

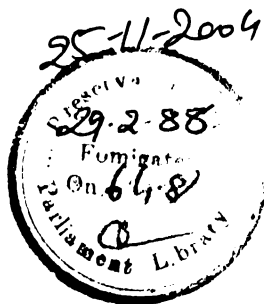
Tuesday, 12th February, 1924

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES
(Official Report)

Volume IV, Part I

(From the 30th January to the 25th March 1924)

FOURTH SESSION
OF THE
COUNCIL OF STATE, 1924



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CONTENTS.

PAGES.

WEDNESDAY, 30TH JANUARY 1924—

Members sworn	1
Death of Nawab Sir Bahram Khan	1-4
Messages from His Excellency the Governor General	...	...	...	...	4-5
Committee on Petitions	...	...	...	...	5
Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	5-15
Statement laid on the table	...	...	...	...	16-17
Bill as passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the table	...	...	...	...	17
Bills assented to by His Excellency the Viceroy	...	...	...	...	17-18
Criminal Tribes Bill	...	...	...	...	18-19
Indian Tolls Bill	...	...	...	...	19-21
Official Business for the 5th February 1924	...	...	...	...	21

THURSDAY, 31ST JANUARY 1924—

Inauguration of the Fourth Session of the Council of State and the First Session of the Second Legislative Assembly	23-32
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-------

MONDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY 1924—

Member sworn	...	...	...	...	33
Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	33-47
Resolution <i>re</i> inquiry into the economic conditions of the people of India. (Adopted as amended)	...	...	...	...	48-80

TUESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 1924—

Bill as passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the table	...	...	...	...	81
Criminal Tribes Bill (Consideration postponed for a fortnight)	...	...	...	...	81-83
Indian Tolls Bill (Consideration postponed for a fortnight)	...	...	...	...	83-85
Election of panels for Standing Committees	...	...	...	...	85-86
Resolution <i>re</i> award of the Nobel Prize for peace to His Highness the Aga Khan. (Adopted as amended)	...	...	...	...	86-101
Attendance of Government Members in the Council	...	...	...	...	102-103
Official Business for the 12th and 14th February 1924	...	...	...	...	103-104

WEDNESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY 1924—

Dates for presentation and discussion of the budget	...	...	...	...	105
Resolution <i>re</i> Kenya Immigration Bill (Not moved).	...	...	...	...	105-108
Resolution <i>re</i> withdrawal of quarantine restrictions imposed upon deck passengers proceeding to the Straits Settlements (Withdrawn)	...	...	...	...	108
Resolution <i>re</i> publication of Bills in all their stages along with the Council Debates (Withdrawn)	...	...	...	...	108-112

MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY 1924—

Members sworn	...	...	...	...	113
Nominations for panels for Standing Committees	...	...	...	...	113-114
Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	114-131
Resolutions <i>re</i> mural paintings in Government buildings in Raisina (Adopted as amended)	...	...	...	...	131-148

	PAGES.
TUESDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Questions and Answers	149—151
Message from His Excellency the Governor General	151
Indian Cotton Cess (Amendment) Bill (Passed)	151
Resolution <i>re</i> reconstitution of the New Capital Committee, Delhi, with a non-official majority (Adopted as amended)	152—167
Official Business for Thursday, the 14th February 1924	167—168
WEDNESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Questions and Answers	169—171
Visit of Members to the Legislative Buildings in Raisina	171
Immigration into India Bill (Passed)	171—206
Death of Khan Bahadur Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair	206—207
THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Members sworn	209
Cantonments Bill (Passed)	209—231
Election of the panel for the Standing Committee, Department of Education, Health and Lands	231—232
Advisory Publicity Committee	232—233
Election of Members to Standing Advisory Committees	233
MONDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Member sworn	235
Questions and Answers	235—241
Election of panels for Standing Committees	242
Election of Members for the Emigration Committee	243
Advisory Publicity Committee	243
Visit of Members to the Legislative Buildings at Raisina	243
Unveiling of the War Memorial at Raisina	243
Resolution <i>re</i> amalgamation of the Imperial and Provincial Branches of the Forest Service. (Not moved)	244
Resolution <i>re</i> substitution of a provident fund for the existing pension system (Adopted as amended)	244—258
Resolution <i>re</i> unemployment in India (Postponed till 20th February 1924)	— 259—266
Statement of Official Business for 21st February 1924	267
WEDNESDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Questions and Answers	269—273
Resolution <i>re</i> unemployment in India (continued)—(Negatived)	273—291
Resolution <i>re</i> Child Welfare movement (Negatived)	291—303
THURSDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY 1924—	
Election of the Emigration Committee	305
Group photograph of the Council	305—306
Proposed gift to the Council of a painting of His Excellency Lord Reading	306—307
Criminal Tribes Bill (Passed)	307—316
Indian Tolls Bill (Passed)	316—323
MONDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY 1924—	
Questions and Answers	325—326
Resolution <i>re</i> expansion of reforms (Not moved)	326—327
Statement of Government Business	327
Presentation of financial statement on Friday, the 29th February 1924	328—328

COUNCIL OF STATE.

Tuesday, the 12th February, 1924.

The Council met in the Council Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

THE HOWRAH-BOMBAY POSTAL EXPRESS.

81. THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Will Government state—

- (a) if the report in the newspapers is correct that the Postal Express from Howrah to Bombay, which was done away with at the instance of the Inchcape Committee, is to be started again from February;
- (b) if the reply to (a) is in the affirmative, the reasons for the change;
- (c) if it is proposed to run a return Postal Express from Bombay to Howrah and also any other Postal Expresses; and
- (d) the cost of whatever Postal Expresses are proposed to be run again?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: (a) It is not quite correct to say that the Postal special train from Howrah to Bombay was abolished at the instance of the Retrenchment Committee, which made no such recommendation. It was however decided to abolish this special from the first week of April 1923 as a measure of economy. The report in the newspapers about the re-introduction of this special is correct.

(b) The present arrangement which involves making up the ordinary Bombay Mail train leaving Howrah on Thursday in two parts, one part to run to Victoria Terminus and the other to be diverted from Kurla to Ballard Pier is extremely inconvenient and has led to the detention of the mail steamer. There has also been curtailment in the hour of posting both in Calcutta and at all places from which the foreign mails used formerly to be conveyed by the Postal Special.

