

Thursday, 20th March, 1924

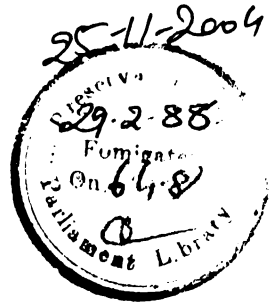
THE COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(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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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, the 20th March, 1924.

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

BILL LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: "In accordance with rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table a Bill further to amend the Indian Income-tax Act, 1922, for certain purposes, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 19th March, 1924.

RESOLUTION RE RESTRICTIONS AND DISABILITIES ON INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA—(Contd.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Council will now resume the adjourned debate on Mr. Natesan's Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI (United Provinces East: Muhammadan): Sir, it appears that in the discussion of this important Resolution, on which, as far as I have been able to judge, there is no vital difference of opinion broadly speaking between public opinion on the one hand, and the Government of India on the other, more heat than light was introduced yesterday. It is important to remember that while negotiating with the Dominions Government on a question of this character, India unfortunately has not the same freedom either to negotiate or to act as is given to a self-governing Dominion. Sir, the speech that was delivered yesterday by the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri gave expression to public opinion on this question, and I think I must say that the Right Honourable gentleman represented the public view point very correctly. Some objection was taken to a portion of his speech, but I understand that the Honourable Member from Nagpur did not thoroughly appreciate the position of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri . . .

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces: General): May I, Sir, give a personal explanation?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: If the Honourable Member will give way.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: Sir, that our wrongs are numerous, that our wrongs are grievous, in South Africa, and that there is need for redress at once goes without saying. Whatever may have been the attitude of the Government of India on this question in years past, it is refreshing to remember that the policy which has been consistently followed

[Saiyid Raza Ali.]

by the Government of India during the past twelve months and more has sent a fresh ray of hope into every Indian heart.

I must not forget, having regard to the limitations to which the Government of India are subject, that it is not unfortunately open to them to throw the whole weight of their authority on the side of Indian public opinion; but we must not forget that only last year in the speech with which His Excellency the Viceroy prorogued the joint session of the Indian Legislature he gave expression to our views and feelings very correctly and faithfully on the subject. As to what happened afterwards it is not very pertinent, I may say, to the inquiry on which we are engaged. Be that as it may, the fact is, Sir, that, if Lord Hardinge's Madras speech occupied a very prominent place in the enunciation of the policy of the Government of India on the question of the status of Indians overseas, Lord Reading's speech last July is entitled to take an equally worthy and important place. Next we should not be justified in disregarding the very important departure in policy which was made by the Government of India in giving direct instructions to the Indian representatives at the Imperial Conference last year. Sir, it is widely known by this time that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru received his instructions direct from the Government of India and not from the Secretary of State last year while he represented India at the Imperial Conference. It may be that, owing to a number of important political questions having engaged the attention of the country during the last twelve months, due weight was not attached by public opinion to the implications that necessarily follow the adoption of this policy. Again, a very important measure which gave the Executive Government certain powers to deal with refractory Colonies was passed by the other House at the fag end of the Simla session. I do not think, Sir, it is necessary to say much about the draftsmanship of that Bill. We know that the Bill emanated from a private Member, but I do not think it will be fair to forget that at any stage of that Bill—which by the way was introduced, taken into consideration and passed at one single sitting,—was any discouragement, either direct or indirect, held out to the sponsors of the Bill by the Government of India. Having passed that House, the Bill came to this Chamber and was taken into consideration only the other day. Now, Sir, having regard to the constitution of this Chamber, I for one have no doubt that, had Government chosen to oppose that Bill, it would have been extremely difficult for it to be successfully piloted through this Chamber; but again Government did not take up an attitude either of hostility or discouragement on this Bill.

Now coming to the last step which has been taken by the Government of India in this connection—the appointment and constitution of the Colonies Committee—it will be within the recollection of Honourable Members that following the precedent laid down last year, the Government of India have made it quite clear that the instructions to the Colonies Committee will be given direct by the Government of India and that the Committee will have the right of direct negotiation with their Government.

‘Sir, the sum total of these numerous acts that I have recited would go far to show that the attitude taken up by the Government of India is not one over which we can legitimately take them to task. It may be that the Government of India, like Providence, acts at times in a manner which is not far short of mysterious and which excites distrust and arouses suspicion at times. I have nothing to say against the constitution of the Colonies Committee, but it passes one's comprehension why the ripe

experience and unrivalled knowledge of some of the Indians who have worked in this connection was not availed of by the Government of India. The suspicion gathers strength when

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I do not rise to a point of order, Sir, but I think it is hardly pertinent to expatiate upon the constitution of the Kenya Committee in connection with the South African Resolution. It will make it difficult for me to explain that position here. I do not want to burke discussion, but I think it hardly relevant.

THE HONOURABLE DR. SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: May I inquire, Sir, what the Honourable Member means by the Kenya Committee. The House is aware of no exclusive Kenya Committee.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: The Committee has been constituted primarily for the solution of difficulties connected with the Kenya Immigration Bill, but it is going to be entrusted with Fiji and it is not proposed at present, unless anything supervenes, to do anything further in the matter of the Dominions.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: If the Honourable Member's point is that this Committee is not going to deal with South Africa, then the reference to the Committee is out of order; if it is going to deal with South Africa, it may not be out of order.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: There is no intention at present, Sir, to entrust this Committee with any negotiations or any statement of representations in connection with South Africa. Whether it may be necessary to do so is not a point under consideration, but I have already announced to the House that this Committee will not deal with South Africa at present.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: If, as I understand, the Committee will not deal with South Africa, then the Honourable Member must not refer to it in discussing a Resolution which deals with South Africa.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: Sir, it is within the recollection of the House that the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma stated last time in a debate on a similar question that, if necessary, this Committee would deal with South African questions. Am I right, please?

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I have not the faintest recollection of having said that the Committee would deal with South Africa.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: If necessary.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: Nor am I suggesting now that it will be possible to ask the Committee to deal with it hereafter. It is not proposed at present to ask the Committee to deal with South African questions; it has not been constituted with that purpose in view.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN: Sir, as a matter of privilege of Members, either the Honourable Member will have to say that this Committee has nothing to do with South Africa, when any reference to the Committee will be out of order, or if there is even the remotest idea of dealing with South Africa, then I respectfully submit the Members have a right to refer to the Committee. • ~

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think the Honourable Member has correctly stated the position. If this Committee will deal with South Africa, it is not possible for me to rule any reference to the Committee out of order. If the Committee is not at present to deal with South Africa any extended comment would be undesirable, but if there is a possibility that it may deal with South Africa then it is impossible for me to rule out references to the Committee.

