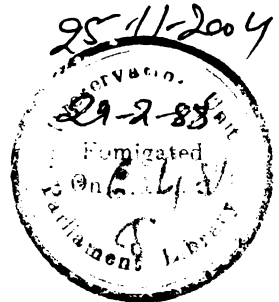


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COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

Volume V

(20th January to 26th March 1925)

FIFTH SESSION
OF THE
COUNCIL OF STATE, 1925



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, 25th February, 1925.

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

MEMBER SWORN:

The Honourable Mr. Evelyn Robins Abbott, C.I.F. (Delhi: Nominated Official).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Sir, may I be permitted to put all the questions, Nos. 109 to 115 together, as I understand the Honourable Member in charge would like to lay on the table written answers.

LOAN OF MEDICAL MEN TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

109. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Would the Government please state whether and when medical men belonging to different cadres in British India were lent to the States of Rajputana for the opening and working of hospitals and dispensaries in these States?

QUALIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

110. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Would the Government please state the number and qualifications of these medical officers and the condition of service under which their service was lent by the Government from time to time?

COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

111. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Would the Government please state if any of them have been ordered to be compulsorily retired on proportionate pension or otherwise, before they are due to retire under the rules of service by which they were originally governed?

GRIEVANCES OF MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

112. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Is it a fact that these officers were subjected to various difficulties and hardships and that the increase of emoluments and promotion due to them under conditions of their service have not in all cases been accorded to them?

TRIBUTES PAID TO THE MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

113. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Is it a fact that Chief Medical Officers have spoken of their work from time to time in terms of praise? In particular has the attention of Government been called to the tribute paid to certain of them by Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt in August, 1924?

COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

114. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Is it a fact that in 1921 the Government of India expressed themselves averse to their compulsory retirement and considered that in view of the fact that the Sub-Assistant Surgeons were originally sent to Rajputana to meet the needs of various States concerned the States should continue to employ them until they were due to retire, or until they were absorbed elsewhere with their consent?

COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MEDICAL MEN LENT TO THE RAJPUTANA STATES.

115. THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: (a) Is it a fact that the Government find themselves unable to reabsorb such as are not yet due to retire, in spite of which they have been or are about to be retired compulsorily on proportionate pension?

(b) If the answer to the above be in the affirmative, would the Government please state if they are prepared to compensate the officers concerned for their loss and if so, how?

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL S. B. A. PATTERSON: A memorandum containing the information asked for by the Honourable Member in questions Nos. 109 to 115 is laid on the table.

109. Yes. Medical men of the hospital assistant (now called Sub-Assistant Surgeon) class have in the past been lent to Indian States in Rajputana for employment in hospitals and dispensaries in those States. Owing to shortness of time and the absence of old records in Calcutta, it has not been possible to ascertain exactly when, or in what circumstances, the practice originated. It is known, however, to have been in force as long ago as 1878 and was probably in existence earlier still. It was however in 1882 that it was placed on a regular footing. In that year Government accepted a recommendation of the Agent to the Governor General in Rajputana for the constitution of a regular cadre of Hospital Assistants to man the dispensaries maintained in various States. They were to be considered as Government servants lent to an Indian State, their pay at Government rates and the cost of educating them as medical students being borne by the States rateably according to the number of dispensaries established in each State.

110. The Government of India have no information as to the numbers and qualifications of the men who have been transferred to service in Indian States in Rajputana in this connection from time to time. Arrangements for the recruitment and distribution of this class of medical officer were made locally. The men were Government servants specially recruited for service in Rajputana and were lent on foreign service conditions to the various states concerned.

111. Yes. In 1910 the Agent to the Governor General reported that the majority of States concerned desired the discontinuance of the system under which Sub-Assistant Surgeons in their employ were recruited as Government servants and were under the control of the Chief Medical Officer, Rajputana. They desired to take their medical institutions under their own control and supervision. The question of providing for the existing staff of Sub-Assistant Surgeons was thus raised and was under consideration, for many years, the Agent to the Governor General being asked to endeavour to arrange for absorption in various ways. In 1921 he reported that though a large number of Sub-Assistant Surgeons had been satisfactorily provided for, there were 49 men whose cases remained undecided. There were no openings for them in Government service outside Rajputana and their continued service in States was not feasible, in some cases because they were not wanted by Darbars and in others because they were unwilling to adopt State service.

The Government of India were very reluctant to resort to the final alternative of compulsory retirement, but, after all other efforts to provide for these men had failed, they were constrained to authorize the Agent to the Governor General to take the necessary steps for discharging them under Article 426, etc., of the Civil Service Regulations.

112. The Government of India have no information on the subject.

113. The Government of India are not aware of the reports referred to, but it seems quite probable that such opinions have been locally expressed.

114. Yes. As already indicated in the reply to question No. 111 above, the Government of India were anxious that compulsory retirement should only be resorted to as the last resource.

115. (a) Yes. The circumstances have already been described in the reply to question No. 111 above.