(c) The Special train from Bombay to Howrah in connection with the inward foreign mails was never abolished and is running now. There is no intention at present of introducing any other Postal Express.

(d) The cost of running the Howrah-Bombay Postal Express is Rs. 1,05,066 a year, as against expenditure in the cost of conveying postal vans by the ordinary trains amounting to Rs. 69,793 per annum.

THE HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS: Will the Honourable Member kindly tell us the average annual income from the Postal Express?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: It is not a question of income, it is a question of expenditure.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member, I think, said that there is no income from the Postal Express.

TREATMENT OF ASIATICS OTHER THAN JAPANESE IN INDO-CHINA.

82. THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Will Government state—

- (a) if it is correct that all Asiatics, including Indians but excluding Japanese, when they proceed to Indo-China are required by that Government to give thumb and finger mark impressions of both hands and they are also required to have on their person their permit to go about in the country and are otherwise liable to imprisonment;
- (b) if the same conditions at one time applied also to the Japanese but they have been subsequently excluded whilst restrictions against Indians still continue;
- (c) if the Japanese have been excluded because the Japanese Government retaliated by compelling Frenchmen entering Japanese territory to have the impressions of their feet taken?

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. P. THOMPSON: The Government of India have no information, but endeavours will be made to obtain it.

ACQUISITION OF LAND BY INDIANS IN HONGKONG.

83. THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Will Government state—

- (a) if it is correct that within recent years no Indian is allowed to own land or erect a house on such land on the topmost parts of the hill known as "The Peak" in Hongkong without the permission of the Governor; and
- (b) the number of Indians who have applied for such permission since the rule came into existence and the number of cases in which the permission was granted or refused?

TREATMENT OF INDIAN VISITORS TO CEYLON.

84. THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: (a) Are Government aware that, whilst considerable latitude is shown to other visitors by the Ceylon Government, even very respectable Indian visitors on landing in Colombo are themselves and their luggage searched closely by the police and subjected to considerable annoyance and indignities?

(b) If the reply to (a) is in the affirmative, will Government state what action they propose to take to ensure equality of treatment to Indian visitors to Ceylon as is extended to Europeans or Japanese or others?

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: With your permission, Sir, I will answer questions 83 and 84 together, if the Honourable Member has no objection.

Government have no information regarding either matter and have received no complaints.

THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Will Government be pleased to state if they have received a complaint from a prominent silk merchant of Bombay in regard to the indignities to which he was subjected when returning from Japan to Bombay *via* Colombo?

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: My attention has not been drawn to it, and, if the Honourable Member furnishes me with the information to which he has referred, I shall certainly look into it and see as to whether a case can be made out for instituting a further inquiry.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: There is a message from the Governor General:

"In pursuance of the provisions of sub-section (3) of section 67A of the Government of India Act, I hereby direct that the heads of expenditure specified in that sub-section shall be open to discussion in the Council of State when the Budget is under consideration."

(Sd.) *READING,
Governor General."*

INDIAN COTTON CESS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Member for Education, Health and Lands): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to amend the Indian Cotton Cess Act, 1923, for certain purposes, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

It is, Sir, a very short Bill, and the objects thereof have been explained clearly in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. Experience in the working of the Indian Cotton Cess Act has revealed two defects. It has been pointed out to the Government of India that the cotton excise officers, in the presidency of Bombay, are under the Collector of Customs, Bombay. It will be convenient to continue to administer that department in the manner heretofore in vogue in that presidency. Clause 2 (a) makes provision for it and expands the definition of "Collector" in the present Act. It has also been brought to the notice of Government that by an oversight cotton exported from India to foreign territories cannot be taxed under the Cotton Cess Act, and power has been taken, therefore, to include that cotton for the purpose of the levy of the cess. The Indian Legislative Assembly has had the matter placed before them and has unanimously passed the Bill. I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is:

"That the Bill to amend the Indian Cotton Cess Act, 1923, for certain purposes, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I beg to move that the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is:

"That the Bill to amend the Indian Cotton Cess Act, 1923, for certain purposes, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

RESOLUTION *re* RECONSTITUTION OF THE NEW CAPITAL COMMITTEE, DELHI, WITH A NON-OFFICIAL MAJORITY.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI (Burma: General): Sir, I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name. It runs as follows:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the New Capital Committee, Delhi, be reconstituted with non-official members in the majority."

Sir, the questions that I asked in this House yesterday in connection with the Delhi New Capital Committee and my Resolution thereon to-day are intended to show the defects of an official body like the New Capital Committee and the necessity of non-official representation on it. I shall prove to this House from official records themselves the benefits that would have accrued,—and, in my opinion, that would still accrue,—by the association of non-officials on that Committee. The history of the New Delhi Capital Committee is as follows. The foundation stone of the New Capital was laid by His Majesty, the King-Emperor, on the 15th of December 1911. According to the first estimate made in 1913, the expenditure was to be Rs. 10,50,00,000. The Government of India reduced it by more than a crore to Rs. 9,17,00,000. It was afterwards admitted that the sanctioned amount was only a rough one based on insufficient material. In 1921, a revised estimate was submitted amounting to Rs. 12,92,00,000. The Government of India made certain modifications and it was raised to Rs. 13,07,00,000. The reasons assigned for the increase were the rates of labour, materials, plant and machinery, and freight, as the after-effects of the war, and the building programme consequent on the Reforms such as the Legislative Chambers for the Council of State, the Assembly, the Chamber of Princes and the accommodation for Members. The money expended on this scheme is as follows: In 1913-14, Rs. 85,00,000 was spent. It was then that the war broke out and there was a lull in the works. From 1914-15 to 1919-20 amounts varying between 39 and 54 lakhs per annum were spent. In 1920-21, 129½ lakhs were spent. In 1921-22, 142½ lakhs were spent. In 1922-23, 204 lakhs. Correct figures will perhaps be found in the Budget. According to the programme, the amount that will be spent in 1924-25 will be 150 lakhs. In 1925-26, 100 lakhs and in 1926-27, 72 lakhs. Sir, during all these years, when huge sums of money were being spent, the power of control rested, as it rests to-day, with an official body known as the New Capital Committee. After nearly 8½ crores were spent out of an estimate of Rs. 13 crores 7 lakhs, the idea seems to have dawned upon the Government that a Committee of officials and non-officials should be appointed to inquire "whether"—I am quoting from the terms of reference—"it is possible to effect changes in the New city project which will both lessen the cost and expedite the completion of the work." Consider, Sir, that after nearly 8 or 9 years had elapsed, that after more than half the amount had been spent, it was suggested that a Committee composed of officials and non-officials should be appointed to inquire whether any economy was possible. We have all heard of the familiar proverb—shutting the stable after the horse is stolen,—and here is a typical instance of it. However, the Committee was appointed—I understand that was the gift of the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma—under the presidency of the Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey with six members, of whom four were Indians—one official and three non-officials. I am glad to find that one of the officials is here, but I regret the absence of the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das who would probably have told this