THE HONOURABLE SAYYID RAZA ALI: I agree. The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma knows that only the day before yesterday some questions were put in Parliament as to what was the scope of this Committee and when a question was put as to whether the Committee would deal with the South African question also, no reply was vouchsafed in Parliament to it. From this I think it is fair to conclude that this Committee may be called upon to deal with that question also.

Now, Sir, I think the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma will see that it is far from my intention to put the Government in a tight corner, and the reason for this is obvious. Had the Government acted in a way which went counter to public sentiment, it would have been my duty in this Council to attack the position of Government. As it is, as I have pointed out, I do not see any vital difference of opinion between public opinion and the view held by the Government of India. But, Sir, I think the public are entitled to inquire as to why, if Government are prepared to take advantage of the services of Sir Benjamin Robertson who retired some years ago, they should deprive themselves of the ripe experience and unrivalled knowledge of those non-official Indians who in the past have been in close touch with their Government. I do not think it would be out of place to inquire as to why this result has happened. It is open to the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma to reply to this query which I am putting in the public interest or to ignore it as he did last time. Sir, the crux of the matter seems to be that, unfortunately, we are not a self-governing Dominion, and here with very great respect to my Right Honourable friend, Srinivasa Sastri, I would invite his attention and that of Honourable Members to section 2 of the Government of India Act. That, Sir, it seems to me, is really responsible for most of our misfortunes, whether they be in Kenya or in Natal, or whether they be in the Transvaal or elsewhere. Now, a perusal of this section would go to show that the Secretary of State shall exercise all such or the like powers, which means the powers mentioned in section 1 that has gone before, and perform the duties relating to the Government or the revenues of India. That, Sir, is responsible for the present deadlock in which we find ourselves to-day. Now, as Honourable Members are aware, in no Colony are powers and duties relating to Government and the revenues of that Colony—I am referring to the self-governing Colonies—vested in the Colonial Secretary, whereas when we come to the case of unfortunate India, we find that, whether it is the Imperial Conference or whether it is the League of Nations, or whether it is the Treaty of Versailles, the Secretary of State must under the Statute find a place side by side with our representatives nominated by the Government of India. So far, on the whole, the Indian representatives have acquitted themselves creditably by pressing the Indian view point, but the constitutional objection is there. I would therefore, with all respect, invite the attention of my Right Honourable friend to try to improve the Government of India Act, for so long as that Act remains as it is, it will unfortunately not be open to us to throw the whole weight of public opinion on the side of the Government of India or for the

Government of India to take advantage of the great weight or authority of popular opinion in full.

Now, Sir, there is just one point which I want to notice in a casual manner having regard to its importance, and that is about the remark which fell from the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri relating to the resignation of the Members of the Government of India. Now save what fell from the Honourable Member from Nagpur, I think it is right to point out that the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri did not say that it is the duty of the Government of India to resign at once. As a matter of fact, he was simply explaining the disabilities of Indians in South Africa, and, having regard to the repeated efforts that were made by the Government of India and their representatives, and also having regard to the poor result with which those efforts had been attended, he simply suggested that, if these grievances were not redressed, then some time later it would be the duty of the Government of India to resign. I do not think, Sir, that is a position to which any reasonable man, or may I say, any sane man, can take objection, because I am right in assuming that in the course of a few years, nay at no distant date, the constitution of the Government of India would be very considerably changed so as to make the Government of India responsible to the people, and if that stage comes, and I hope it will come much sooner than later—then in that case, if the Union authorities persisted in taking up the attitude that they are now taking, would it surprise the Honourable Member from Nagpur if a demand were made by public opinion in favour of the Government of India taking this extreme measure, namely, the Members of the Executive Council resigning their posts as a protest against the action of the Union authorities? I do not think, Sir, that there is anything in this which would offend against the political sense even of a Moderate or Moderates. Those remarks have no relation to the present Government or to the Government as it is constituted at present.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: I am sorry that you did not understand the speech of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri at all.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: I do not think that my Honourable friend is right in claiming that he alone of all the Members present in this Chamber is competent to follow the speech of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri. Sir, it is a case of nervousness. As a matter of fact, I know there are people who are subject to nervous diseases, who get nervous at the very mention even of a reasonable proposition if it suggests something to which they have been unused or unaccustomed all their lives

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: I am much more accustomed than yourself. I have had 15 years' experience in Council.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: Sir, I am told that my Honourable friend has been much more accustomed than myself to such things. It would be extremely difficult for me to contradict my Honourable friend, but one thing I can say and that is, that my Honourable friend's reputation outside this Council is that he is a politician, but we of this Council know that he is no politician at all. Sir, again I say that quite apart from a word here and a word there, to which the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri might have given expression I think that, looking to the substance of his speech as a whole, there is nothing in the speech which does not truly and faithfully represent Indian public opinion.

THE HONOURABLE MAULVI ABDUL KARIM (East Bengal: Muhammadan): Sir, after having heard all that has been said on the subject, I feel that it would be undesirable to record a silent vote. The discussion, I am afraid, has taken a turn that is to be regretted. Solidarity and unanimity of opinion in a matter like this, I am sure, would have carried great weight. The Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, I believe the Honourable Members are not unaware, was at one time sanguine of success in bringing about a satisfactory settlement, and he was pilloried in the extremist press and platform for his optimism. I think it is the personal knowledge of the actual situation which he acquired in the course of his tours in the countries concerned that turned him into a pessimist. After having seen with his own eyes the human treatment meted out to his countrymen in those countries, and after having heard the many tales of grievances they had to tell, and, above all, finding that their opponents—I may say their oppressors—took up a most unyielding attitude and showed a determined unwillingness to entertain even reasonable proposals, he must have realised the futility of the efforts made and the steps taken from time to time to ameliorate the pitiable condition of his countrymen. In such circumstances, I believe, he was perfectly justified in using the strong language that he used in giving expression to his disappointment and in suggesting certain extraordinary measures. It seems, Sir, that those who are inclined to take exception to what the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri said, are not in touch with the intelligentsia of the country, the people who really and seriously think about such matters. I believe if the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma had opportunities of personally seeing and hearing all that the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri saw and heard, he would not have thought that the mild measures he is inclined to advocate would produce the desired effect. In going through the magazine "Indians Abroad" I happened to come across a passage in which public opinion has been expressed by a certain person. It runs as follows:

"Is not the time ripe for the Indian leaders to devote their attention towards their exiled brethren also? It is an admitted fact that in the past, leaders of Indian thought and the Indian National Congress did nothing to prevent and redress the various wrongs under which our people are labouring. The Member in charge of the Emigration Portfolio in the Viceroy's Executive Council is an Indian and of our own blood—the Honourable Sir B. N. Sarma. He must be able to feel the difficulties of his own brethren in the Colonies and he should take up this question. Hitherto he was practically in slumber. We hope that now at least he will awake, fear God, and for the sake of humanity begin to act."

