کہ لوگوں کو دلوں کو ہاتھ میں لے۔ اور جلد سے جلد انکی بے چینی اور بے قراری دور کرے۔

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION.\*

**Mr. M. E. Makan** (Bombay Northern Division: Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I very much regret for my ignorance of the English language, and therefore beg you to allow me to deliver my speech in the language of the land.

Sir, whether any person approves of the details of the Budget or does not, I, personally, cannot refrain from commending the laudable labour and effort, with which the Honourable the Finance Member has prepared the Budget.

The Finance Member has endeavoured to do his best to bring the income and the expenditure to an equilibrium; but if we survey the situation from the standpoint of a business man, we find that the expenditure still exceeds the income. No businessman, on merely imaginary and fluctuating income, can prepare his Budget for expenditure: and a person who, relying upon such an income, indulges in an expenditure that is in excess of his income, is ever exposed to some extreme form of embarrassment.

The most regrettable feature of the Budget is that the Honourable Member has not been able to relieve the poor subjects of India from any of the taxes: unless and until some economy is observed in the expenditure, no reduction can be brought about in the taxes; in fact the poor subjects of India are being crushed under the heavy pressure of taxation. There are hundreds of thousands of people in our country, who, in the course of twenty-four hours, are hardly able to find a single meal, and their bodies, if covered at all, are covered with rags. The introduction of a Budget proposing an expenditure of over hundred crores of rupees, for a country labouring under such miseries, is really amazing.

Taking into consideration the income of the country, the outlay of more than Rs. 60,00,00,000 over the Army is much too high. The Indians, in general, do not possess any arms, neither are they trained in the art of warfare; at the same time there is no apprehension of India being involved in a war with any foreign country: in these circumstances it appears to be extravagant to spend over sixty-three crores of rupees for the maintenance of the Army, and it is actually overburdening the nation without any real advantage in exchange.

This large amount is spent over the Army, because we are endeavouring to hold Waziristan and other Frontier districts in our possession. If this territory, from which we enjoy no present revenue, and where there is no prospect of obtaining any in the future, is handed over to the Government of Afghanistan, the doors against the perpetual source of trouble would be closed for ever, and the military expenditure would be reduced to less than half of the present charges on that score.

It has not afforded me any pleasure to find that a certain portion of the tax has been taken away from petrol, for the obvious reason that it is consumed by the rich, and the poor would not derive any benefit whatsoever. If, in place of it, the tax on piece-goods were reduced, or the additional tax on salt were entirely remitted, it would have been a happier alteration. Now, I desire that the Salt Tax should be fixed at the rate of Re. 1-4-0, and the surplus money should be devoted to this cause and no other.

\* Vide p. 1218 of Legislative Assembly Debates, Volume IV.

In case the Government realises the necessity for raising some extra money, I am of opinion that the tax on opium and other intoxicants should be enhanced to enable the remission of the Salt Tax. Salt is a commodity used both by man and animals, and sometimes it serves the purpose of man as well.

It is really distressing to note that Indian trade has long been subjected to depression; and it is highly important that the taxes injurious to it should be abolished at once.

The sole cause of disturbances and agitation in India appears to lie in unemployment and poverty: the first duty of the Government at present should be to endeavour to get employment for the unemployed and to remove poverty. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them to Indianise the Army and other departments with still greater rapidity.

The strength and prowess of a Government consist in gaining the good will of its subjects, and not in guns and air-ships. If the British Government desire to establish their power and prestige, they should make an effort to win over the true devotion of the people, and to remove the discontented and agitated feelings at the earliest opportunity.