

Wednesday, 18th July, 1923

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(Official Report)

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THIRD SESSION

OF THE

COUNCIL OF STATE, 1923.



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, the 18th July, 1933.

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

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Council will resume the discussion on the first Resolution on the paper.

RESOLUTION *RE* OPENING OF THE PORT OF MADRAS FOR PILGRIM TRAFFIC (Continued).

The HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, the Resolution that stands in my name runs as follows :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that arrangements be made with the Madras Government to open the Port of Madras for pilgrim traffic to Mecca and other holy places, as per my Resolution moved and adopted by Government in the meeting of the Council held on the 13th February 1922, by providing the required funds for the upkeep of sanitary arrangements, etc.”

In this connection, I beg to make the following few observations :—

This is a question that affects the religious interests of my community. I moved the Resolution at the meeting of the Council held on the 13th February 1922, requesting the Government to open the Port of Madras for Pilgrim traffic to Mecca and other holy places, as the pilgrims had to undergo great difficulty in going over to Bombay and Karachi with a view to catch their steamers for Jeddah. The Resolution was then adopted by the House but the Government did not give effect to it.

I communicated with the Government of Madras as to what arrangements they have made in getting the Port opened and their reply is as follows :

“ With reference to the question of arranging for pilgrimages to Mecca from Madras, I find from a letter which we have received from the Government of India that that Government considers that a part at least of the expenditure involved in arranging for the supervision and accommodation of pilgrims who are waiting in Madras would have to be met by the Provincial Government. In the present state of our finances it seems to me impossible to undertake this liability.”

Thereupon I wrote to the Government of India about what the Madras Government have said and requested them to arrange for opening the Port at the cost of the Government of India, to which I received the following reply :

“ Mr. Chatterjee has asked me to acknowledge your letter of the 26th of February suggesting that the Government of India should provide financial aid to the Madras Government to enable it to open the Port of Madras for Pilgrim traffic. In the present state of the Government of India's finances he is afraid that it is of no use to pursue your suggestion. You will, I am sure, understand the difficulty.”

[Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair.]

I fully explained at the time of my moving the Resolution last year regarding the difficulties and hardships the pilgrims are undergoing at Bombay which was not at all realised by the Government. Now, my statement on this subject was sufficiently borne out and even admitted by the Government in the debate that took place in the other Chamber on the 4th July. More than 20,000 pilgrims gathered this year at Bombay and Karachi and several thousands of them could not go for want of steamers. It is the duty of the Protector of Pilgrims and the Haj Committee appointed by Government to make necessary arrangements with the Steamship Companies to carry the pilgrims according to the requirements. Owing to the failure on the part of these people, a large number of pilgrims had to go back to their homes after having spent the money they had for their passages at Bombay, while waiting for steamers. As a matter of fact the pilgrims were obliged to live and sleep in the streets of Bombay, as the Musarfarkhanas provided in Bombay are not adequately large enough to accommodate these pilgrims. Had the Government only made the necessary arrangements in getting the Port of Madras open for the pilgrim traffic, there would not have been so much of a rush to one Port and loss of money to the pilgrims would have been avoided. Besides, I understand several of them died of cholera and many were taken ill.

After my Resolution being adopted last year, I advertised broadcast that the Government were going to open the Port of Madras for Pilgrim traffic and that the pilgrims could get boats from Madras for Jeddah during this season and a large number of pilgrims from various parts of the Presidency of Madras and Malaya gathered and were sadly disappointed. They were obliged to go to Bombay at a considerable amount of inconvenience and high cost; even there they were disappointed, on account of the mismanagement of the authorities at Bombay. I have permission to make mention of the name of my friend, Mr. Barodawalla, M.L.A., from Bombay, who had actually seen the miserable sights of these pilgrims.

He writes to me as follows :

“ I am glad that you are moving a Resolution in the Council of State to relieve the Hajis from the hardships that they are subjected to while awaiting a passage to Mecca. The following might be of interest to you. The Bombay Government do their best to help the Hajis while they are in this port. Mr. Kelly, the Police Commissioner with his Deputies, including Mr. Clayton, the Municipal Commissioner, did their level best to see to the comforts and convenience of these men who come to Bombay, but owing to the large number of pilgrims proceeding to Mecca, I believe the steamers are not sufficient to carry them, and it happens on several occasions that the departure of a vessel is delayed and the pilgrims are put to very great inconvenience and some of the poor Hajis, owing to their very long stay in Bombay, spend the funds they have, which, had the vessel started at the given date, would have lasted them till their return. Some of the Members of the Haj Committee try to do good work but in my opinion the panel of the Committee requires shuffling.”