I think those who are really aware of the intensity of feelings in the country cannot be so callous as not to feel the urgent necessity of adopting such measures as would prove really effective in removing the disadvantages, the difficulties and the disabilities under which our countrymen are labouring. I do not think it desirable to take up the time of the Council by enumerating the various grievances of our brethren in the Colonies. I think these are too well known to need repetition. I believe, Sir, the days of paper despatches and telegraphic protests are gone, and the time has come for taking more decisive and stronger action. An impression seems to be gaining ground (it is not at all to the credit of the authorities) that the Government of India and even the Imperial Government are powerless to protect the Indians who are entirely at the mercy of the Colonial Whites. They have so far disregarded and, I think, will continue to disregard the agitation in this country. What does it matter to them if we make a noise without hurting them? This is an age of self-assertion; unless we can effectively assert ourselves, our representations and our requests will, I am afraid, be unheeded. I think, Sir,

the self-respect of the people of India, and the self-respect of the Government of India as well, demand that such effective retaliatory measures should be adopted without further delay as would produce the desired effect. The time has come when the policy of representation should be changed. We should not ask any longer as a matter of favour what we are entitled to demand as a matter of right.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH (Punjab : Sikh): Sir, the problem of the position of India in the commonwealth of nations, to my mind, is a problem of paramount importance at the present moment, not only for us Indians but for Englishmen also. Thinking men all over the world are realising the economic unity which is bringing the world together, which is making us all feel that we cannot prosper without coming to some kind of world understanding, and without finding a new way to live. This problem, Sir, needs continuous effort, not only on the part of India, but on the part of Britannia in whose hands at the present moment the interests of the world are concentrated. What is going to be the future of the world and of this great Empire, which has brought white men, brown men and black men together? We have all enjoyed peace together; we have been learning the art of living together. It may be that in our hearts we still entertain certain dark distinctions. We feel that one is superior and the other inferior, but at the same time the thing that is becoming very clear to all of us is this that by learning to live together we can realise the future of civilization. The war has proved the destruction that awaits discords. That in our own Imperial household we cannot live together in times of peace and that in South Africa Indians cannot assert their Imperial citizenship is a thing most undesirable, a thing Britannia should not tolerate. Britannia is the trustee of India I cannot agree with my friend Saiyid Raza Ali when he spoke of the Government of India Act as standing in the way of our realising our position in the Empire. I think because we are not self-governing it is the duty of Britannia to see that our rights are respected and our position as citizens of this great Empire defined. And then, Sir, there is the great question, and this is to my mind the problem of greatest magnitude the future relations of Asia and Europe. The whole of Asia is working towards equality and air tide is rising. It may be that for a little while, it became noticeable that in India, Indians were in some respects conscious of the superiority of the West, but, Sir, as the time has gone on India is no more conscious of any inferiority. Indeed, we believe now, as we did not believe before the war, that India has something to contribute to the West, the lesson of simple living and high thinking, the lesson of simplicity in life and carrying out brotherly relations between man and man and thus helping peaceful progress. Self-assertion, the assertion of individuality, the movement towards freedom, that we notice to-day in the West, to what is it leading? Is it leading to unity or is it leading to disintegration? Are we working towards unity? I am sorry, the portents do not promise peace. It is here India has to teach something. In India many people have lived together and lived together in peace. It is in India again, that the future of the British Empire is to be realised. We must learn to sink differences and gather together as citizens of this Great Empire. To me, Sir, it seems that the question of Indians abroad is invested with a great deal of imagination. A certain amount of practical thinking will clear misconceptions. Is India going to invade South Africa or Kenya? Because a few thousands of Indians are settled it does not follow that people from India will migrate in large numbers. Our fellow country men wherever they

[Sardar Jogendra Singh.]

are add to the wealth of the country, they are not taking away anything from those countries, and all they are asking for in South Africa and in other parts of the Empire is that they may have the right to assert their manhood. It appeared to me that Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy was really nervous when he spoke criticising the speech of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri. In pressing the claims of India, I think we are really pressing the claims of the British Empire. India is an integral part of the British Empire, and to weaken the position of India is to weaken the British Empire. To those who resist our claims in South Africa and in Kenya, I would appeal to their statesmen to realise that our Empire is great, not only from the economic point of view, but from the spiritual and moral point of view. And its future depends on the coming together of all the Nations.

During the war, Sir, when we heard General Smuts speaking of peace, the world peace, it seemed that he was the one man that could solve this question. He had the larger view and his speeches were inspired with something of the idealism which was found in the literary articles contributed to the *Times* by some great journalist. He had the vision, the grip, the large understanding of the world problem. But now what has happened when this question of the sisterhood of nations within the Empire itself has come before him? He shirks it; he does not face the problem at all. He is governed by the problems of the moment and he is forgetting the future. It was a great disappointment to me when I found General Smuts, the one man who stood during the war for world peace, standing up against Indians' claim. I still hope that when he has had time to reflect and consider this question, he will espouse our cause, not only in the interests of South Africa, but of the Empire itself. I need hardly assert, Sir, that no race, so far as the history of the world goes, has ever been able to appropriate any part of the earth for itself. And to-day, when we are talking of a white man's land and a brown man's land, do we really believe that it is possible to mark out new boundaries where the sun will not shine, and where God's law will not assert itself? It goes without saying that the balance is maintained by a law which meets out utter justice. The need for a clear definition of Imperial citizenship is greater to-day than it was ever before. Not long ago, Sir, in France an incident occurred which points out how these great people are tackling this problem. There was a hotel where coloured people were barred from entering, and I saw, I think, in the *Times* that President Poincaré himself passed an order that the hotel should be closed declaring that those who fought for France during the War must enjoy fully the fruits of peace. That is the French idea of Imperial citizenship. That is how we wish Britannia to stand for us and say "They are ours, and so we shall stand by them; they fought for us during the war, they were our comrades during the war and in the times of peace they too shall be our comrades and enjoy the fruits of peace." While I am on this point, Sir, I cannot but congratulate the Government of Lord Reading on the stand that they have made for India. They have consistently maintained our position. They have tried to do their best, and if we in this Council pass Resolutions, if we sometimes criticise the Government of India, we do so with one object only, to bring home to them what the country is thinking outside, to bring them strength, that they may be able to continue the fight. There is no other motive in passing these Resolutions but to show how the popular mind is moving. I need hardly point out that the need for firmness is as strong to-day as it was yesterday. The Government of

India must be firm. It does not mean that they should resign; it means that they should not give up, but should stand for the Indian claim and consistently bring it to the notice of the British Government, and also to the Government of South Africa and find a permanent solution.