(b) No. The Government of India are not prepared to compensate the men further than has already been done. They have been treated in the same way as other Government servants who may lose their employment through reduction of establishment, and, as all efforts to provide employment for them elsewhere have failed, the only course open was to retire them and grant them the compensation pension admissible under the rules just as has been done in innumerable recent cases occasioned by the policy of retrenchment. It was also considered that compulsory retirement involves less hardship for medical officers than for most other classes of Government servants since, if they are really efficient, they should have little difficulty in making a living by private practice.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: Sir, I would like to ask some supplementary questions, of which I have handed the Honourable Member a copy, and he tells me that he would like to have time to answer. May I just read out the supplementary questions and, with your leave, the answers may be given later?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member read the questions.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: 1. Would the Government please place on the table (when found) the original terms of employment of these officers?

2. Is it not a fact that these cases are not covered by any of the retrenchment or reduction rules of Government, and that such rules did not exist when the loan of these officers was decided upon?

3. Would the Government in their Medical Department be pleased to state why the officers in question with their added experience cannot be absorbed in the service?

4. Would the Government please state the length of service to the credit of each officer about to be retired and the period for which they would have to serve before retirement in due course would be insisted on, and what the loss in pay and in pension in each case would be?

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL S. B. A. PATTERSON: Sir. I will endeavour to obtain the information asked for by the Honourable Member in as short a time as possible. In some cases the archives in Calcutta dating back to the early Seventies will have to be examined and so it will take a little time.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: May I suggest that, if the answers are not available while the Council is yet in session, copies of the answers may be forwarded to me and published in due course?

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL S. B. A. PATTERSON: Yes, Sir.

BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table the following Bills which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at their meeting held on the 24th February, 1925.

1. A Bill to amend the Prisons Act, 1894.
2. A Bill to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924.

RESOLUTION *RE* INCLUSION OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC IN RAILWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HAROON JAFFER (Bombay Presidency: Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to direct Local Governments to include a representative of the travelling public, elected by recognized passenger associations, in the Railway Advisory Committees in the provincial headquarters."

The Resolution which I have just moved appears to me to be so vitally connected with public utility that I feel sure our far-seeing Government always anxious to know and administer to the needs of the masses will accept it in its entirety and give operation to its provisions at a very early date.

The appointment of Railway Advisory Committees was a very wise and commendable move undertaken in response to many requests from

different public bodies, and the proposal which I now beg to make is a necessary sequence to that action. Government have laid great stress on the work of these Advisory Committees, and there is no doubt but that they will form a very useful link between the travelling public and the Railway Administration. But to make them really useful it certainly is absolutely necessary to have a representative of the travelling public on these bodies. The political and educational awakening in the country has led to the formation during recent years of many Passengers' Associations, a large number of which are already representative bodies doing their best to promote and safeguard the comfort and convenience of the travelling public, and their work has earned and received the appreciation of Government and the Railway Department. Yet, despite this very evident success and usefulness, they have not as yet been granted representation on these Advisory Committees, not even the Passengers' Protecting Society of India, which was the first association formed to carry out its work on behalf of the crores of people who travel up and down India every year. Surely at least a society like this could be given representation on those Committees, especially as the actual proposal for the establishment of those Advisory Committees found its birth in that Society. On several occasions it addressed Government drawing attention to the usefulness of a closer contact between the travellers and the Railway Board, which could be obtained by the formation of some such associations or committees. In 1920 a deputation of the old Council Members, of which I had the honour to be one alongside the Honourable Mr. Khaparde, Mr. Patel, Mr. Kamini Kumar Chanda, and a representative Secretary of the Society went to the Government with various suggestions, one of which was the formation of Advisory Committees, and although Government could not or did not accept the proposal at that time, Sir George Barnes expressed his sympathy with it and promised to give it his best consideration. But later, when the Acworth Committee was appointed by Government to consider the working of the Railways, this Society continued its agitation, and at last that Committee accepted the suggestion and recommended to Government the establishment of Advisory Committees. When stating the Government view on one of Mr. Joshi's Resolutions in the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Sir Charles Innes commended the work of the Society. Yet its representative has been given no seat so far on any Advisory Committee.

The same anomalous position is to be seen in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal where there are excellent Passenger Associations doing most useful work on their own, without any voice whatever on the Advisory Committees. I need not here refer to the admirable work done by the Bombay society under the chairmanship of my friend the Honourable Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas. Surely the present state of affairs can and should be remedied, and so I earnestly request the Government to accept my Resolution and direct the Railways to nominate one representative of a recognised passenger association on all Advisory Committees.

THE HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, my name has been brought up by the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution in connection with the Bombay Passengers' Association. Sir, I was Chairman of that Association till the end of last year. I have now resigned the Presidentship both on account of the press of other work and for other reasons also. That Association did

[Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas.]