This is what my friend Mr. Barodawalla of Bombay writes about what he actually saw there.

I am sure the Government of Bombay will agree with me that rather than all the pilgrims should go to one particular Port, it would be better if more Ports were opened for Pilgrim traffic, so that the number of pilgrims may be divided among the respective Ports and the authorities at those ports would look after their own pilgrims.

I really cannot understand the plea of the Government as to their inability to help in this direction on account of financial difficulty. There are several items in which the Government of India are spending money unnecessarily. Such items could easily be omitted and funds provided for this important religious purpose. It is the belief among the Muhammadans that if any one goes to Mecca and Medina and performs the religious ceremonies there, his sins are mitigated and purified. Those who returned home from Bombay for want of berth on board the steamers, after having spent all their money and undergone a good deal of hardships, will, I am sure, be cursing those who are responsible. After all it is not very heavy expenditure the Government of India have to meet in this connection ; it is very hard on the part of the Government of Madras and we cannot expect them to meet a portion of the expenditure, especially when they are unable to meet their own requirements. Further, it is purely a matter concerning the Central Government and it is only proper that such expenditure should be met by the Government of India.

In these circumstances, I fully trust that the Government will not hesitate to accept this Resolution and I trust Honourable Members, I mean, the non-Muslim Members, of the House, will support my Resolution as it is entirely a religious matter.

With these few words, I commend my Resolution for the acceptance of the House.

The HONOURABLE SIR ZULFIQAR ALI KHAN (East Punjab : Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to support the Resolution which has been so eloquently moved by my Honourable friend, Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair. We have all heard the reasons for which it is necessary that the Port of Madras should be opened for pilgrim traffic. It is an open secret, Sir, that all those people who have to travel from the Madras Presidency to Bombay undergo great hardships as in Bombay itself there is no accommodation to meet the demand. But one thing which I do not know and which my Honourable friend has not made clear is this : whether there are any ships available to take these pilgrims from Madras to Bombay, and if there are no pilgrim ships to take them to Bombay, then I do not see any use in opening this Port for the pilgrim traffic. In any case, if the Honourable Member has made any arrangements with Shipping Companies there, then I think the Government may favourably consider this request. I have no doubt that every pious Muhammadan in this Council will support this Resolution and place under a great debt of gratitude those poor Muhammadans who live in that Presidency. Sir, with these few words, I strongly support the Resolution.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Member, Education, Health and Lands) : Sir, the Government are fully aware that the Muhammadan community attach particular importance to this pilgrimage question and have therefore always attempted as far as lay in their power to meet their wishes. It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate the various measures which the Government have taken to facilitate the travelling of those Muhammadans who wish to undertake a pilgrimage to Jeddah. I think Honourable Members who have studied this question and have heard the discussions in this Council and elsewhere this year and last year are

[Sir Narasimha Sarmā.]

fully aware of them. This year again the Government have had to face the incurring of heavy expenditure for sanitary arrangements in Jeddah and elsewhere, and for making some provision for the contingency of having to repatriate those Muhammadans who go to Jeddah but who are left destitute there and who are not able to find their way back. The Department over which I have the honour to preside have with very great difficulty been able to secure this year funds for this purpose and it was a very heavy sum indeed, and the Government have to consider as to what steps have to be taken in order to meet this grave trouble that has to be faced, every year, as to what is to be done to prevent a number of people from going to Jeddah who may be left destitute there. The assistance of the Muhammadan community has been sought, and I am glad to say that last year they have been able to do something in this direction, but this year they have expressed their inability and so the Government have to bear the whole burden. I am only mentioning this for the purpose of showing that the Government are fully alive to the importance of the subject and how sympathetic they have always been.