I, Sir, have no belief in retaliation of any kind whatsoever, but I do believe very strongly in reciprocity. We should cultivate reciprocity and promote it, so that the different races that make up this great Empire may come to understand each other.

The Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy in his speech seemed to confine his eye to profit and loss account only. But this God's world is not a shop. There are higher values which we have to take into account; and, if I may say so, the Government of India should forget the policy of expediency, should step out of the atmosphere of unreality that sometimes surrounds it, and remember that:

*Matta-i-koshish-i-be mudda ki kya khabar tujhko;
Teri hadi-i-nazar ai bulhawas sūd-o-zīdān tak.*

It is very difficult to translate this into English, but it means "What dost thou know of the wealth which is not desired O greedy one whose eye is fixed on profit and loss".

With this, Sir, I would appeal to this House to support this Resolution with one voice, Europeans and Indians joining together, and at the same time bring to the notice of the South African Government that we have absolutely no feeling of hostility towards them. We want to promote their happiness; we want to bring them new wealth, and we want to take a share in this great Empire so as to make it even greater.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces : General): I want to make a personal explanation, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member may do so if it is a personal explanation he wants to make, but he must not bring forward an argument.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: No, Sir, a personal explanation only. Sir, in the course of this debate to-day, I find that I have been grossly misrepresented by more than one speaker. Sentiments have been ascribed to me in connection with this Resolution to which I never gave expression. All my quarrel or rather my complaint yesterday was with respect to certain remedies to meet the present difficult situation suggested by my two Honourable friends Sir Umar Hayat Khan and the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri. I did not and do not oppose the Resolution in any way. I started with my full sympathy for the Resolution, and, if it goes to the vote to-day, I am going to vote for the Resolution. I only questioned the course adopted and the suggestion made that the Governor General in Council as a protest should resign their appointments (An Honourable Member: "Should the contingency arise"). to meet this difficulty. I do not at all favour that course.

THE HONOURABLE DR. MIAN SIR MUHAMMAD SHAFI (Law Member): Sir, towards the conclusion of his eloquent speech yesterday, my Right Honourable friend Srinivasa Sastri, for whose selfless patriotism I entertain the highest admiration, gave expression to a sentiment which I cannot but regard as the outcome of that mental condition represented by the well-known saying "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick". Although he admitted that the Government of India had consistently for a long time

[Dr. Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi.]

past represented the views and feelings of the Indian people to His Majesty's Government in connection with this important and vital question, nevertheless he expressed the opinion that, unless and until the Viceroy and the Members of his Government sent in their resignation by way of protest, there was very little hope for the solution of this important question.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: And not hereafter, as the Honourable Saiyid Raza Ali said.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: Is that a personal explanation?

THE HONOURABLE DR. MIAN SIR MUHAMMAD SHAFI: I appeal to the House to permit me to offer the few observations which I intend to make on this question without interruption. Sir, personally I do not believe that that expression of opinion represents even the Madras spirit, but it certainly does not represent the Punjab spirit. If I were to liken South Africa to a fortified citadel which we Indians wish to storm for the relief of our brethren there, what would the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri think of a General who, simply because he failed in storming that citadel once, twice, perhaps even three times, laid down his arms and did not persist in his efforts, did not continue his efforts to storm the citadel in order to bring relief to the people imprisoned there. I submit the analogy holds literally true. Assuming for the sake of argument, and for the sake of argument alone, that we have hitherto failed to make an impression, an effective impression, upon the parties on the other side of the ocean in achieving the object which we all have in view, does it follow that we Members of the Government, trustees of Indian interests, should, in a mood of pessimism such as I am afraid the speech of my Right Honourable friend indicated yesterday, throw down our arms, quietly retire into private life, give up the trust which is vested in us as custodians of Indian interests, and say "We are helpless in the matter and therefore we had better give up the struggle"? No, as I said, that is not the Punjab spirit. I for one am not going to resign simply because, in the imagination of certain people, the Government have failed in the effort which they have hitherto made in achieving the object which we all have in view. I regard it as my duty, as the duty of the Government of India, even if there has been failure, because of that failure to persist in our efforts, to make renewed efforts in order to bring relief to our countrymen in Africa.

• And have we failed? Have we really failed, miserably failed, as some people think, in the efforts which we have been making? Well, I regard the very fact of the appointment of this Colonies Committee, which will have the right to negotiate direct with the Colonial Office and will receive instructions from the Government of India as tantamount to storming the outer gate of the citadel. It gives us admission into the citadel; and I believe that the Colonies Committee will achieve, if not all the success that we want, a reasonable measure of success in its effort towards bringing relief to our countrymen in Africa. Sir, pessimism never did

12 NOON. any good either to the individual or to any community or nation. It is optimism alone which is the soul of political struggle, and I am one of those who believe that where one's cause is just, where righteousness is on the side of one, he has no ground whatever to feel downhearted, because a satisfactory measure of success may not be achieved in the first or the second or the third battle. I believe that the cause of truth and righteousness is bound to triumph in the end, and in consequence,