House how the Members were "cabined, cribbed and confined" in their inquiry and how their inquiry was necessarily cursory. The Committee had felt that they were appointed late in the day. On almost every page of the Hailey Committee's report you will find expressions of regret that they did not find certain expenditure was essential, but at that stage they could not recommend any alteration in the design or reduction in the expenditure. I do not know when the Hailey Committee was appointed but it went into working order on November 1st, 1922, and completed its labours within ten days, before November 12th, 1922. The Committee saw that they were helpless to attempt to scrutinise the many hundreds of detailed estimates which comprised the project. In one place the Committee say:

"Many of the questions with which a Committee such as ours would ordinarily deal, as for example the question of the accommodation to be provided in the main building or of their designs, are already finally settled and work has progressed to a stage at which alterations are no longer possible."

Again.

"any change made at this juncture necessitating probably the cessation of work and the re-drawing of numerous plans would involve so much delay that the change would be administratively unjustifiable."

Speaking of the Government House, the report says:

"We note that at the instance of the Home Committee, a sum of Rs. 6½ lakhs has been added to the estimate for internal decorations and for the structural alterations necessary to enable effect to be given to the architect's ultimate scheme for the interior. While not convinced that the whole of this additional expenditure is essential, we find it difficult to recommend reduction at this late stage."

Then, again, Sir, speaking of the Viceroy's Court, Great Place and Central Vista, the Committee say:—

"The majority of us consider that the expenditure should be kept rigidly within the provision sanctioned and that no excess should be permitted even should it be necessary to re-draw the plans to obviate it."

Coming under the heading 'Local Administration office' under which is included the erection of two Hostels for the Members, the Eastern and Western Hostels, the Report says:

"The hostels, and particularly the Eastern Hostel, have never proved very popular."

Well, the unpopularity of these Hostels both in design and structure could have been brought to the attention of the New Capital Committee, if non-officials were there.

Speaking under the heading 'Imperial Record Office' the Committee say:

"The only elaboration being a stone facade, necessitated by its position in the Central Vista. We do not consider that any material saving is possible; the omission of the stone facade would involve a very considerable delay in redrawing the plans for the building."

Coming to the main residential scheme, I can point out to the House that, so far as accommodation of Indian members is concerned, it is most unsatisfactory. If any one would go into any one of the rooms of Indian officers he would find that there is no room for any guests who come in.

Under the heading 'Medical buildings' the Committee say:

"We are of opinion that the amount of 16 lakhs allotted for a hospital is excessive. We consider that a suitable hospital which would meet all present needs could be constructed for about Rs. 7½ lakhs, the design being such as to be capable of expansion in the future if necessary."

[Mr. S. Vedamurti.]

It is when the Report comes to the Legislative Chambers that we find the greatest possible censure that this Hailey Committee can pass upon the Capital Committee. In one paragraph the Committee say:

"The majority of us believe, however, that the circular design has added both to the cost and to the difficulties of construction, and had a simpler design been chosen the Legislatures could have been suitably accommodated possibly upon another site at a less expenditure than the Rs. 83½ lakhs provided for the purpose in the revised estimate. Three of the members of our Committee are so dissatisfied with the present design that they would be glad to see the work already done abandoned."

If I could hazard a guess I should think that those three members must have been Sir M. Visvesvaraya, Mr. B. S. Kamat and the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: Will you tell us the names of all the members of the Committee?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI: Yes; they are as follows:

President.

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey.

Members.

The Honourable Rao Bahadur B. N. Sarma,
The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das,
Mr. B. S. Kamat,
Sir M. Visvesvaraya,
Mr. Thomas Smith, and
Mr. A. W. Dods.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: What was the number of non-officials?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI: My impression is that three were non-officials.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: There were five non-officials and two officials.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI: Later on, the three members who desired a complete change both of design and site fully realised that only by special measures could the result aimed at be achieved. Fearing the risk of delay evidently, the three members had to give way and the Report itself says that "they have reluctantly decided not to press the proposal. We therefore make no recommendation for disturbing the existing arrangements."

Under the heading 'Miscellaneous public improvements' the Committee remark:

"We are informed that it will be necessary to substitute some other architectural feature in its place."

It means in the place of the Indrapat Reservoir.

"We are not convinced of this; in our opinion the Memorial Arch will form a fitting termination to the Vista and we strongly recommend that any work carried out beyond this point should be of the simplest and most economical character."