Now, there is one slight inaccuracy in a statement of fact in the Resolution, namely, that Government adopted the Resolution which was moved by my Honourable friend and accepted by this House in February 1922. The Government were unable at that time to see that there was any necessity for opening the Port of Madras—at any rate at that time—for pilgrim traffic for various reasons which still hold good and which I may have to recapitulate shortly. But they desired to comply with the wishes of this House as far as possible and immediately put themselves into communication with the Government of Madras to see if effect could be given to that Resolution, in spite of their feeling that there was not the same necessity for opening the Port of Madras, as there was perhaps for opening the Port of Calcutta, the opening of which Port might facilitate the solution of the problem to a greater extent than possibly the opening of the Port of Madras would, but the Madras Government have again expressed their views in a manner unfavourable to the Mover of the Resolution. They stated firstly that the matter was not of any pressing importance and, secondly, that if the Port were to be re-opened the construction of a camp would have to be undertaken at a cost of Rs. 1 lakhs, non-recurring, that the Musafirkhana or the place where these pilgrims might be temporarily located which my Honourable friend said would accommodate about 800 pilgrims was not really sufficiently large to accommodate more than 200 or 250 pilgrims, and consequently the capital expenditure, they mentioned would have to be incurred, and that a recurring expenditure would have to be undertaken to provide sanitary and medical arrangements. Then there is the difficulty to which my Honourable friend Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan has alluded, namely, as to whether there would be a sufficient number of pilgrims to attract pilgrim ships to Madras, providing a direct communication between Madras and Jeddah. I may say, Sir, once again, that some of the data upon which my Honourable friend proceeded last time seem to have disappeared now, in that he complained last year that there was no direct communication between the Straits Settlements and Jeddah and therefore pilgrims had to break their journey at Madras and instead of being able to take ship again there that they had to go to Bombay, which

was a great inconvenience to them. I am glad to say that there is direct communication between the Straits Settlements and Jeddah, and consequently those pilgrims from the Straits Settlements and the Dutch East Indies who wish to go to Jeddah need not break their journey at Madras or go to Madras unless they wish to see their relatives if they happen to have any, on their way to Jeddah. So, that part of the problem to a certain extent disappears from our calculation although it could never have formed a formidable factor in the situation, inasmuch as we were not bound to provide for pilgrims from the Dutch East Indies or the Straits Settlements.

Then there was another point on which I shall once again lay special stress, namely, that according to the admission of Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair himself the pilgrims may not welcome a long and tedious sea journey from Madras to Jeddah and might prefer—at least many of them might prefer the land route to Bombay and from Bombay a short sea journey to Jeddah. I think he himself stated on a previous occasion that the pilgrims would prefer a land route to a long sea route, but apart from that, again, there is this fact which has to be taken into consideration, namely, that a large number of Muhammadans—about an million and a quarter out of three millions—live on the West Coast in Malabar and South Canara, and they would prefer a west coast port to an east coast port; if Madras were to be opened, they would have to pay travelling fare to Madras and then pay for their sea journey from that place. I do not think Madras would serve either of those districts, or even the central districts of Bellary, Kurnool, Anantapur and Cudappah, or the northern Telugu districts whose people would prefer the Hyderabad route to Bombay because it would be cheaper; at any rate it would be more convenient for them than coming to Madras. Consequently, we are driven to this conclusion, that this Port of Madras would serve the needs of the city of Madras and of the Tamil districts, where there is a large Muhammadan population of over a million. And even as regards many of them, there is this factor, that many of them might prefer a land route and a short sea route to a long sea route. But after all what is the total number of these pilgrims from the Madras Presidency? We were told in a communication from the Government of Madras, dated the 13th November 1922 that according to the information furnished by the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, the total number of Hedjaz pilgrims that started from or passed through the Madras Presidency to embark from Bombay in 1921 was 821 classified as follows: Those that belong to the Madras Presidency proper—424. Of these 424 a certain number would belong to Malabar and the west coast and a certain number to the Ceded districts and the Northern Circars; it is only the remaining number that would properly belong to the Tamil districts and the city of Madras, who may benefit by the proposed Resolution or who may be able to participate in this new scheme. I am not quite sure, therefore, as to whether such a small number would attract a pilgrim ship there at all. If there is any money to spare, from the Government coffers, which at present as Honourable Members are aware are not overfull I think the problem of opening the Port of Calcutta which would supply the needs of about 22 millions of Muhammadans is a matter of greater necessity than the opening of the Port of Madras. But coming as I do from Madras and knowing full well the conditions there, and having