the spirit of pessimism which sometimes unfortunately finds expression in this country ought to be discarded by us all. On the contrary, believing in the justice and righteousness of our cause, we should go forward in a spirit of optimism, in a spirit of tactful statesmanship, which alone, not only in modern times, but to my mind, in all times, has really resulted in the achievement of success. In that spirit we should go forward with renewed vigour and try to bring about a satisfactory solution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. V. RANGASWAMI AYYANGAR (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, in the first place, I should like to congratulate my friend the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri on the bold stand he has taken up by his advocacy of asking the Members of the Executive Council and His Excellency the Viceroy to resign their seats if the Home Government does not accept the proposals made by the Indian Government. Is there any other logical course left open for them to take under the circumstances? If the proposals of the Government of India are not accepted by the Imperial Government, then the Members of the Executive Government should resign their seats as a mark of protest, if the bitter pill of inequality and inferiority of the Indian is forced down their throats. Under those circumstances, what is the alternative left but to express resentment against it in a tangible manner? I think the only logical course would be for His Excellency the Viceroy and the Members of the Executive Council to resign their seats, and not to agree to be a limb of that Government which does disregard their advice. Sir, we all feel very keenly on this subject, and I think that had Lord Hardinge continued in office as Viceroy to-day, he would have adopted the course suggested by the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DINSHAW WACHA (Bombay: Nominated Non-Official): Very doubtful.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. V. RANGASWAMI AYYANGAR: Sir, when the Reciprocity Bill was passed and again now the question that India would be the loser on account of the balance of trade being in our favour was mooted. Where does the question of profit arise when the question of status and honour is at stake? I cannot understand their mentality. I strongly support this proposition and entirely agree with the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri who has now voiced the course that was once suggested by Mahatma Gandhi, namely, that, when the proposal of the Indian Government is not accepted by the Imperial Government, the only other course left open for the Members of the Government is to refuse to be a limb of that Imperial Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DINSHAW WACHA (Bombay: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I take a very detached view of this question. I am afraid I cannot agree with everything that has been said here. I am one of those who dissociate themselves entirely from what is called the screaming fraternity of politicians on this matter. I have been very carefully listening to every one of the speeches made yesterday afternoon and to-day, and I do say that in this House, which is fully alive to a sense of its responsibility, I have heard nothing but words, words and words, words which are without substance and without any constructive suggestions whatsoever. That is not the way that a Council like this should behave on an important question. I am really very sorry for the unwise speech which my Right Honourable friend Srinivasa Sastri delivered yesterday and also for the speeches of several of my Honourable Colleagues. I certainly feel inclined to ask them whether by such speeches as they

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have delivered they can ever help the Government in this important problem of bringing about a right solution. That is the question. What is the right solution? The Government of India have been doing, as you have all acknowledged here, all that they possibly can; they have done their very best. If they have failed in their efforts, is it on account of their weakness or is it on account of the stern opposition of some who have vested interests in South Africa and elsewhere? The Colonial Governments and the South African Union are independent by themselves; and they have like all independent States in the world every right to reject your proposal if they like. Therefore, you should not rouse the sentiment of the people of the Dominions and Crown Colonies by speeches of the nature delivered here. They do no good but the opposite. You have all frankly admitted that the Government of India have every respect for the popular sentiment, and feel very keenly on this question as much as the people. Therefore, I say, the gratitude of the people of India is due to the Government of India for all that they have so nobly and courageously done during the last few years. To say that the Government have failed—they have not failed at all—is mere petulance if not childishness. They have done much and are making every possible effort to bring about a right solution. His Excellency the Viceroy himself in his last speech declared that they are disappointed by the solution arrived at on Kenya as related in the Kenya Paper, and that they are still going to persevere in the matter in order to bring about a satisfactory solution of the problem at no distant date. That being the situation, Sir, is it right on our part, as practical men, as men who have got practical wisdom, knowledge and experience, to go on speaking in the way in which some Honourable Members have spoken to-day? Sir, I entirely dissociate myself from such shriekings and screamings which are only for the consumption of the popular gallery and naught else. I may be wrong; you may attack me if you like saying that “Wacha is wrong”; but I do say, Sir, that none is perhaps more sorry than myself for the speeches made here on this question including the speech of my Right Honourable friend Srinivasa Sastri. I am really very sorry for the speech of the Right Honourable gentleman. I expected from his practical wisdom and knowledge and experience that he at least would guide this House in such a way as to bring about a practical solution of the matter. Now, what is the practical solution suggested by him? Is the solution suggested in the course of the several speeches we heard yesterday and to-day a practicable one? As my Honourable friend Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi asked in a very vigorous, independent, courageous and fearless way, what is the meaning of asking that the Governor General and the Members of his Executive Council should resign? Who will go into their seats? Is it that the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri will be the Viceroy and Governor General and Mr. Ayyangar and his friends form the Executive Government and bring about a solution of this problem? Well, Sir, they may make such preposterous suggestions as they like, but are they really practicable and workable? That is not the solution which this deliberative Assembly should at all approve. As to the Resolution before us, I am perfectly indifferent to it. It is really a harmless one. You may pass it if you please. I do not care two straws for it as in my opinion it is superfluous. But what I do say is this, that you must refrain from importing excessive warmth in your speeches regarding Indians in South Africa. I have the same warmth and sympathy as you have for our brethren in South Africa. Warmth and sympathy are not the mono-

- poly of a few Members only—it is only a question of the degree of the warmth felt. The degree of my own warmth is 90° Fahr., while that of others even mount up to 212 degrees or boiling point. That is the only difference. But it is really a preposterous suggestion which is put before this deliberative Assembly, which is really a revising body, and which is expected to show its wisdom when people in another place go astray. And I am really sorry, exceedingly sorry, that the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri above all, with his knowledge and experience should have been so unwise as to suggest that in case the proposals of the Government of India are not accepted by the Imperial Government, the Governor General and Members of the Executive Government should resign in a body. The Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri's philosophy seems to be a type with the philosophy of the Epicureans of old whose thesis was that there were no difficulties which were impossible in the world. What we have to do as men of practical wisdom and long experience, is to see what can be possibly done; how far those difficulties which face the Government of India can be solved, and solved in a way which may be deemed fairly satisfactory by the people. All human institutions are imperfect and neither Mr. Sastri nor anyone else will be able to change the destiny of human affairs, certainly not till the Greek Kalends. In human affairs we must exercise practical common sense and wisdom. I earnestly appeal that in this difficult problem now demanding solution common sense and practical wisdom alone should be allowed to prevail and it would be wrong of this Council of State to allow aught else to prevail. In that case I would dissociate myself from it and wish that the Council had better be dissolved at once.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN (Madras: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, the Resolution before the House asks the Governor General in Council to take effective steps to prevent the perpetuation of measures in South Africa, such as the Class Areas Bill, which affect Indian interests very seriously. I would first like to say that I feel thankful to the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma and the Honourable Dr. Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi for having said that there is no difference of view between the public and the Government in regard to this matter; that with reference to the Resolution itself they view it in a favourable light; but, forgive me for a moment, if I say that I cannot share the complacent optimism with which they seem to view the solution of this problem. I want everyone here to remember that these people are not fighting for theoretical rights; they are not fighting for equality; they are not fighting for Parliamentary franchise; they are fighting for a very small claim which was solemnly promised, and that was, that the rights of the people there should be protected; that their vested rights should not be interfered with. It may be of interest to this House to know that when Mr. Gokhale returned from South Africa after agreeing to the Smuts-Gandhi agreement, the late Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta, and with him the Honourable Sir Dinshaw Wacha both protested that the case of India had been given away by Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Gandhi because they did not stand and fight for the cause of the theoretical equality of Indians and for the right of every Indian British subject to proceed wherever they desired to any part of the British Empire.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DINSHAW WACHA: I still adhere to my previous opinion. Theory and practice are very different in human affairs, and we have always to look to the practical and workable.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN: I recognise all these difficulties. I am only telling you of the strong view that Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta took. Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Gandhi were very practical. They realised that they had to fight with a Government that was formidable, so they agreed to a compromise, not to allow any more men from our country to go to South Africa but that those that were there should be treated well. That promise has been broken and therefore we have the right to protest.