Well, I can go on quoting several passages from the Report. The only effect, however, that has been given to the report seems the omission of the electric generating station and high tension mains, and the transfer of a portion of the cost of Paharganj road to the railway. I might be asked: What could non-officials do after all on a Committee intended for supervising a special expert work. But here it is. This Committee say:

"We have recommended that the New Capital Committee should be kept regularly and accurately informed as to the progress of the work",

meaning thereby it was not done. It is really deplorable, Sir, that the Government of India did not grow wiser even after the Hailey Committee report. All the estimates that were submitted to the New Capital Committee were original estimates and, if non-officials were on it, they would have devoted more time to scrutinise the works and they would have been in a position to advise the Committee whether they were essential and whether they could be done at a less cost. When it is the declared policy of the Government of India that non-officials should be in a majority in local bodies, municipalities and Legislative Councils, it is but right that this House should recommend to the Governor General in Council that the New Capital Committee, which controls the expenditure of 13 crores of rupees of the tax-payers' money, should have a non-official majority on it. If my information is correct, the power of control has from this year onwards been transferred absolutely from the Government of India to the New Capital Committee itself. I was given a fright, Sir, yesterday that the Honourable Mr. Ley was going to cut the ground under my feet alleging that there are legal difficulties in the way, that the New Delhi Committee is an executive body and not an advisory body, that the non-officials would have no place on it and that I have no *locus standi* to move a Resolution to include non-officials on it. It must be a laborious process to him. My conviction is that I am on as solid a ground as is possible, and my impression is that the Honourable Mr. Ley stands on very slippery ground. However, I should like to see how he is going to prove that the New Capital Committee could not be re-constituted by the inclusion of non-officials in it.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (West Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, I am glad that the Resolution is not dealing with the transfer of the Capital. We have at first had one Committee and from the report that we have just had of the work of the second Committee it appears that the former's work has been so much disapproved by the latter that perhaps they would like to bring down all the buildings which are now being erected. If a third Committee is appointed, perhaps there will be no work left for them to do. There is, no doubt, a great cry in these days that the officials should be replaced by non-officials. But there is one thing good about the official and that is, that he is a paid servant. He remains present and has to work. If he does not work properly, somebody can ask him about his responsibility. But if there is a non-official he may go away and may never come to work. Who is going to compel him to do it? Sir, we are always very fond of these big Committees. But once they are appointed they rather retard the work and do not facilitate it. (*Cries of "No, no."*) It was only yesterday that we were dealing with a Committee, I thought that there were men present who knew their work well and that is why they suggested that there ought to be a small committee to carry on the work. As far as I know, it is difficult to find men who will be prepared to give up their business in order to work on these Committees

[Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan.]

for twelve months in Delhi. I do not think anyone is going to do it. Then, Sir, it may be said, "why not appoint Delhi people"? But, if we bring the Delhi people on to the Committee, they will have their own fingers in the pie, and I think that their lives will be worried out of them by their near relatives asking them for jobs and contracts. I do not think control of public funds ought to be given into the hands of those who can benefit by it.

Finally, Sir, I think that this Resolution would not serve any useful purpose. All of us who have the good of the New Capital at heart and like to see it finished as soon as possible desire only that all the facilities possible should be provided. So we do not want to have the work retarded by a new committee.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces: General): Sir, I support the idea which underlies this Resolution. I quite appreciate the arguments that have been advanced by my Honourable friend Mr. Vadamurti in favour of associating some non-official members in a matter like this. At the same time I do not underestimate the difficulties on the other side. There is no doubt that the present Committee is mainly a Departmental Committee, whose members have special knowledge and special technical qualifications. It must also be borne in mind that, as my Honourable friend has pointed out, there may be a hundred and one matters involving detailed investigation and examination of estimates, and perhaps in such cases the value of non-official assistance may not be so great as that of expert official members. At the same time we cannot overlook the fact that in a matter of such importance it would give the public some satisfaction if some non-official members possessing technical engineering knowledge were associated with the existing official Committee. The Government would lose nothing by agreeing to associate non-official members with this Committee. Of course, as my Honourable friend has said, his Resolution at this stage is something like locking up the stable door after the horse is stolen. Yet I think it will be of some value and create a good effect, and I therefore endorse the idea which underlies the Resolution that some non-official members ought to be associated with the Committee. In the original Delhi Capital Inquiry non-officials were associated, and I cannot understand why they were subsequently eliminated. But at the same time I deprecate the idea of having a majority of non-officials. I do not think a majority of non-officials will do any good. In my opinion there ought to be a majority of officials having technical and engineering knowledge and understanding the technical side of the business, and there ought to be a few non-official Indians possessing technical qualifications associated with them. I shall therefore, with your permission, accept this Resolution with only a little modification, namely, that the words "in the majority" in the last line be omitted.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Does the Honourable Member move an amendment?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: Yes, that the words "in the majority" be deleted. This will serve the purpose which my Honourable friend Mr. Vadamurti has in view, and I do not think the Government could possibly with any show of reason take objection to a simple Resolution like the one which has been moved by my Honourable friend.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: To the Resolution under discussion amendment moved:

"That the words 'in the majority' at the end of the Resolution be omitted."

That amendment and the original Resolution are open to discussion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY (Secretary, Department of Industries and Labour): Sir, I hope it will not be necessary for me to take up very much time on this question. It is rather a simpler matter than the one we were discussing yesterday. I am afraid I am in the unfortunate position of having to oppose both the original Resolution and the amendment, on the very simple ground that the Resolution and the amendment seek to establish a position which is frankly unconstitutional. As far as I could gather from my Honourable friend Mr. Vedamurti's speech, it was apparently his idea that this New Capital Committee is an advisory body advising the Government of India, in which case of course there would have been a good deal to be said possibly in favour of non-officials being represented on that Committee. I think there must be some misapprehension in my Honourable friend's mind and possibly in the mind of other Honourable Members of this House. If they are under the impression that this body is a Committee advising the Government of India, let me hasten to assure them that it is nothing of the kind. Incidentally, Mr. Vedamurti was not quite correct in his history of the New Capital Committee. That Committee has not been in existence, as he seems to think, since 1913 or before that. It was created in 1920. The history of the matter is simply this. Originally there was an Imperial Delhi Committee appointed in 1913 for the local administration of the work in the construction of the New Capital. That Committee did some very useful work particularly in drawing up project estimates. It was abolished in 1917 because the Government of India then considered that it was unnecessary for the Committee to continue for this purpose, and its functions were transferred to the ordinary head of the local administration, namely, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi. Subsequently it was discovered that this arrangement, which is the normal arrangement for the carrying out of public works, was not very satisfactory, more particularly from the point of view of expediting the work, because it involved frequent references from the Chief Commissioner to the Government of India in matters beyond the powers of the Chief Commissioner himself to settle and frequent references also between Departments of the Government of India concerned, more particularly the late Public Works Department and the Finance Department. Consequently, it was decided by the Governor General in Council that a body should be appointed *ad hoc*, which should have the full executive powers of the Government of India, not an advisory body at all. It is in fact, though not actually in name, a separate Department of the Government of India and nothing else. (*The Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy*: "Under what law have such powers been given to it?") The Governor General in Council has complete power under the law to constitute any Department in any way he likes, I understand. That is the position. It was created merely with the idea of expediting the work and avoiding references from the local officials, the Chief Commissioner and the Chief Engineer. I can quite sympathise and appreciate the idea that there is a public desire, and very rightly so, that the non-official public generally should have a say in large questions of policy in connection with the construction of the New Capital, such as the general lay out of the new city, designs for the main buildings, and so on. And