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

many friends amongst Muhammadans of the Tamil districts, I for one should stretch a point and try to see, if possible, that the Port of Madras is opened. But I do not think that this House would press the Government to undertake a further expenditure of this kind at the present moment, before they can settle the other factors that I have mentioned in my foregoing remarks, namely, the necessity of finding funds for the pilgrims who have to be repatriated, and the opening of Calcutta which seems to be a matter of greater necessity at the present moment. But I may assure my Honourable friend that the earliest possible opportunity will be taken to induce the Government of Madras to undertake the necessary measures or the Government of India itself to undertake them if they have to find the funds, in order to facilitate the travel of those who wish to journey by steamer from Madras to Jeddah. The Government of India in compliance with the wishes of the Honourable Member and of the House placed the matter before the Standing Finance Committee this year, and they have come to the same conclusion that, in the present state of the finances, it would be absolutely impossible to find any money for this purpose. So, the Government of Madras do not see any very great necessity for it ; the Government of India themselves do not see any very great necessity for it ; the Standing Finance Committee are not in a position to find funds. There is the greater problem of the opening of the port of Calcutta. I would therefore ask for a little patience from my Honourable friend, who, I am sure, will succeed in his object if he were only to wait a little longer, till funds permitted us to accept his Resolution, and we hope with the settling down of conditions in Europe it will be our good fortune to replenish our exchequer before long. I hope that my remarks will not be taken as made in any critical spirit. It is only because we are not in a position to spare the necessary funds that we are unable to meet the wishes of these Muhammadan residents in Madras. I shall not go into the question now as to whether there is any real desire on the part of my Muhammadan friends there ; so far we have not had any Resolutions from them or in the Madras Council ; but we are prepared to act upon the statement of my Honourable friend that he knows the feelings of Madras, and that it is unnecessary for us to go into the question now. But taking it that my Honourable friend rightly interprets the wishes of the Madras Muhammadans as desiring the opening of this direct communication from Madras, I only ask for a little time, until we are in a position to spare the necessary money, when we shall undertake to review the question and take it into as favourable consideration as circumstances may permit. I hope, therefore, that the Honourable Member will see there is not much use in his pressing the Resolution now, and will withdraw it.

*The HONOURABLE NAWAB SIR BAHRAM KHAN (Punjab : Nominated Non-official) : Sir, I stand here to support this Resolution. My friend, the Honourable Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair has delivered an eloquent speech and explained everything in detail in moving this Resolution, while the Honourable Sir Zulfar Ali Khan has delivered a long speech in support of it. There is, therefore, no need for me to go into further details. What I will say is this. This Resolution concerns Muhammadans and aims

* Translation of speech delivered in the Vernacular.

at providing facilities to the Madras Muhammadans in the matter of shipping arrangements for Haj pilgrims. It can be said that the pilgrims from Madras are not at present feeling any inconvenience in proceeding to Mecca by sea, but it should be understood that the Musalman Hajis from that Presidency have to go to Bombay or some other port to embark for Mecca. This entails not only great inconvenience but extra expense as well. Although the Indian Muhammadans are quite prepared to undergo all expenses and inconveniences in discharging their religious duties in connection with the Haj pilgrimage in going to so far-off a place, yet when Government provides facilities to all religions, without any distinction, in the performance of their religious duties, whereby expense and inconvenience is minimised, I respectfully and strongly support this Resolution. It is a religious matter of vital importance and should get Government support.

The HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS (Bombay : Nominated Non-official) : Sir, although not a Muhammadan, I think it is my duty to speak on this Resolution, and when I rise to speak I can only speak on the Resolution in support of it and in no other direction. The question of pilgrimages is one common to both the Hindus and Muhammadans of India. The demand for providing facilities for pilgrims is common to both, and although I am not a Muhammadan I can very easily conceive the difficulties to which pilgrims are put, and which I have witnessed with my own eyes in the case of Hindu pilgrims, owing to insufficient and incomplete arrangements for transport. I am aware of the great inconveniences entailed on Hindus when they proceed to their holy places in India.