apply to the Bombay, Baroda and Central India and the Great Indian Peninsula Railways to allow them to elect one representative on the Railway Advisory Committees and the answer that they received from the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway was that, when their Railway Advisory Committees met for the first time, this question would be discussed at the meeting, and if it was found desirable that this Association should be represented, then they would consider this question. I believe—I am speaking from memory—that at the first meeting this question was raised at both the Advisory Committees and both of them thought that the representation of public bodies was quite sufficient and that at present there was no reason why the Association need be given separate representation on any Advisory Committee. Later on when we found that the Madras Association which is affiliated to ours, had been given the opportunity of sending a representative to the South Indian Railway Advisory Committee, I wrote demiofficially to the Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. He however said that public interests were very well represented and that therefore it was unnecessary to give special representation to the Railway Passengers' Association. The Association did however feel that, if it was allowed to elect a representative, it would strengthen its hands and that it would then be able to do much more useful work than it is able to do at present. On the other hand, if I understand aright, the attitude of the Railways as well as of the Railway Board is that the Association was not strong enough, was not representative enough, to be given this right. What actually happens is this. Such an Association is not able to get the support of the public if it is not recognized by the railways or by Government. On the other hand, the Government and the Railways say, "Your Association is not strong enough, therefore we will not give you representation." That is the present position. I thought I had better make the whole position clear to the House. I have only to add that if Government see their way to allow these Associations to have representatives on the Railway Advisory Committees, the Associations would feel sincerely grateful.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN (Madras: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, as my Honourable friend, the Mover, has referred to Madras, I feel it my duty to state that I know as a matter of fact that on the Railway Advisory Committee of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway of which I happen to be a member, there is a representative of the Madras Passengers' Association. I might further state what is but due to the officials that, generally speaking, the representations made to them are generally very carefully attended to. So far as Madras is concerned, I know that in Madras our Railway Advisory Committee contains a representative of the Madras Railway Passengers' Association.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab: Non-Muhammadan). Sir, I rise to support the Resolution which has been so well moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Haroon Jaffer; and, as I think the Bombay Railway Passengers' Association is a representative body, it ought to have one nominee on the Railway Advisory Committee of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. The proposal is simply a modest one and is, I think, reasonable. I hope Government will kindly see their way to accept it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. T. CHADWICK (Commerce Secretary): Sir, I value this Resolution because it shows the interest which the Council

of State takes in these new bodies, namely the local Advisory Committees which have been attached to the Railways. The object of these Committees is to bring representative local opinion into closer touch with the Railways and with the railway administration, to secure closer touch with public feeling and to obviate mutual misunderstandings. These Committees are not bodies for conducting debates; they are intended to be practical working bodies. They also form a new experiment in any case; they have only been in existence for a year or a little more than a year, and whether they succeed or not is a matter of very great interest to us in this Council of State and to the country as a whole. But at present they are very tender plants. Now, Sir, in order to have a good working body of that nature, I think everybody will agree that it ought to be small in numbers and that it ought to be as representative as possible and that it should not be a packed body. For these reasons, Government have refrained from laying down very tight restrictions upon how these Committees should be formed. They think it much better that a great latitude should be left to the local centres. Yesterday, we heard a great deal of the advantages of decentralization. We do not want to centralize or place in strait waistcoats these local Advisory Committees, which are essentially local by their name and in their objects. We do not want to lay down elaborate rules specifying who shall be on them and who shall not be on them, and whether representatives shall be nominated or elected, or how they should be elected, whether by the single transferable vote or by any of the other encumbrances or difficulties that hamper our own procedure here at times. I will read, if the Council will allow me, the instructions which the Government of India have sent about these Local Committees.

“*Constitution.*—A separate main Committee to be constituted for each administration.”

that is for each railway administration,

“the number of members being decided by circumstances subject to a maximum of 12.”

I think everybody will agree that 12 is a good working maximum.

“The Agent to be *ex-Officio* Chairman.”

He is the only railway man on the Committee. There is thus no question of packing the Committee with railway officials.

“The remaining members to consist of—

two Local Government members nominated by the Local Government in whose jurisdiction the headquarters of the railway in question is situated;

three representatives of the Legislative Council of the Government in whose jurisdiction the headquarters of the railway in question is situated. These members should be selected to represent rural interests and the travelling public.”

It is left to the local Legislative Council to select three representatives of rural interests and the travelling public. I draw attention to the words “rural interests and travelling public.”

“one member from the local municipality or corporation at the railway headquarters;

five members representing industries, commerce and trade.

The method of selection of the non-official members to be left largely to local discretion.”

[Mr. D. T. Chadwick.]

The House will see, Sir, that at least nine out of the twelve members are non-officials.

"The method of selection of the non-official members to be left largely to local discretion. The representatives of the Legislative Council need not necessarily be Members of the Council."

Therefore, it is perfectly competent for the Legislative Council to select representatives from powerful, strong, railway passenger associations in any of the headquarter towns, if they exist. It is perfectly open to them to recognise such associations and nominate one of its members as one of their representatives on the local Advisory Committee.

"Members of the Central Advisory Council are not debarred from membership of Local Advisory Committees. The five members representing industries, commerce and trade would ordinarily be drawn from important local bodies representing predominant trade interests; the actual selection of such bodies should be made in consultation with the Local Government, and once the selection is made it should be left to them to nominate or elect their representatives. The tenure of office of the members to be left to the electing or nominating bodies to decide."

I cannot conceive of any rules that could be framed more freely and which could give greater power and greater latitude to Local Governments and to local interests. Now, Sir, we are asked to insert some rigidity into these rules, to insist that recognised railway passengers' associations at headquarters should be given seats on these Committees, which seats are to be filled by election from among the members. That is, as you see, prescribing details to an extent hitherto not attempted.