[Mr. A. H. Ley.]

of course when questions of policy of this nature have arisen in the past, recently at any rate, the Government of India have appointed a Committee of non-officials, such as Mr. Vedamurti has referred to, known as the New Capital Inquiry Committee. And it is quite possible that, if large questions of policy of this kind arise in the future, Government may find it necessary to consider whether it is advisable to do so again. I rather think, however, that it is unlikely that this will occur. As the Honourable Mr. Vedamurti very rightly pointed out, these questions of policy, in which the public are generally interested, have been settled a long time ago; as he said, the horse has been stolen. Indeed his speech seemed to me to be a general attack upon Government for not having appointed a Committee, such as the New Capital Inquiry Committee, at an earlier stage. Well, I am not concerned at the present moment to defend the action of the Government in the past, some years ago, but the whole burden of his speech, as far as I understood it, was that when they appointed this New Capital Inquiry Committee it was already too late to lock the stable door; if that is so, how much later is it now, now that the lay-out of the city has long ago been settled and the buildings are nearing completion? I do not mean to suggest in my remarks that there is not a great deal of work still left to be done by the New Capital Committee. The work is extremely laborious as I know to my cost, but my point is this, that the main work of the New Capital Committee now is connected not with questions of policy of general public interest, but with purely administrative and technical details such as fall to the lot of any Public Works Department or any Department of Government, in which, as I think, the public themselves are not particularly interested. I have here in my hand, for instance, a copy of the proceedings of one of the meetings of the Capital Committee held last month. This is the sort of thing that comes before it. I will take the questions one by one as they arise:

Sanction to an estimate for sanitary services in the north and south blocks of the Secretariat;

sanction to an estimate for sewage disposal works, percolating filter, settling tanks, distributing pipes for percolating filters;

sanction to an estimate amounting to so much for constructing a silt and flushing tank on the main sewer near Delhi Gate;

sanction to an estimate amounting to so much for providing water supply and hydrants for syces' quarters, stables and coach houses;

note regarding the execution of an agreement with a temporary Engineer;

note regarding an extension of an agreement with an Architect;

sanction to an estimate amounting to so much for wiring for electric lights and fans;

supplementary estimate for installation of gas plant; estimate amounting to so much for filtered water supply for boiler feed, and supply of the Staff at Wazirabad.

It would weary the Council to go further through these details. I submit that these are the kind of administrative and technical details which are the ordinary work of a Department of Government, and it is, as far as I can see, an unheard-of procedure that they should be decided by a body on which non-officials are represented. And,

after all is said and done, if there is any desire that the public should take part in, or express their opinions on, matters of this character, the constitution as it exists at present affords ample opportunity for ventilation of opinion in these matters: questions can be asked, and are asked, in this House and in another place; Resolutions can be moved and are moved in this House and in another place, and also I may remind the Council that we shall shortly be electing a Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Industries and Labour, to whom the Honourable Member in charge of the Department will be at liberty to refer any questions of policy. I submit, Sir, that this is the ordinary procedure, and that the constitution, as it stands, affords ample opportunity for the expression of public opinion on questions of this nature. I cannot agree, Sir, that there is any more reason for employing non-officials in this New Capital Committee, which, as I say, is in fact a Department of the Government of India, than there is in employing non-officials in any other Department acting in an executive capacity. Clearly, therefore, I must oppose the Resolution as originally moved and the amendment.

THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Who do the Committee consist of?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: I am sorry I forgot to mention this. The Committee consist of a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, namely, the Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour, the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, a Secretary to the Government of India, that is myself, the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India, the Chief Engineer, Delhi, and a representative of the Finance Department, Mr. Brayne.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARADHIKARY (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, this, as the Honourable Mr. Ley has put it, is strictly a constitutional question, and those who want to advance constitutional progress must yield and obey where such questions are raised. I think, therefore, after what the Honourable Mr. Ley has explained to the House, that we must recognize that the Committee, which is really a part of the Department, or rather representative of several Departments, cannot be fittingly associated with non-official Members. I am glad the Honourable Mr. Ley has mentioned the near future formation of Committees to be associated with a Department like the Department of Industries. If this Department is not behindhand in accepting the advice of non-official Members, I do not think that the departmental Committee, if there is a case made out for it, would refuse such assistance. I think enough of a case has been made out by Mr. Vedomurti for such association, this will be borne out by the personal knowledge of those who are watching with interest, sometimes keen personal interest, the progress of work in Delhi; I think enough of a case has been made out for association in some shape of non-official Members with this Committee. Therefore, if it is in order, I would ask permission to move an amendment as follows:

"That after the word 'Delhi', in substitution of the words, 'be reconstituted with non-official members in the majority', the following words be added, namely, 'be assisted in its work by an advisory Committee of non-officials till the work is completed.'"