Speaking of optimism, a great writer once said, "An optimist is one who hopes for all things and expects nothing." (Laughter.) I fear my two Honourable friends are optimists of that kind. I am optimistic I believe in fighting even against odds, but still it must be remembered that it is not always that patience is a virtue. Patience shown at a time when patience is necessary is to be admired, but patience shown at a time when some stronger quality should be displayed is not a virtue. What is the case now? The representative of the Government of India, Sir Benjamin Robertson, said:

"An undertaking to administer existing laws in a just manner is meaningless, if the rights which Indians are entitled to exercise under those laws can be restricted at will by fresh legislation."

"This is all that the Government of India are asked to do, to protect these rights. This is a question of a life and death struggle and counselling patience when any delay or absence of firm action means ruin will, I think, rather injure the cause of the Indians in South Africa. It must be remembered too that General Smuts broke faith in 1907 when he said that he would withdraw the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, introduce voluntary registration, and that prohibition of immigrants should be based on economic rather than on racial grounds, and that it should be brought in by an administrative regulation rather than by a legislative enactment. It should be distinctly understood that now he repudiates that. Let us hear what General Smuts said. He has repudiated other things too. I quote from the proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1923.

"No Government could for a moment either tamper with this position or do anything to meet the Indian viewpoint. That is why I think the Resolution passed in 1921 was a mistake. I thought it then. I still think it a great mistake. We got on the wrong road there."

Then again:

"I had to stand out but that has made things worse in South Africa. South Africa now certainly sees that she has to stand to her guns much more resolutely than she would have done otherwise. I think we made a mistake in 1921."

My Honourable friend, Sir Narasimha Sarma, quoted the words of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. While admiring his chivalry, let me point out that there is a strong determined view of a man upon this question. That man was Dr. Sapru and this is what he says. Speaking of General Smuts he said:

"But he would give nothing, consent to nothing, and hold out no hopes. * * * But as matters stand, he can pursue his even course in the name and on behalf of the whites there and refuse to be dictated to by any outside authority on the ground that South Africa is an independent self-governing unit of the Empire. India on the other hand, is not self-governing unit and its Government is still in the leading strings of the India Office and His Majesty's Government."

Sir, I want you to understand that there are at the present day in South Africa 161,000 people comprising the Indian population, but note the fact

that 1,41,000 are in Natal being threatened with ruin. That is a fact which we should face. That is why I say that in this matter strong and swift action is absolutely necessary. General Smuts, in my opinion, has been guilty of a gross and flagrant breach of faith. He has challenged the Government of India. I hope the Honourable Member and others are aware of the speech he made in South Africa very recently where he said :

"We are masters in our house. We shall not allow the Government of India to meddle in our affairs."

This is the pronouncement made by a great statesman who talked big about the British Empire and brotherhood and yet has the unblushing effrontery to say that Indians are at the mercy of his Government. I consider that it is a challenge to the Government of India, and I hope that the manner and method indicated by the Honourable Dr. Shafi will also be shown in the Government of India's action in challenging General Smuts' statement. Upon the manner in which the Government of India answer the challenge will depend their claim to voice forth the real feelings of the people of this country on this burning question. I need not detain the House any longer.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, when Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas asked me last July, after the Kenya decision was announced, to waive the rules and allow a debate on the Kenya question, I readily consented to do so and I am glad that I did permit such a procedure. When the Honourable Mr. Natesan made a similar request a few days ago, I readily and cheerfully assented to a similar waiver and though I foresaw that there would be some misconception regarding the attitude which the Government of India have taken, whether it be with regard to the Kenya question or the South African question, I welcomed the discussion with a view to removing it if possible. I am glad that I did welcome the discussion because the Government have, as I have said, nothing to withhold from the public in the matter of their policy, and feel that they would be only strengthening themselves in any line of action they may adopt by a free, frank and open expression of the views of the people whose destinies they are in charge of. I am glad therefore that the debate, which was initiated at the instance of Mr. Natesan, has proved clearly to the whole world that in this august Chamber of elderly statesmen, there is a feeling of youthful exuberance of passion provoked by the South Africa Segregation Bill. I was criticised for a suggestion I made in my speech in this House that temperate language was consonant with public interests, and it has been observed that perhaps I was wrong in taking such an optimistic view of the sweet reasonableness of our European fellow-subjects in South Africa as to hope that a solution would be readily achieved by the mere use of mild language. Sir, when I suggested a mild and temperate expression of our views, it was because I felt that our cause, yours and ours, is so good on its merits, that we should be only spoiling it, damaging it, by the use of any violent language, because it is invariably considered that abuse and unnecessary strength of language are always employed only in the advocacy of bad cases. There is nothing to be lost by strong and vigorous expression of public opinion and the Government welcome it, and I am glad such a vigorous expression of opinion has been forthcoming in this debate, and I have no reason to complain that the tone has been in any way hostile to the European population in South Africa or to the Government of India. I have never minced matters in expressing myself when I felt strong expression was necessary, and I do not expect

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others either to do it; but, Sir, let us not mistake for strength, unnecessary violence or vehemence in the use of language which might only embarrass the successful course of negotiations and can never improve them, especially when indulged in by a representative of the Government. It has been said that the Government of India policy has been a begging policy, has been a mendicant policy, and something stronger is required if justice is to be done to the claims of our South African Indian fellow-subjects. I should despise myself if I were to ask the Government of India to adopt, on behalf of the 300 millions entrusted to their care, a begging policy, or a mendicant policy, or a policy of asking for favours from any Government, much less from the South African Government. But I do not think that if you tell a man or a Government to pay some regard to justice, sense of equality, sense of fairness in reasonable and moderate language, and ask him to live up to the traditions of his ancestors, to live up to the traditions of civilized men and civilized Governments, that can be construed as a mendicant policy or as a begging policy, simply because the language in which the representations may be made is couched in gentlemanly, moderate and reasonable phrases or phraseology. Sir, I do not think it can be charged against the Government of India that they can ever be guilty of being beggars at the doors of others. They realise the dignity of their position and they maintain and will maintain, God willing, those traditions and will not yield their claims to any Government, whether within the Empire or outside it. It has been said that the only remedy for the removal of these grievances would be fighting for the franchise in South Africa, and Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary has quoted in evidence of that claim the attitude of the Cape Colony Government. There is no difference of opinion between us that the franchise is the only effective protection and that we, as a Government, we as the people of India, can have nothing more or not much to say with regard to the treatment of our fellow Indian subjects in South Africa the moment the franchise is granted. We have been troubling His Majesty's Government simply because the past policy of the Government of India has been responsible for the sending of large numbers of men to South Africa who at present possess no vote. Otherwise it would be a purely domestic question with which the Government of India would never dream of interfering because it would be interference in the internal affairs of a self-governing Dominion. Honourable Members do not seem to fully appreciate the position of self-governing Dominions in the Empire, and under the constitution of the Empire how little interference would be tolerated by any self-governing Dominion whether it proceeded from a sister Dominion from the Home Government, or from the Government of India.