Before I deal further with that I would examine on what this claim is based and would like to disabuse the Council from one or two misapprehensions. I am thankful for the support that I got from the Honourable Mr. Natesan. He showed that in Madras under this very constitution as framed, the Legislative Council, the Corporation or somebody else did find passenger associations at work and did appoint to the Advisory Committee as their representative men who were members of those passengers' associations. We could not have gathered that fact from the speech of the Honourable Mover. He gave us the impression that none of these Railway Passengers' Associations got a chance. I now turn to my friend the Honourable Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas. He referred to his letter to the Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. I have got a copy of that letter here. But he did not tell the Council that at the time that it was written that Mr. Nansey, the Secretary of that Association (*The Honourable Mr. Lalubhai Samaldas*: "Mr. Jivaraj Nansey") was in fact, under this constitution already framed, a member of the Local Advisory Committee of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway appointed by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. If the Corporation appointed Mr. Nansey to the Advisory Committee attached to one Railway in Bombay and did not see it fit to appoint him to another Railway Committee whose headquarters is also in Bombay, that is a matter entirely for the Corporation and it is not a matter to be brought up by a Resolution in the Council of State. Presumably the Bombay Corporation have good reasons; perhaps they wanted that somebody else should be put on the Committee of the other Railway. I do not know their reasons and they are immaterial to us. The Council will see that the Secretary of this Passengers' Association has in fact already been nominated a member of the local Advisory Committee on one of these

Railways in Bombay by the Corporation of Bombay and that has taken place under the constitution as at present framed. Yet the Honourable Mover based his case on the implication that this Association, of which this gentleman is Secretary, is shut out from these Committees.

Then, again, we know that many of these associations are very small, some are one-man shows. This Resolution, as it stands, begs the question. It refers to election by recognised passenger associations. Recognised by whom? Are we here, the Government of India, to say what constitutes recognition? Is it not much better to leave that to the local authorities, the local people, amongst whom these men live? Is it not better to leave the matter to the local Legislative Council and to the Corporation, who know the standing of these bodies and who are free to send whom they will as their representatives? Therefore, Sir, I regret that I am not in a position to accept this Resolution as it stands.

I have forgotten a point, of which my Honourable Leader has reminded me and he, by so doing like a true leader, is keeping me up to the mark; I am indebted to him. If this Resolution is to be passed, are you going to increase the number of these local Advisory Committees? Does Bombay wish to have on its Council the unlucky number of thirteen to make room for one association? It would perhaps be an unlucky and unwelcome change. If they are to be provided for by additions how many of these associations are going to crop up? Or is it intended that they should be included at the cost of the representatives of the already established bodies of trade, commerce and industries, who are interested in Railways, or is it suggested that the discretion and patronage which has been given to the local Legislative Councils should be withdrawn from them? I do not think that either of such courses is likely to increase the popularity of the Railway Board with local institutions. These Railway Advisory Committees are very young bodies; we hope that they will become extremely useful. I do earnestly submit to this Council that they have been in existence only for 18 months and it is unnecessary and unwise to interfere with them or to alter the constitution. Passengers' Associations ought to be able to bring their influence to bear on their local Legislative Councils or the Corporations of the town in which they are situated.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HAROON JAFFER: Sir, I am sorry that the Government has not seen their way to accept even a Resolution which seeks to improve the administration of the Railways. If representatives of such associations are put on Advisory Committees, they would have before them true and complete knowledge of the grievances and the needs of the masses, whose interests, I know, are very dear to Government. I still hope that the Government will keep the matter in mind and give effect to it in some form or other on account of its great practical utility. Sir, I now leave it to the Council to decide the fate of my Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is that the following Resolution be adopted:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to direct Local Governments to include a representative of the travelling public, elected by recognised passenger associations, in the Railway Advisory Committees in the provincial headquarters."

The motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION *RE* REDUCTION OF INTERMEDIATE AND THIRD CLASS RAILWAY FARES.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI CHOWDHURI MUHAMMAD ISMAIL KHAN (West Bengal: Muhammadan): Sir, I do not wish to move my Resolution.*

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member withdraw his Resolution? There is a Standing Order which lays down that the Honourable Member called must either move or withdraw his motion.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI CHOWDHURI MUHAMMAD ISMAIL KHAN: Sir, I withdraw my Resolution.

RESOLUTION *RE* IMPROVEMENT OF WATERWAYS.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HAROON JAFFER: Sir, I beg to move my second Resolution which runs thus:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint an expert Committee to consider the advisability of reshaping many of India's most important water-roads in order to provide heavy water transport to her innermost doors, security of land against erosion, reclamation of land, and tidal power for electric schemes."

In moving this important Resolution, I will at the very outset admit that I am broaching a very technical subject, and that is why I am bringing before this Honourable House that most unhappy of all visions, namely, the appointment of "an expert committee". For the same reason I am going to refrain from going into the subject with any degree of detail, because I realise that it is a matter for experts and for their investigation rather than for a gathering of politicians, no matter how far-seeing and how enthusiastic we may be. All I am asking for in this Resolution is a committee of inquiry who will bring in their recommendations for careful consideration in due course, although I hope that consideration will not be delayed for many months.

I think that all the Honourable Members present will agree with me that considering the size of its population India should be ashamed of the state of its rivers. If there be any, however, who do not agree with this statement, then I would inform them that they are disagreeing not only with what I think but with what the foremost engineers of the country think, and with what no less an authority than Engineer-Commander W. A. Williams thinks about it. Indeed, I say that my Resolution found its cue in a lecture given by this eminent engineer, although perhaps I should add that, as far as I know, he is absolutely unaware of my intentions in using his remarks as the foundation of my Resolution. But his remarks were so striking that they literally compelled the framing of this Resolution, as also I believe they will compel the passing of the Resolution.