This departmental Committee, or, more strictly speaking, this representative Committee of several Departments will, if this amendment is carried, be assisted by an advisory committee of non-officials,—I will not say non-official members—but of non-officials. There may be Delhi people with

[Dr. Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary.]

axes to grind such as the Honourable Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan has alluded to; I am afraid in this imperfect world of ours, there is a lot of rusty axes always waiting to be ground, whether officials or non-officials control the thing. Those who have got to administer the Department in question must see if they can that the number of these rusty axes are as few as possible, but there will be some of these always and no one can prevent it, whether officials or non-officials control the situation. Non-officials on this score should not be barred out. There are men in the Punjab, Sir, like the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das—who is not here to-day—who, I am sure, would be able to give time if there was a Standing Advisory Committee like this, and even birds of passage who for three months in the year have to put up with all sorts of conceivable and inconceivable inconveniences and difficulties may be able to give some slight assistance and advice that may be useful to the Department itself and to this Committee that takes the place of several Departments. From all these points of view, Sir, I think the House would be well advised if, conceding and accepting the principle, as the Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy has done and as the Honourable Mr. Ley has also done, the House were to consent to the association of such a non-official advisory Committee with the New Capital Committee. I do not want to go into details; I think everyone of us, if he had his way, could spend not a quarter of an hour but hours in detailing the various matters to which they would like to call attention in the development of the New Capital. It would be useless to do so and we have now passed that stage. No one, and in particular Sir Umar Hayat Khan, need be apprehensive about the question of transfer of capital being re-opened. I think we have also passed that stage. We are now loyally settling down in trying to assist the Government and the departments with our advice, if it is worth having, and letting the thing progress as quickly as possible. I therefore, with your leave, move the amendment and I hope it will commend itself to the House.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member hand in at the table the wording of his amendment? Meantime the debate will proceed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. PHIROZE C. SETHNA: Sir, the Honourable Mr. Ley has explained to the House the Government view in regard to this Resolution. The explanation that has fallen from him is certainly very lucid. It would mean that the executive Committee which the Government have appointed would have to take action from day to day and in consequence of that, if any non-officials are added to that Committee, their presence would be necessary, I suppose, almost every day or at least once a week, in which case the choice would necessarily be restricted to people staying in Delhi. There are however many matters,—important matters, matters of principle, matters of opening of new roads or something out of the ordinary,—in which advice might be taken of non-officials. With that view, I think the Honourable Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary's amendment ought to be acceptable to the House and, if I support it, I do so with the knowledge that there does prevail a similar practice in at least one Provincial Government. As this House knows, the Bombay Government have undertaken a huge scheme for the development of Bombay City. This scheme involves nearly as large an expenditure as does the expenditure on New Delhi. When that motion was brought forward before the Bombay

Council, for having a department of Development Directorate, I happened to be a Member of that Council. I raised then this very point which my Honourable friend Mr. Vedamurti has raised here to-day. I suggested that non-officials might be associated with officials in the discharge of the work of the Development Directorate. Before that, I may remind my Honourable friend Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, who said that the Government of India could not delegate their power to a Committee, that I believe the Bombay Government informed us they had the right to delegate their power to the Directorate of Development of the city of Bombay. The Government of Bombay refused to have any non-officials to help the Department, but they did accept to an extent the suggestion that fell from me and appointed an advisory Committee which still continues. Therefore, Sir, I think the amendment of my Honourable friend Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, if I may say so, is exactly on the lines of what does exist in regard to a very big development in one of the Provinces—a development which will cost the Bombay Government as much as New Delhi will cost the Government of India. Consequently, Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting my Honourable friend Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary's amendment.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Before I put the amendment formally, I should like to inquire from the Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy whether, in view of this amendment, he desires to ask for permission to withdraw his amendment.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: When I moved the amendment, I was not aware of the constitutional position of this Committee. I did not know then that it was an administrative body forming simply a department of the Government of India and that the powers of the Government of India had been delegated to that Committee. In view of the very lucid explanation given by the Honourable Mr. Ley, I am prepared to withdraw my amendment with the permission of the Council in favour of the amendment proposed by my Honourable friend Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary.

The amendment moved by the Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy was, by leave of the Council, withdrawn.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The amendment now before the House is:

"After the word 'Delhi' to the end of the Resolution, the following words be substituted:

'be assisted in its work by an advisory committee of non-officials till the work is completed.'"

That amendment and the Resolution are still under discussion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: Sir, if it is understood by this amendment that it is not necessary for the Government to appoint another and an additional Committee, and, if we can utilise the services of the Committee to which I referred and to which my Honourable friend Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary referred, namely, the Standing Advisory Committee of the Department of Industries and Labour, which will be an advisory Committee to that department, I have no objection to accepting the amendment on that understanding. I think that was the Honourable Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary's intention. (*The Honourable Dr. Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary*: "No, no.") We are going now to appoint a Committee which will be an advisory Committee to the Department of

[Mr. A. H. Ley.]

Industries and Labour and that Committee, I submit, Sir, can equally well advise the New Delhi Capital Committee, which is really a part of the Department of Industries and Labour or at any rate on very much the same lines. I should be quite prepared, on that understanding, to accept the amendment.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Sir, that was not my intention. On the other hand, I think the Committee, to which the Honourable Mr. Ley referred, would necessarily be one on which people who could always attend will not be available. And the Committee that the Honourable Mr. Ley has in his mind would have much more to do than they can if the Department desires their full advice on New Delhi. The Committee I have in view was indicated by the names that I mentioned—men like the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das or some resident in and about Delhi, who would be always available.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member does not make it clear in his amendment. He had better make it clear.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: As far as I can see, Sir, it is clear. The amendment is for the substitution of the words "be assisted in its work by an advisory Committee of non-officials till the work is completed." That explains the situation entirely.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member pass the amendment to the table.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: I have added the words "to be specially appointed."