Now, Sir, the pilgrimage to Mecca, I understand, is looked upon by Muhammadans as the one craving of a devout Muhammadan. The Honourable Member in charge said that Government had to spend a good deal of money in order to repatriate indigent pilgrims from Jeddah. I wish he could have enlightened some of us who were not in the Council in 1922 when the Honourable Mover of the present Resolution moved his original Resolution, as to the cost entailed in this direction. But if it is a fact that many pilgrims who go to Mecca for their one last wish are so indigent that Government have to provide funds in order to get them back to India, it is all the more necessary, to my mind, Sir, that the shortest, and the cheapest route available should be opened for pilgrims in order to enable them to get to their places of pilgrimage by the easiest, cheapest and soonest method. I do not want to strike a new note. Transport facilities in the shape of up-to-date trains with all comforts are things which the educated, the monied and the more advanced classes all appreciate, but in order that the masses may appreciate the blessings brought by British rule in India in the shape of easier and comfortable transport, the one thing that the Government should do for the political contentment of the masses, Sir, is to provide cheap and comfortable transport facilities for the large classes of people who wish to proceed to their places of pilgrimage to pay their homage. I hope I have made clear to the House the reason why I, a non-Muhammadan, rise to support this Resolution.

The Honourable Mover said,—I wonder if I followed his figures correctly,—he said that the Government of Bombay reported that the

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

pilgrims that went to Mecca from Madras were 424. I wonder if I heard him correctly.

The HONOURABLE 'SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : From the Madras Presidency proper.

The HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS : I do not know whether the Honourable Mover will confirm it, but I will leave it to him to give an adequate reply to that part of it. I feel that, irrespective of the number of pilgrims,—I do not say that for 424 pilgrims the Mover will ask for any extraordinary expenditure, but irrespective of the number of pilgrims, if a little money is spent by the Government of India even in these days of great economy it would be most excellently and discreetly spent. I do not know,—I am very ignorant in these matters because they do not concern me—I do not know how many ports are open for pilgrims going to Mecca. I understand that Calcutta is one that is likely to be opened. I wonder if Karachi is open or not...

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : It is and Bombay.

The HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS : If Karachi and Bombay are the only ports now open, then I for one as a responsible legislator in this House would vote as much as is necessary for the purpose of opening suitable ports on the other coasts of India. I wish the Honourable Mover had told us what it would cost the Central Government to open the port of Madras. I would vote for this Resolution on the underlying principle that all reasonable expenditure incurred in the direction of providing facilities for pilgrims, be they Hindus or Muhammadans, proceeding to their sacred places either to Benares or to Mecca, is very excellently spent and should not be stinted under any excuse. I hope the Honourable Member in charge will give the utmost and the most urgent attention as far as the Government of India is concerned and will not allow small considerations of economy,—I call it small because the gain on the other side is great—to come in the way of the contentment of the Muhammadan and Hindu masses in this direction, as contentment of the masses of these two communities can never be earned at too great a price.

The HONOURABLE SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, I am very thankful to the Honourable Member in charge of the portfolio for his generous remarks, but I cannot withdraw my Resolution without making some observations.

With regard to the question of figures, the point was challenged last year and it is not at all correct. I am sorry I have not got the proceedings of last year with me otherwise I would have quoted the exact figures.

Then with regard to the question put by my friend, Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan, I have already made arrangements with the British India Steam Navigation Company to supply as many steamers as are necessary at Madras, and therefore, there is no question at all about getting steamers there.

Then with regard to what the Honourable Member in charge has said regarding the disinclination of the Madras Government to assist us in this matter, I may say they are quite willing to take up this scheme provided the Government of India is willing to pay a contribution. I saw the representative of the Madras Government in charge of this subject, Mr. Knapp, and the Government of Madras are quite willing to open the port of Madras, provided the Government of India will not compel the Madras Government to pay a portion of the cost. I have already read the letter to the Council, and the whole point is that the Government of India want the Madras Government to pay a contribution, which they are not willing to do. Therefore, to say that the Government of Madras are not in favour of the scheme is not true at all. They are perfectly willing to take up the scheme.

Then with regard to the Malay States, my Resolution did not concern purely the Muhammadan pilgrims of Madras. I mentioned last year that those pilgrims who come from the Straits Settlements and Malaya direct to Madras are desirous of taking the ship to Mecca at Madras, and their number is somewhat large. I had included this figure also last year and I had mentioned in my speech that thousands of such pilgrims would be available per season. The Honourable the Member in charge said that there is a direct steamer service from the Straits Settlements and Malaya for Jeddah. Sir, I have had direct dealings with the Straits Settlements, and as such I know very well that once in a way a steamer goes and picks up a few hundreds of passengers, but it is a very costly and long voyage for them. The people in Malaya do require a steamer direct to Madras, which is about 4 or 5 days' journey. They will take rest in Madras and then take a steamer from there to Jeddah direct. That is the desire of the people and I place it before the Council.