Anyone who travels extensively over India and Burma will be forcibly impressed with the enormous extent of the yearly—and we might almost say daily—erosion and consequent alteration of the channels of the rivers. In fact, these channels have been found so shallow and so in-

* "This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that immediate steps be taken for increase of the comforts and conveniences of the third class travelling public of India and to reduce the third and intermediate class railway fares to their pre-war level."

definite in their courses that it has actually been found undesirable, if not absolutely impracticable, to formulate rules for inland ship construction and navigation. In other lands, which possess rivers of much less width and natural depth than those in India, the fullest use is made of the inland waterways, and the Governments spare no pains to improve the existing waterways and to establish others if possible. It is a recognised fact that water conveyance is by far the cheapest of all traction; but here in India we find large rivers not only going to waste but actually diminishing in size or yearly becoming more shallow because of the lack of attention which is bestowed upon them.

According to those experts who have studied the question as it relates to India, the immediate requirements are measures for the prevention of erosion and the formation of channels of sufficient depth to enable a decent wave to proceed unhampered. This absence of river banks which are being demolished by erosion might almost be termed a river disease, and nearly every province is suffering from it. As a result the vast quantities of flowing water spread themselves over the land in the form of floods which have done such enormous damage in various parts of India recently, and I make bold to state in this very connection that a scientific treatment of this erosion question would go a very long way towards the prevention of such disastrous floods and of the consequent famines and misery. Bengal and Madras are great sufferers from this river disease. Moreover, the correct treatment of the trouble would have productive as well as preventive benefits. Wealth could be acquired from the sand-banks and shoals could be brought under cultivation by similar reclamation. Deep-sea communication would be possible from Europe and the rest of the world to Benares, Barisal, Khulna, Chandpur and a dozen other places on this side of the country, whilst on the Bombay side similar deep-sea navigation could be arranged. In this way it is not fantastic to believe that new towns would spring up all over the country, and the majority of our transport problems would vanish.

It may be that a small scheme may have been put up to Government for investigation, but I believe that the interests of India would be best served by a more careful investigation, by a special committee, of all the pros and cons. I could enlarge on some of the details and the difficulties here, but I think that I shall find more favour with the Honourable House if I leave those things alone and confine my remarks to the sphere of generalities. To my mind what is wanted is a careful study of the whole situation with the ultimate aim of so draining the rivers and so dredging and straightening their courses as to make navigation by large ships possible and easy. We are assured on very good authority that such a thing is very practical and would very materially lighten the burden of poverty and misery which India has to bear through flood havoc, and would at the same time result in inestimable benefits in the direction of water shortage, inadequate transport, insufficient fisheries, bad drainage, and disappearance of land from erosion, giving India in return extensive acquisitions of new land, improved public health, and above all unlimited tidal electric power over vast areas. Such a picture of results as this is, I would assure the House, not one whit overdrawn, but in order that the scene might be depicted in all its wealth of detail and the full balance sheet of profits placed before the

[Mr. Haroon Jaffer.]

Government and this House, I most earnestly request that my Resolution be accepted and put into operation at the earliest possible opportunity. America and Canada are just beginning to awake to the enormous possibilities of this kind of inland constructive work, and both countries are contemplating the expenditure of millions of dollars on such schemes in the near future. Shall India lag behind these other countries, especially when our need is not the mere acquisition of land, wealth, and mechanical power, but is the salvation of land that is being washed away, the prevention of floods which exact an appalling toll of life and money every year, and the solving of some of the most acute transport problems with which a nation has ever had to deal? Surely these bare facts, coupled with my purposeful and probably most acceptable refusal to give columns of statistics, will urge you to appoint the suggested committee of investigation.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. H. LEY (Secretary, Department of Industries and Labour): Sir, my Honourable friend's Resolution raises exceedingly large and also some exceedingly interesting questions, and if I have to oppose the Resolution it is not because I am not sensible of the interest of the subjects which he wishes to deal with and also of their importance in many aspects. I shall have to take a different line. The Resolution deals with four different subjects. It is one of the most comprehensive Resolutions I have seen for some time. It deals with four different and quite separate subjects, and the reason why I shall have to oppose it is because I believe that in respect of two at least of these subjects a special investigation such as he desires would serve no useful purpose at all, and because with respect to all four of them, if any investigation were required, it would not best be undertaken by the kind of committees which he suggests. Now, I will refer as briefly as I can to each of these subjects.

Take first the question of inland water transport which is in a way the most important, or at any rate the only one I think of the four subjects with which this Council is directly concerned. I think my Honourable friend said that he was drawing no fanciful picture when he contemplated steamers from all over the world travelling up to Benares. I venture to think that this Council will hardly endorse that opinion, and I venture to think also that he is under a little misapprehension as to the possibilities of inland water transport either in this country or in any other country in the world. Now, it seems to me in the first place obvious that it is no use discussing this question of inland water transport as a commercial proposition except in respect of those rivers—there are only four—which are snow-fed. We may leave out of account all the southern rivers for the very simple reason of course that, generally speaking, for a considerable period of each year they run practically dry and no amount of engineering skill of course can get over the difficulty of lack of water. Therefore, you need only consider the snow-fed rivers, four of them, the Indus, Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy. Now I would just like to say one or two words about those rivers. Take the Indus first, because it illustrates two points which I wish to make. The first point is a common experience of all countries; such a common experience that I might almost call it a law, that is, that inland water transport on a large commercial scale cannot compete with railways. Time was when the Indus Flotilla Company ran its steamers up to