That is the real difficulty of the situation and I think the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, although he must know the exact position, has perhaps slightly exaggerated what could be done and what would be done by His Majesty's Government if they felt that the Government of India were more in earnest. When I said that His Majesty's Government were perfectly in accord with the policy we have enunciated I think I was not wrong because this is what Lord Peel said at the Imperial Conference:

"The Resolution of 1921 stands, but, I rest my case not merely upon a formality but upon the broad equities of the case and an appeal for justice and Imperial unity. I am quite aware of the difficulties of South Africa, but I hope General Smuts when he returns, while alive to his own difficulties, will retain a vivid consciousness of our own."

Lord Peel was speaking on behalf of His Majesty's Government. He knew full well that General Smuts stated, or the Minister of the Interior stated in the Union Parliament that they would bring forward a Class Areas Bill. The Government of India made their representations, and His Majesty's Minister intervened in unequivocal terms in asking that General Smuts should be alive not merely to his own difficulties but to the difficulties of the Government of India and the difficulties of His Majesty's Government. And I take it that the policy of the Ministers from all the self-governing Dominions in practically isolating General Smuts—I would not use such a strong expression but at any rate differing from him in an essential matter in regard to status—must have clearly indicated to General Smuts that the opinion of His Majesty's Government, that the opinion of all the self-governing Dominions and the opinion of the Government of India, were all equally against the policy which he was foreshadowing as being the policy which is likely to be pursued in South Africa. And I do not think that he could have paid a greater compliment to the Government of India than when he complained that we had adopted an intransigent attitude. These are his words:

"But I must say quite frankly that I have been very much perturbed over the attitude adopted by the Indian Government in this matter. They pressed the case against Kenya in a way which seemed to me to exceed the limits of prudence and wisdom, and when a settlement was ultimately made, language was used with regard to it which I think would certainly not help the cause of loyalty either in India or anywhere else in the Empire. The whole incident, as I say, has had a very bad effect in South Africa."

Now I look upon this as a compliment to the Government of India and I may assure General Smuts that the Government of India would not be deterred one inch from the policy that they have laid before themselves in protecting and in order to protect His Majesty's Indian subjects whether in Kenya or elsewhere, whatever may be the temporarily bad effect, whether in South Africa or in the other Colonies. But I would ask Honourable Members at the same time to remember that the constitution of the Imperial Commonwealth is of so fluid a character (as I put it yesterday) that we shall have to remember the difficulties of His Majesty's Government in successfully intervening in a matter of this description. I would not say more because I would not commit myself or the Government of India to a helpless position or to a position in which I would have to admit that His Majesty's Government may not be able to do more, and so I would let the matter rest at that. But this much I can say. What would be the attitude of the Indian Government supposing they were to come to a resolution in the matter of the Bill which has been passed by both Houses the other day, in action being taken thereon and the South African Government were to protest—would not it be said that India has the same freedom as South Africa in the matter? I need not pursue the matter further, Sir, but I think we who hope for self-government should be as keen in safeguarding the protection of our own interests and the interests of our Government in dealing with other Governments as perhaps the Union Government is trying to do at the present moment. But that does not absolve the Union Government, as I said yesterday, from departing from the spirit of the promises which they made in 1914, from the policy which has been pursued by His Majesty's Government when self-government was conferred upon South Africa, from the policy which they tried to enforce during the Boer regime, from the policy which was attempted to be enforced or recommended for adoption after self-government was conferred upon South Africa. We are at one in that matter

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and therefore it is unnecessary for me to deal further with a question on which there is absolute agreement.

The Honourable Sir Umar Hayat Khan has dwelt upon the question of repatriation. I would take his remarks in the same sportsman-like spirit in which he used the words relating to the government of man in practical affairs by the use of a little physical vigour. Coming to the practical question of repatriation, I should deprecate anything being said here which would weaken the hands of the Government of India or which would weaken the hands of our fellow Indians there in resisting the adoption of measures which may be considered to be measures adopted for the purpose of driving Indians out of South Africa if possible. Many of those Indians are African born. They have as much right both under God's and under man's law to remain there and to exercise their privileges and rights as any of His Majesty's European subjects, and I for one would never recommend to the Government of India the adoption of a policy which would make them forsake those rights and return, not to the land of their birth but to the land of their forefathers' birth, simply because they could not get justice, at any rate temporarily in the land of their birth. But if any of them choose voluntarily to come back to India, I think it is the duty of the Government as well as of the Indian people to do all that they can to make the condition of such repatriates as comfortable, and as cheerful, as may be possible under the circumstances. I must confess that I cannot defend the position of the Britishers in Natal against the attacks of General Smuts and of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri. I fear that in this respect they are departing from their customary traditions and are being guided too much by what they conceive to be their immediate self-interest, and I can only join those who have appealed to their true instincts as Britishers to rise above their environments and join the Government of India in resisting the enforcement or enactment of laws which cannot be justified either on grounds of justice, equity or expediency in the interests of South Africa or the Empire. I do not think, Sir, that we have suffered in this matter by reason of the fact that India has not been self-governing. I looked for concrete suggestions from the House as to how India could have improved her position in South Africa if she had been self-governing, barring perhaps by the adoption according to some, of reciprocity or retaliatory measures which were contemplated by them at the time the Reciprocity Bill was passed. I shall not go into that question. The Government of India have not opposed the passage of that Bill, and barring a faint allusion to what may be done in that way, I do not see how a self-governing India could have intervened more successfully in this matter. On the other hand, as was put by one of the Members, we stand in this advantageous position, that we can invoke, that we have got the moral right to invoke, the support of His Majesty's Government in fighting our battles with South Africa on this question, and I hope that that appeal would not go in vain. The only suggestion, if it could be called a constructive suggestion, was that made by the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri that, perhaps our position may be improved if His Majesty's Government felt convinced that the Government, or at any rate, the Member in charge, would resign their or his position, if an adverse decision were come to on this question. A similar recommendation was made for consideration on a previous occasion. I am not surprised. I am not grieved either, there is nothing very peculiar about it. When