Then, Sir, the Honourable Member said that pilgrims prefer to go by land rather than by sea. When this question was last discussed, the Honourable Member in connection with the Malabar question said that the Malabar Muhammadans were willing to go from Malabar to Bombay direct. I said they preferred to go to Madras by rail and then catch the steamer from Madras. I said it did not mean that, as a general rule, people wanted to go by land. It is not like people going from one place to another in India. When a pilgrim goes to Mecca and Medina he has to take all his rations and clothing with him; he has to take a large quantity of luggage and foodstuffs with him. Would any pilgrim like to go long distances by rail, chopping and changing at many stations? Certainly not. They prefer to get on board a steamer at Madras and go off to Jeddah at one jump, rather than change at various places. So that statement is not at all satisfactory.

The question of Government spending money on repatriation was a thing that was discussed last year. A large number of the Muhammadan Members of both Chambers assembled in Delhi last year under the presidency of the Honourable Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi. A Committee was formed of which I had the honour to be one of the Secretaries. We had a long discussion regarding the expenditure incurred in repatriating pilgrims and it was suggested that, if a return ticket was

[Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair.]

insisted on, Government would not have to incur expenditure for repatriating destitute pilgrims. It was also considered that if Government pressed the steamship companies to take such pilgrims who were destitute for want of funds to go back to India at a concession rate, such difficulties of expenditure would not have occurred. Further, this season nearly 20,000 pilgrims left Bombay. All of them do not generally return. Most of them die there; they like to die in a sacred place rather than return again to their homes, because they consider that if they die in a sacred place like Mecca or Medina they will be taken immediately to Heaven. Further, we know that epidemics rage so badly in Mecca and Medina and the mortality from them is so great that the whole 20,000 do not return to India; naturally there would have been savings on a large number of return tickets to the steamship companies. On these and various other points we had discussions, and the reply of the Honourable Member that the Government will have to spend a lot of money for repatriation and other things is not very satisfactory.

Then, again, take the question of expenditure in opening the Madras ports. What are the sanitary arrangements you are going to make? After all, you will have to have a Musafarkhana. A number of Muhammadan gentlemen in Madras are willing to give Musafarkhanas. Of course, the Government must have one, but this may be had at a monthly rental of Rs. 100 or Rs. 150. Then again, the pilgrim traffic does not take place every month. It is only once a year, seasonal, and, if you take a big house to accommodate these pilgrims for a month or two before and a month after, or three months in all during the pilgrim season, you will have to pay Rs. 350, Rs. 500 or Rs. 600. Assuming, even that it is Rs. 1,000, that is not a great deal.

Then, with regard to the appointment of a Director of Pilgrims as you have in Bombay, you need not appoint a full-time man in Madras. There you have a Protector of Emigrants, and you can ask him to look after this pilgrim traffic once a year for a month in addition to his own duties, and you can pay him an allowance for the trouble he takes. We have already done this in the case of Emigration in Madras and Negapatam where the Port Officer and the Health Officer undertake the duties and they are paid Rs. 75 or Rs. 100. Something like that can be done; "where there is a will, there is a way", if you really want to help these poor Muhammadans who are already suffering in this important matter you can. I really cannot understand the attitude of Government. One day you accept a Resolution, the next day you put some embargo on it and ask a third person to spend the money necessary for giving effect to it. It is said the Madras Government does not want to accept it. On what point? On the point of finance. You all know that the Madras Government is the milch cow of the Government of India, and, in addition to that, you ask them to meet some further expenditure. You cannot expect them to do that. So, Sir, it is essential and proper that the Government of India should undertake this business and put it through, with a view to meet the requirements of the Moslem subjects of His Majesty.

I do not want to keep the House any longer, as the Honourable Sir Mankoji Dadabhoi has told me that he wants to move his Resolution

and he wanted me to finish soon. A debate took place on this question in the Legislative Assembly on the 4th of July and I suppose all Honourable Members have got a copy of it. I do not think they would have gone through it ; there were so many questions asked and the Government themselves admitted that it was true and if I go on to take up the question.....

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member must confine his reply to a reply.