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has suggested to the House the insertion of the words "specially appointed." It will meet his point, but I am unable to agree that it fully meets his case. As I understood his explanation of his intention, he desires that the members of the Committee should not only be specially appointed, but should be persons continuously present in Delhi or be likely to be present.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: That is what I am indicating by way of suggestion to the Government. In appointing the Committee, they will probably bear it in mind that the services of the members should be had who would be easily available.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: If it is a condition it should appear in the amendment, if it is merely an argument it need not do so. However, I leave it to the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY: I am afraid, Sir, with this explanation I cannot accept this amendment. I have agreed that we should be free to consult the Standing Advisory Committee. The question is one of expediting the work as far as possible. They are purely technical details—nearly all of them; and, if we have always got to refer each question to a particular non-official member, I am afraid the work will be very seriously delayed. I am quite prepared to consult, whenever it is considered necessary, the ordinary Advisory Committee of the Department.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. A. BARRON (Delhi: Nominated Official): Sir, may I intervene in this debate to point out one or two practical considerations in connection with this amendment. This advisory Committee of non-officials which, it is suggested, should be appointed. What is it going to do? The main lines of the work have been laid down and the work has been proceeding on those lines for several years. The sums allotted under the various heads, sub-heads, and sub-sub-heads—
12 Noon. there are hundreds of them—are all given in detail in the printed project estimates. No expenditure can go outside those estimates without the sanction of the New Capital Committee, and very often the sanction of the Secretary of State. A large work like this cannot be altered in any essential details from day to day. No advisory Committee could now suggest that the main buildings should be moved to another site. The roads, the railway system, the sewage scheme, the electric lighting scheme, these are all big matters which take up a vast proportion of the total expenditure, and cannot now be changed. We have already had, as has already been mentioned by the Honourable Mover, an Advisory Committee. This consisted of seven Members, five of whom were non-officials.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: That is a defunct body now.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. A. BARRON: It sat only last year. It went through the whole of the project and it showed where alterations could be made and where alterations could not be made at this stage of the proceedings.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: But it is now *functus officio*.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. A. BARRON: It may be defunct, but its advice still remains. And as an instance of that advice I may mention that only at the last meeting of the New Capital Committee the scheme referred to by the Mover of the Resolution with regard to the Indrapat Reservoir scheme came up for discussion. The House will remember that the Advisory Committee said that beyond the Indian War Memorial Arch as little money as possible should be spent on that area. The architect responsible for this particular part of the work was present at that meeting, and I am afraid the New Capital Committee ruthlessly threw out the enormous amount of money he wished to spend there and cut the thing down to the absolute minimum in accordance with the advice of this defunct Committee. My point is that we have already had only last year this Advisory Committee composed almost entirely of non-officials. The advice of this Committee is being acted up to.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI: It completed its labours over a year ago. It reported in November 1922.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. A. BARRON: I accept the correction, Sir. The Committee finished its labours about 15 months ago and not a year ago. The difference is slight. This work began in 1913. The advice of that Committee is being followed as far as possible by the New Capital Committee. I do not think that a further Committee of non-officials could be consulted on anything but the most trivial details. They would very soon get so bored with their work that the Committee would hardly ever meet.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, I did not propose originally to intervene in this debate as my experience of the New Capital Committee is about a year old and I have no up-to-date information as to what exactly is going on in the Department of Industries and Labour with regard to this particular subject. But, having been in charge of the Department of Public Works for some time, and having been connected with the Capital Committee, I think I ought not to allow some observations made by the Honourable Mover to go absolutely unchallenged, because an impression might be created that the Government admit that in the past their policy might have been varied considerably if the help of non-officials had been sought at an earlier stage when the horse was not stolen, and that it is now too late perhaps to lock the door. I wish it to be clearly understood that the Government do not admit that any very great changes would have been possible having regard to the peculiar circumstances of the construction which had to be undertaken in New Delhi by reason of any extraneous assistance which could have been obtained, at any rate in the late stages of the adoption of this scheme. Allusion has been made to a difference of view with regard to the construction of Legislative Chambers. Of course, the plans had been settled long before I assumed charge. Therefore, I may say that I was not directly or indirectly responsible for them. But still, having gone through the records of those dates, I must state on behalf of the Government that the matter was very very carefully inquired into. The different views which were expressed by certain sections of the Committee, which was appointed in 1922-23, were taken into consideration before a final decision had been reached. It was not therefore without a considerable discussion of the merits and the demerits of the particular type of building which was finally adopted that the Government had come to a decision. But it was after the most anxious inquiry and after consulting all their expert advisers that a final decision had been reached as to the particular type of building, having regard to the locality in which it had to be fixed. I am not here now to justify as to whether that particular decision was a correct decision or not. All that I am trying to insist on is that the opposite view, which could have been put forward, has been put forward and it has been anxiously inquired into and the Government have felt that there was no alternative but to adopt the proposals which their expert advisers had put forward, and that it was the only possible and feasible scheme under the circumstances in which the construction had proceeded up to that point. Various points of detail might have been possibly altered with reference to the accommodation which has been provided in the various buildings in Raisina. But I understood that some of the non-official members of the old Legislative Assembly had been taken into confidence with regard to the construction of the hostels before the final plans were evolved. That was of course before my time. But still it was not without some non-official advice that the final plans were evolved. If experience has proved that that advice might have been different, it is to be regretted; but the Government did what they could in that regard before the plans were finally approved.

The question of the cost was alluded to at some length. It has also formed the subject-matter of an inquiry both by the Capital Committee which sat in 1922-23 and by others who investigated the problem, and I am free to admit that, if the buildings had been completed before the war came on, considerable savings would have been possible having regard to the low wages and the small cost of materials that prevailed before the

war. But, owing to reasons with which all the Honourable Members are familiar, it was impossible to spare any money or to find officers to execute the work during the war. With the enormous increase in prices and in wages after the war there was no alternative for the Government but to face the increased expenditure if they were to go on with the scheme which had been originally contemplated. Even now they find that they are not able to accommodate all the officials of the various departments in New Delhi and some doubts have been felt as to whether some new buildings have not to be constructed in order to provide accommodation for all the officers, both superior and subordinate, in Raisina. The elaborate embellishments that were at one time hoped for have been ruthlessly cut down and it is believed that, after the scheme on its existing lines is completed and handed over to the Government, the public themselves will come forward and press upon the Government various items of expenditure in order to make some of these buildings worthy of the New Capital. But that is in the distant future and it will be for the then non-official Members of the Legislature to consider what steps should be taken to improve the exterior and interior of public buildings of which all of us ought to be proud as a nation. I have made these remarks for the simple purpose of explaining to the House and to the outside public that the Government have been very vigilant in the past and have tried to reduce the cost to the lowest possible minimum, to such good effect that those who have intimate knowledge of the construction of similar buildings in London and other places are surprised at the phenomenally low cost at which we have been carrying out our works in the new city of Delhi.