Ferozepur on the Sutlej, but now with the advent of the railway on both banks of the river, never a steamer plies. That has been the experience in this country, and I say it is also the experience of every country in the world. My Honourable friend referred to America and he said, if I heard him correctly, that America was just beginning to wake up to the possibilities of developing their inland water transport in this way. I do not know on what authority that statement was made by my Honourable friend. In point of fact America many years ago spent over 16 million pounds sterling in improving the courses of the Mississippi and Missouri, but later on with the advent of railway communication it was very quickly found that the steamers were unable to divert the traffic from the railways; and of course that is the experience not only with rivers but with artificial canals especially built for navigation purposes, and if it applies to artificial navigation canals it must *a fortiori* apply to rivers. Look at the canal system in England for instance. That was a flourishing system many years ago; now I might almost say it is dead as a door nail. We have an instance of that again in this country, the Buckingham Canal in Madras. That was a canal specially constructed for navigation purposes, 262 miles long, which carried a great deal of traffic when it was first constructed. With the advent of the East Coast Railway that canal has, I will not say ceased to exist, but practically ceased to function except within a few miles north and south of the city of Madras. That is the first point. It is an almost universal rule that inland water transport on a large commercial scale cannot compete with railways.

Now let me get back to the Indus, I have rather wandered from the Indus for a moment. There is another point about the Indus which illustrates my second point with regard to this question, and that is that on any kind of commercial scale navigation and irrigation cannot go hand in hand. That is obvious I think, and of course the construction of the Sukkur Barrage on the Indus obviously rules out that river from consideration. Now let me get to the other rivers I mentioned. The Ganges in its upper reaches is precisely in the same position as the Indus with regard to the second point I have mentioned, that is, the existence of large irrigation projects on the upper reaches of the Ganges renders that river quite impossible from the point of view of navigation purposes. I quite admit that when you get lower down to the middle reaches of the Ganges—my Honourable friend Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary was referring to this point the other day when we were discussing rather a different question—it would possibly be feasible to run inland water transport on a large scale. But there again you get into the difficulty which I mentioned at first, my first law so to speak, namely, that there is no possible chance of it competing with the very excellent railway systems on both sides of the river. Now it might be supposed from what I have said that there is not much chance for inland water transport in this country. I do not mean to suggest that at all. I do not think so. I say this, that where the conditions are favourable, you will find, just as surely as night follows day, an efficient system of inland water transport and you will find that money is being spent and attention paid to the upkeep of the rivers. These conditions are fulfilled in the lower reaches of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra and in the Irrawaddy. What are they? They are these. You have got a perennial river, you have got abundant traffic offering, you have got little or no irrigation, and you have got little or no railway competition; and where you have those conditions you do have a flourishing system of

[Mr. A. H. Ley.]

tide is as high as almost anywhere in the world. It is 42 feet. The difference between high and low tide is 42 feet. Without conditions of that kind expert opinion, I understand, is generally to the effect that any schemes of this nature could not possibly be a commercial success. Now, how is it possible to duplicate those conditions in India? I will take only the last point, the height of the tide. Nowhere on the coast of India have you a tidal range anything like what it is at the mouth of the Severn. The highest tidal range, taken from tide tables which I have obtained from the Meteorological Department, amounts to 31 feet in the Gulf of Cambay. That is, incidentally, not a very suitable part of the country for any elaborate electric installations such as have been suggested. Nowhere else does it come anywhere near it, 14 feet at the mouth of the Hooghly, 16 feet Rangoon, 13 feet Chittagong, 13 feet Bombay, 9 feet Karachi, extending down to 2 and 3 feet for most of the rest of India; 3·5 in Madras so that, I say, it is almost inconceivable that you will be able to find conditions in this country where you can even begin to talk about the possibility of schemes of this nature. Nor do I think is there any necessity to consider such schemes. After all, there are, as we all know, numerous sites in India which it would be possible to develop by ordinary hydro-electric installations, and I do think that it would be better to develop what we have got at present before we start on considering any kind of scheme, which must be infinitely more expensive, even if you could find the best possible natural conditions.

That is all I have got to say on this subject of tidal power, except to emphasise the point, which applies to practically all the other subjects dealt with in this Resolution, namely, that they are purely provincial subjects, and any expenditure of money on a committee or anything else would have to come out of provincial revenues. I think it is perfectly obvious that the Local Government concerned would possibly regard the action suggested by my Honourable friend, though I quite realise the importance of the questions raised, as an undue trenching upon their authority and their responsibility. I entirely endorse what the Honourable Mr. Natesan said the other day on the undesirability of this Council endeavouring in any way to interfere with the freedom of action of Local Governments in a matter of this kind. Therefore I hope this Council will agree with me that the Resolution is one which should not be put into effect.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HAROON JAFFER: Sir, I am rather disappointed that a Resolution bearing so directly on trade facilities in the country and contemplating the provision of easy transport should not get the support of Government. It will be a pity if our rivers, full of great possibilities, do not receive the scientific handling to make them a factor of importance in the economic advance of the country. I have said enough on the subject and do not wish to take the time of the Council any longer. I appeal to the House to pass this useful Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is that the following Resolution be adopted:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint an expert Committee to consider the advisability of reshaping many of India's most important water-roads in order to provide heavy water transport to her innermost doors, security of land against erosion, reclamation of land, and tidal power for electric schemes."