people hold strong views, when they are aggrieved, they naturally give expression to those views in a manner which they think might be effective. But we who are in charge of affairs, we who may be supposed to know more of what is going on, may be pardoned, if we are unable to see eye to eye with such recommendations. I felt my position, speaking personally, when the Kenya decision was announced, very uncomfortable indeed. I knew, as a matter of fact, when I was asked to take charge of this portfolio, that I was going in for trouble, but I never shirked trouble, and I am not sorry that that was my policy. But I do feel now that I did the right thing in resisting that temptation, in resisting that demand, in resisting that call, because I feel that I have been of some use to my country by continuing to remain in office. . . .

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: "Of much use, much use".

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: And you may be sure of this gentlemen, that to one of my temperament, to one of my training, office has very little glamour, at any rate it must have passed away with four years, and you may be sure that no amount of abuse and no call to abandon my post of duty would have the slightest impression upon me if I feel that I can still be of some use. But when I do feel that by adopting such a course as is recommended I will be of greater use, you may be sure that that course will be adopted. But Honourable Members will remember that the Government of India have been unanimous both on the Kenya question as well as on the South African question; there is no difference of opinion at all, and I cannot complain as Member in charge, that there was any difference between myself and the other Members of the Executive Council, though perhaps I should not say that there has been or has not been any difference. But, Sir, speaking for the Government of India, I think my Honourable Colleague Sir Muhammad Shafi has explained the position clearly. We must remember that we are working a constitution with specific limitations, that when we entered office we knew what we were doing, that His Majesty's Government must be carried on, that His Majesty is trying to do full justice as between all classes of His Majesty's subjects, and although we may wish that something more might have been done, still we cannot, occupying responsible positions as we do, but recognise the difficulties and loyally and cheerfully submit to the decisions of His Majesty's Government. And so far, I do not see that His Majesty's Government has told the Government of India that they were in the wrong in the matter of asking the South African Government to adopt an altered policy. I hope that the efforts of this Legislature as well as those of the Government of India would successfully persuade the Union Government to alter their line of action so that they may adopt a policy which will consolidate the various component parts of the Imperial Commonwealth.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARY: There are two intermediate suggestions that have been put forward and are distinctly mild to which I would draw the attention of the Honourable Member in charge. They are that the Colonies Committee should be stiffened by the addition of strong people who know the situation and that the Government of India should give instructions to that Committee to take cognizance of the South African question.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA: I have already stated that the Colonies Committee has been appointed primarily for

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

dealing with the Kenya immigration problem and for dealing with the problems arising out of the decision which was arrived at last June by His Majesty's Government, and that we propose to ask that Committee to deal with the Fiji problem also. It was a matter of some difficulty for the Government to arrive at conclusions with regard to the composition of that Committee, but they did their level best in getting such a Committee as they felt the circumstances demanded to make their representations and negotiations effective. They felt that new ground had to be broken. It was not a question so much of the strength of the case as that of presenting it, and presenting it through channels which might not provoke unnecessary opposition. Therefore, the Government of India felt that the procedure they have adopted is the right one in regard to the composition of the Committee, and that the best Committee that could be arranged has been appointed, and every one of us has joined in blessing it with success. Whether any change in the composition, partial or whole, is necessary if the Colonies Committee has to deal with the self-governing Dominions, is a matter which will receive due and adequate attention on the part of Government. But anything that I have said must not be construed for one moment as expressing an opinion that the present Committee is not well fitted for undertaking any task that may be entrusted to it, whether in the matter of Kenya, Fiji or any self-governing Dominion.

Well, Sir, I have been told that I am an optimist, and an amusing definition of an optimist has been referred to by the Honourable Mr. Natesan. Well, after all, the school of idealistic philosophy in which he and I have been brought up has perhaps taught us to indulge in such blissful unreal dreams and not to care much for practical politics; but somehow I am not dissociating myself when I use the word "optimism", from practical politics and am not indulging in mere illusory hopes. We have by the strength of public opinion succeeded in persuading the South African Government to modify their policy in some respects, and the exclusion of the Cape Province is an indication that the Union Government is weighing the matter most carefully. What can be gained after all by a pessimistic attitude? Nothing is to be gained by pessimism or throwing up our hands in despair. I shall not say more, Sir. More than one speaker, both here and elsewhere, has alluded to the desirability of Lord Hardinge's footsteps being followed. I claim, Sir, that Lord Hardinge did act wisely and nobly in intervening in South African affairs at that moment, but there is nothing which the Government of India or His Excellency Lord Reading has done which would or can lend itself to any suggestion that all that Lord Hardinge did or attempted to do has not been done or is not being attempted by His Excellency Lord Reading. If there is a misconception on the point, and my attention has been drawn to an article in the "*Hindu*" to show that there is such a misconception, I hope to be able to dispel it. The writer says:

"Let me repeat again, at the conclusion of this brief article, that a gesture from the Viceroy himself,—a public statement by the Governor General in Council,—is needed at this present juncture, if South Africa is to be duly impressed, because there is a fatal idea prevalent that on this subject there is a difference between British and Indian opinion in India; that the Viceroy and his Council are trying their best to modify Indian opinion in favour of South Africa, instead of leading it against South Africa."

I may state, Sir, that there is absolutely no difference of opinion, so far as I am aware, in official or non-official circles, between British and Indian opinion in that justice is on the side of the Indian subjects of His Majesty in South Africa (Hear, hear). There is no difference between any of the Members of the Governor General's Council. Let me not tire you by repeating once again that His Excellency the Viceroy has done and is doing his best, and no further gesture is needed than the example that he has set both on the Kenya controversy and in other matters, to prove that he will put up as big a fight as it is open to a constitutional representative of His Majesty to put up, for the protection and safeguarding of the rights of the people entrusted to his care (Hear, hear).

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

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take effective steps to prevent the repeated attempts of the Union Government of South Africa to impose restrictions and disabilities on the Indian community similar to those embodied in the Class Areas Bill, as the proposed measure constitutes a violation of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement of 1911, and would damage Indian interests irretrievably besides endangering the solidarity of the Empire."

The motion was adopted.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 24th March, 1924.