To come to the immediate object of the Resolution, I ask Honourable Members, especially after the explanation which has been given by the Honourable the Chief Commissioner and the Honourable Mr. Ley, whether any considerable purpose would be served by the appointment of another advisory Committee to assist the Delhi Committee in their labours. Being a non-official myself and knowing the minds of my non-official friends. I went into some of these questions with a view to finding out whether it was possible to devise any machinery by which the assistance of public opinion could be utilized in the matter of the granting of contracts, in reducing expenditure, and so on. But I realized that the task was hopeless, for the simple reason that all the plans had been settled and any disturbance of them at this stage would mean enormous delay and additional expenditure. No contracts of any value are accepted except by tender. Responsible officials have to accept these tenders after careful scrutiny, and I therefore felt that by associating non-officials with the Executive and Superintending Engineers, who are in charge of the work, or with the Delhi Committee, nothing could be gained, while the officers who are in charge of the work would deeply resent any interference from the outside public in these matters, doubtless considering that suspicion was thrown upon them by so doing. I would ask Honourable Members to remember that in all these matters tenders are invited, carefully scrutinised by the officials in charge, and only then accepted. The work is done on that system and therefore not much of a saving could be effected. The designs are there and have been settled; it is therefore not to be expected that an advisory committee would be of any great use. There are several points of conflict between the New Capital Committee and the citizens of Delhi, *e.g.*, in regard to the water supply, the purchase of building sites in New Delhi, and so on. But harmony I believe has recently been restored and I should be sorry to see any further friction arise. I think, if Honourable Members take an interest in the matter, they have it in their power

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

by continued vigilance on the Advisory Committee, which is to be associated with the Department of Industries and Labour to press any reforms which they may desire and bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Government to see that their wishes if reasonable and arguable prevail; for it has to be remembered that the members of that Advisory Committee will also be Members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. I would therefore commend the Honourable Mr. Ley's suggestion that only such Members as care to devote their time to this task should come forward to serve on this Advisory Committee. And, if we can find Members of both Houses who are able to spare the time for this purpose, I think the Government would be ready and anxious to seek their assistance. If only Rs. 10,000 was saved as a result of their labours, I think both the Government and the public would be extremely grateful to them. I think therefore that the suggestion that residents of Delhi should be associated with the New Capital Committee should be dropped at this stage. As for outside assistance, it is very difficult to get it. It was very difficult for me to get Members to stay for some time when we sat in November 1922, and Honourable Members will readily understand why it was so. It is unlikely therefore that we can get expert engineers from outside Delhi to come and assist us. Beside, as you perfectly know, no two engineers ever agree on most points. I think the work is being expedited smoothly and if Honourable Members will accept the suggestion I have offered with regard to the Standing Advisory Committee attached to the Department of Industries and Labour they will inspire confidence both in the public and in the Government.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Sir, I have consulted some of my Honourable friends on this side of the House and I am prepared to fall in with the view which has been suggested. I would therefore, with your permission, like to omit from my amendment the words "specially appointed."

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Is it your pleasure that in the amendment moved by Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary the words "specially appointed" be omitted.

This portion of the amendment was, by leave of the Council, withdrawn.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The amendment now stands as follows:

"That the words from 'be reconstituted' to the end be omitted and the following be substituted:

'Be assisted in its work by an advisory committee of non-officials till the work is completed.'"

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. VEDAMURTI: Sir, as my object in moving the Resolution is merely to see that somehow or other non-officials are associated with the New Capital Committee, I am willing to accept the amendment that has been moved by Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary. In doing so I should like to point out that after all it is not an unheard-of procedure that it is proposed to follow. If I may quote the instance of Japan for the edification of the Honourable Mr. Ley, I can tell him that for the reconstruction of Tokio and Yokohama, which have been ruined by the recent earthquake, there has been constituted a Board of Construction evidently equivalent to the New Capital Committee which is under

the control of the Cabinet and which is to be assisted by an Advisory Committee of Reconstruction composed of eight prominent men, besides the Cabinet Ministers, such as leaders of political parties, influential members of the House of Peers, Privy Councillors and Directors of leading Companies. After all, it is not an unheard-of procedure, it is a procedure that is followed in other lands; and to the argument that has been advanced by the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma that non-officials will be of practically no use, there has been the answer of the Honourable Mr. Barron, who said that the Hailey Committee has been of much use and that even to-day its advice is being taken . . .

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I have not said that non-officials will be of practically no use; on the other hand, I welcome the suggestion that they should be employed for the purpose of assisting us in the manner suggested by the Honourable Mr. Ley.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The original Resolution moved was:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the New Capital Committee, Delhi, be reconstituted with non-official members in the majority."

To that Resolution an amendment has been moved:

"That for the words after 'Delhi,' the following be substituted, 'be assisted in its work by an advisory committee of non-officials till the work is completed.'"

The question is that that amendment be made.

The motion was adopted.

The further question therefore is that the following Resolution be adopted:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the New Capital Committee, Delhi, be assisted in its work by an advisory committee of non-officials till the work is completed."

The motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I take it, Sir, that the non-official advisory committee referred to is the Standing Advisory Committee. On that understanding, I do not oppose.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I put the question to the House, and I understand it accepted the motion. The Resolution, as amended, is therefore carried.

The Resolution, as amended, was adopted.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS FOR THURSDAY. THE 14TH FEBRUARY, 1924.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Has the Honourable the Leader of the House any statement to make as to future business?

THE HONOURABLE DR. MIAN SIR MUHAMMAD SHAFI (Law Member): Sir, the next meeting of this Council for official business will be on Thursday, the 14th instant, on which day, as already announced, motions will be made by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief that the Cantonments Bill be taken into consideration and passed. There is also a motion in

[Dr. Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi.]

the name of the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma regarding the election of Members for the Standing Committee to advise on questions relating to emigration in the Department of Education, Health and Lands, and a motion by the Honourable Mr. Crerar regarding the election of a member of the Standing Publicity Committee in place of Sir Purshottandas Thakur-das who has ceased to be a Member of this Council. Thereafter, as you announced yesterday, Sir, there will be elections to the departmental Advisory Committees. I am not at present in a position to make any announcement as to the official business which may be brought before the Council on Tuesday, the 19th as the agenda will depend on the progress made with legislation in another place during this week.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That finishes the business of the day. I therefore adjourn the Council till 11 a.m. to-morrow.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 13th February, 1924.