The motion was negatived.

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Ballot papers will be handed to Honourable Members who will record their votes in the usual manner.

(The ballot was then taken.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Have all Honourable Members recorded their votes?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes.

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PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF MARCH.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Law Member): With your permission, Sir, I should like to elicit the wishes of Honourable Members regarding the programme of business in this Council during the second week in March. Up to and including Thursday, the 5th March, we shall be fully occupied and there is likely to be no dearth of business from the 16th March onwards. The week opening on Monday, the 9th March, however, contains three holidays, Monday being the Holi and Tuesday the Dulanhi, while Wednesday is shown as a holiday for the Shab-i-barat. Members of the other House have indicated a desire to observe all these holidays and, in view of the possibility that in this respect the sentiments of Honourable Members of this Council would be identical, the Government have abstained from asking His Excellency the Governor General to allot the usual days for non-official business during the week in question. So far as can be foreseen at present, Government are likely to have enough business to give the House one normal day's work during the week in question, but a postponement of that business till after the 16th March would not materially prejudice the public interest. If,

[Mr. A. H. Ley.]

inland water transport. Nor I think is there any reason to suppose that where those conditions are fulfilled the Local Governments are not alive to the importance of the question. Indeed the importance of the waterways to the provinces concerned is so great and so obvious that that in itself ensures all possible steps being taken to conserve and to improve the rivers. I have not heard anybody suggest, for instance, that navigation on the Irrawaddy is hampered by negligence on the part of the authorities responsible for the maintenance of that river. In Bengal again which is an important part of the country from this point of view, and as I think probably many Members of this Council are aware, the Government of Bengal have a special Department which does practically nothing else than attend to the conservation and improvement of the rivers in their charge, and lakhs of rupees are spent there every year. I need also hardly remind this Council that a great project estimated to cost three crores of rupees has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State for the provision of an easier and shorter route for steamers between Calcutta and parts of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and the commencement of that scheme only awaits the provision of funds. I would finally remind this Council with regard to this portion of the subject that to assist them in dealing with their waterways the Government of Bengal have appointed an advisory committee on which the three provinces concerned are represented, namely, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Assam, as well as the principal Chambers of Commerce, the steamer companies, the Railways and the Calcutta Port Commissioners, and I can assure the Council that no all-India Committee which the Government of India could hope to convene would be able to give opinions carrying half as much weight and authority as the Committee already in existence. That, Sir, is all that I have to say with regard to the first part of this Resolution. I say that the Committee is unnecessary and will serve no useful purpose.

I would like now to pass on to the second and the third parts—namely, security of land against erosion and the reclamation of land. Now my objections to the Resolution on these points is again two-fold. In the first place, these two subjects—I wish to make it perfectly clear—are purely local problems, purely local provincial problems. The matter is entirely a provincial concern, and these two problems have not even an interprovincial bearing as might be the case with the question of inland transport, and therefore I think that the Local Governments would justifiably resent any action by the Government of India in appointing a committee to go into affairs which are their peculiar concern. That is one objection. The second objection is a practical one. I cannot but feel that an all-India Committee appointed to go into this question of security of land against erosion and reclamation of land would be really incompetent to make any useful suggestions. And why I say that is this. Every river, I might almost say every reach of every river, has its own peculiar idiosyncracies and its own peculiar vagaries, and nothing is of any value except intimate local knowledge extending over a period of years of the particular river and its particular idiosyncracies. Therefore a committee of this kind could never obtain such intimate local knowledge, even to attempt to do so it would presumably have to judge over the banks of rivers for hundreds of miles to make those personal inspections, without which I think, their advice on any problem either of erosion or reclamation would not really be worth the paper it was written upon. Nor, again,

with regard to this part of the subject do I think that there is any reason to suggest that the Local Governments are not fully alive to the importance of the subject. I am quite sure they are. I do realize that the subject is important, but I do say this that Local Governments are fully alive to its importance. Let us take Bengal again. There has been a vast amount of money spent in recent years by the Bengal Government on this problem. Look at the Magrahat scheme in Bengal. That is a scheme which benefited nearly 300 square miles of previously water-logged country, which has recently been completed at a cost of Rs. 21 lakhs. (*The Honourable Dr. Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary*: "That was largely a drainage scheme".) Well, reclamation I should call it. If you call it drainage, I will not object to it. It was really I think reclaiming the land, if I am not mistaken. My point is this. There is no reason to suppose that the Local Governments are not fully alive to the importance of this question, and that when any measures are necessary they are slow to come forward.