The HONOURABLE SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : Very well, Sir, I will leave that subject alone. Finally, Sir, I just wish to say that I do not want to go against the wishes of the Honourable Member of the Government, provided that he gives me a further assurance that he will do his best. I know he is a Madrassi himself, that he is a great friend of the Mussalmans and that he will do his best to get the Madras port opened. If he will give me a further assurance that he will take up the question and help it on, because there are 12 more months for the next season to come, I am sure by that time the Government of India will be in a solvent position.

You say that they are not in a better position now, but by that time I hope you will be able to make up your mind and see that the port of Madras is opened, the port to which my Resolution relates. Somebody else has mentioned about Calcutta and though I am interested in Calcutta also, still my Resolution refers only to Madras and so I would be out of order if I said anything about Calcutta—I hope the Government will see that the port of Madras is opened to pilgrim traffic. And so, Sir, I want an assurance to that effect. With these few words I will not press my Resolution.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : Just a few words, Sir. I am glad that the Honourable Sir Ahmedthamby is going to help us considerably in the solution of this repatriation question by facilitating the requirement of a return ticket, along which lines we hope to be able to proceed before very long. And if we are in a position to solve that question in that way, I should not be surprised if our funds could be utilised in other more useful directions, one of which may be on the lines that my Honourable friend suggests. But I would just like to correct one or two misapprehensions into which he has fallen as to what the Madras Government's statement was based upon—I am only mentioning that for the purpose of correcting him and not with regard to the final attitude the Government of India may take up on this subject ; I only want to make the position clear. The Madras Government stated :

“ The District of Malabar contributed the largest number of pilgrims who are natives of Malabar and of other Districts situated near Bombay would naturally prefer to embark from there, and even pilgrims from the other parts of the Presidency are not likely to embark from Madras for the reasons :

- (i) that the steamer journey from Madras would take longer,
- (ii) that it would be costlier, and
- (iii) that Bombay is the natural sea port for going to Jedda.”

They give a number of other reasons and conclude :

“ In view of the circumstances set forth above the Governor in Council sees no reason to depart from the view stated in Mr. Cardew's letter No. 1515, dated the 11th

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

December 1912, and reiterated in Mr. Dutt's letter No. 927, dated the 26th July 1921, viz., that there is no need to open the port of Madras for pilgrim traffic."

So Honourable Members will see that there is a difference of opinion on the question whether there is need, specially having regard to the financial stringency, to open the port of Madras. But I have said already and I hope that will be the general view, which was voiced by my Honourable friend, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, that the Government will be supported in any endeavour that it may make to facilitate to improve the condition of the journeys of devoutly minded pilgrims, whether Hindus or Mussulmans. Only I must warn the House that the Government of India may not be able to see eye to eye with Honourable Members as to any very large extension of liabilities based upon this principle which we may all accept, provided the resulting consequences are not very embarrassing that the Government would not be asked to provide for the wants of the numerous Hindu pilgrims going to Benares and other places of pilgrimage which will make it a very difficult proposition indeed. So we must be cautious in putting into practice the general principle.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS : Do not be too cautious ; do not be over-cautious.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : No Government can be over-cautious in matters of this description, although as a matter of fact they should do and will do all that lies in their power consistent with their other liabilities to promote the interests of the people, and they realise that they cannot do better to secure the contentment of the people than by complying with all the legitimate requests of the people, specially these based upon religious grounds. The Local Government are doing their level best to meet the needs of all the pilgrims, spending large sums of money both for Hindus and Muhammadans, and the Government of India, in so far as the Government of India Act will permit them to do so, will always be willing to help.

The only other remark I will make is this. My Honourable friend was a little too harsh on the Bombay Government. His accusation that the Bombay Government did not do enough was later on corrected by himself when he read an extract from Mr. Barodawalla's letter which showed conclusively that the Bombay officials did their level best to secure satisfaction for the numerous pilgrims who were in Bombay.

THE HONOURABLE SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : I did not accuse the Bombay Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : It looked to me as if he did, but I am glad to hear he is satisfied with all that the Bombay Government and the Bombay officials have done there. Well, I can assure him that as soon as financial conditions permit, we will try and comply with his request. The only thing that starts between us and him is the question of finance, and we will try to secure financial equilibrium at the earliest possible moment.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Does the Honourable Member wish to ask for leave to withdraw his Resolution ?

The HONOURABLE SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : Yes, Sir, with the permission of the House I wish to withdraw my Resolution.