I pass now to the last question, the question of tidal power for electric schemes. Now I have a little difficulty in dealing with this, because it is an exceedingly technical and difficult subject, and I am sorry to say that I really have no expert knowledge of it, and I consequently may find it rather difficult to explain what the problem really is. I understand that the question of utilising the tides, the question of the possibility of utilising the tides for generating electricity is a problem which the highest expert opinion in the world is divided about even at the present time—that is to say the question whether it is possible even under the most favourable conditions to harness the tides in order to generate electricity as a commercial proposition. It is perfectly feasible of course to impound the rising waters of a tidal river by placing a dam across it and thus to obtain the benefit of a fall from which power can be generated. That is feasible. But then you have also got the difficulty, even if you can do that, that you cannot generate electricity continuously by that method, for the simple reason that there are certain periods, twice in every twenty-four hours, when the level of the water on either side of the dam is equal and obviously no power is available at all. That is a difficulty which possibly can be got over. I have only heard of one important scheme which has ever really been suggested—it is possible that some Members of the Council know a good deal more about it than I do—a scheme which has been propounded, which has not gone much further than the stage of proposition, namely to harness the tides for the purpose of generating electricity at the mouth of the Severn in England. That is the only scheme of the kind of which I have heard, and I know it is a question on which there is still very considerable difference of opinion between experts as to whether that scheme or any other scheme like that, given the most favourable conditions, is possible at all as a commercial proposition. This is, though interesting, a technical and difficult subject and I am sorry I cannot explain it in detail. Now, what are the conditions at the mouth of the Severn? You have got a tidal river, you have got a convenient bed of rock on which to construct your dam; you have got a high hill in the neighbourhood,—the relevancy of this is to meet the point which I just raised about a continuous supply of power; namely, that water should be pumped to the top of a neighbouring hill and so utilised to generate power when there is no power available when the waterlevels at the dam are equal. You have got a tidal river, a convenient bed of rock, a high hill; you have got almost unlimited demand for power in the neighbourhood; and you have got, what is more important than any of these, an exceedingly high tide. I believe the Severn

[Mr. A. H. Ley.]

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[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

therefore, Honourable Members would welcome an adjournment for some ten days after the Budget discussion on the 5th March, it would be possible to meet their wishes. On the other hand, should Honourable Members prefer to work during the interval, we shall have, as I have said, sufficient Government business for one day during the intervening week, and we should be prepared to invite His Excellency to allot another day in that week for non-official business. Should Honourable Members, while not desiring a prolonged adjournment, wish to observe the holidays to which I have referred, Thursday, the 12th, and Friday, the 13th March, suggest themselves as suitable days for Government and non-official business, respectively.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I should like to ascertain the views of Honourable Members in this matter. Put briefly, the position appears to be that there will be business up to and including the 5th March, that is Thursday. It will be followed by Friday, Saturday and Sunday, days on which the Council does not usually sit, and the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are holidays. Therefore, if these holidays are to be observed, the Council will have six consecutive days with no business. The question then really is: Would the Council prefer to have business on the following days, or would they like this six days break extended to 10 or 11 days?

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Since the Honourable the Leader of the House was good enough to speak to some of us, two important matters have been thought of that will have, if Government are pleased to agree, to be assigned some day. Yesterday the report of the Territorial and Auxiliary Committee was placed in the hands of Honourable Members. It has already been agreed that the deferred debate on the proposal of the Honourable Raja Sir Rampal Singh will be resumed some time after the publication of that report. Then, Sir, I referred to the approaching publication of the Reforms Committee's report. I understand from a newspaper announcement, a day is to be allowed in the Assembly for its consideration. Some of us would like to have similar opportunities here. Having regard to these items of business which I invite the Honourable the Leader of the House to fit in with due regard to the desire of Honourable Members to have as much holiday as possible, I should like to urge those two matters for the consideration of the Honourable the Leader of the House in dealing with the programme of the work ahead.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, we should very much like to have the Holi holidays and I would very much prefer that the Council should not sit for ten days. Holi is a religious festival and the Hindus wish to observe it.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces: General): I think it will be a great pity if the Council adjourns for 10 days. I have no objection at all to the real Holi holidays being steadfastly observed. But many of us have come long distances and cannot afford to go back to our homes and return again in time for the Council work. On the other hand, to keep us here for 10 days doing nothing, I think is a little bit outrageous in my opinion. I am of opinion that five or six days holidays is quite enough and that we should meet as early as possible and assume our work in this Council.

THE HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): The Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy said that it was not possible for Members to go down to our place of business for 10 days. I think, I can go down to Bombay in that interval and I would very much prefer to have 10 full holidays so that I may attend to business instead of staying here and forcing Government to create work for us.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DINSHAW WACHA (Bombay: Nominated Non-official): I am prepared to sit *de die in diem*.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: With regard to the question put to me by Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, I do not know that any promise has been given to the Legislative Assembly to find a day for the discussion of the Reforms report. The report is very likely to be published some time early in March, and I think if the Members evince a desire to discuss it during this Session Government will see if they can find time for that purpose. I think, if there is to be no discussion now, Government will very likely find some time certainly in September.

With regard to the other items of business, Government have already promised time and they will fit in those items of business when the work which is before the Council is concluded, I mean after the 16th March, Government are not anxious to have any holiday. They are perfectly willing to work on the 12th and 13th and it is entirely for the Members of the House, especially the non-official Members, to decide what is to be done. There seems to be a desire to work. So far as the Government are concerned, they would welcome such a desire on the part of Honourable Members to continue to work and help them with their advice and co-operation.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think it would be better if some definite announcement were made on the subject to-morrow morning. In the interval I will take the opportunity to consult with the Honourable the Leader of the House to see if it is possible to meet the wishes of the majority of Honourable Members.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 26th February, 1925.