The Resolution was, by leave of the Council, withdrawn.

RESOLUTION RE WITHDRAWAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON PASSENGERS TO CEYLON AT MANDAPAM QUARANTINE CAMP.

The HONOURABLE SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution which runs as :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that necessary steps be taken with the Ceylon Government to withdraw the quarantine restrictions enforced by them at Mandapam Quarantine Camp on Indian passengers proceeding to Ceylon.”

This is a question that has been pending before this Council for a long time. It was not moved at the last Simla Session on account of the Honourable Member in charge of the portfolio having said that the Government of Madras were in correspondence with the Government of Ceylon, and that the Ceylon Government had said that certain Members of the Ceylon and Madras Legislative Councils should meet in the near future in order to arrive at a solution of the question and asked me not to move this Resolution. Accordingly the subject was not brought before the Council for discussion and I awaited the reply from the Government of India. When I asked them whether they had received any reply from the Government of Ceylon, they said that the Ceylon Government wished to postpone the meeting about the Mandapam Quarantine regulations until the International Conference on these matters had been held in Batavia in October. Then I asked the Madras Government whether any deputation was coming and, if so, when ? They have not given any definite reply to my letter. The Government of India have also not said anything finally in the matter. So I am obliged to move this Resolution to-day.

This question was also brought to the notice of the Madras Government during my tenure of office as a Member of that Council on various occasions, and as a result of the representation made by the Madras Government to the Government of Ceylon they agreed to allow passengers to go direct to Ceylon without undergoing quarantine at Mandapam, provided the passengers produced certificates of good health and freedom from infection from the District Medical and Sanitary Officers. Such certificates were however not recognised by the Ceylon authorities and the passengers were put under quarantine at Mandapam. I have also received a telegram dated 17th January 1917, from one of the passengers from Ramnad stating :

“ Mandapam Quarantine Doctor rejects Ramnad District Surgeon's certificates. Required Government Order 349, dated 22nd November last. Hundred passengers detained. Pray help.”

[Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair.]

Here is the certificate of the District Medical and Sanitary Officer :

“ This is to certify that Mr. C. R. N. Muhammad Hajiar of Adhirampatam, son of Sithu Vakir, aged 56 years, is proceeding to Ceylon. The whole district has been free from epidemics for over a year, and he is healthy and free from infection.”

This certificate was rejected by the Ceylon authorities at Mandapam.

I ascertained from the Superintendent of Mandapam Quarantine Camp whether it was a fact that such refusal was made, for which he replied that “ the matter should be referred to the Honourable the Chairman of the Plague Committee, Colombo.”

Then I wrote to the Chairman of the Plague Committee and he replied that I should address the Madras Government through whom circumstances will be explained. Thereupon I addressed the Madras Government on the subject for which I received the following reply from the Secretary, Home Department, sending me a copy of the G. O. No. 150, dated 16th February 1917 :

“ With reference to your demi-official letter of the 26th February 1917, addressed to the Honourable Sir A. G. Cardew. I am directed to state that the refusal of the Quarantine Medical Officer at Mandapam to accept certain certificates of health produced by passengers to Ceylon was due to the ill-considered and indiscriminate issue of certificates by certain District Medical and Sanitary Officers. I am to forward for your information a copy of G. O. No. 150 Home (Miscellaneous), dated 16th February 1917, in which instructions have been issued for the guidance of District Medical and Sanitary Officers in granting certificates of health. The Governor in Council hopes that the arrangement will work satisfactorily in future.”

That G. O. lays down certain general instructions to the District Medical and Sanitary Officers in the matter of granting certificates and the conditions imposed on the District Medical and Sanitary Officers are so very strict that it will not be possible for the said Officers to issue any certificates in conformity with such restrictions. The conditions are :

“ I certify that the above-named passenger has been residing for the last seven days in.....a place free from infection and in circumstances which render it unlikely that he has been exposed to infection ; and that he is free from disease. He undertakes to report himself to the Port Surgeon, Colombo, or to the Government Medical Officer of the District immediately on arrival and for five days thereafter.”

Well, Sir, no Medical Officer would give such certificates that the applicant has been actually residing during the previous week in the place mentioned by him. In the absence of such certificates, passengers were insisted by the Ceylon Government to undergo quarantine at Mandapam for 7 days. In this connection, I may mention that the Ceylon Government are issuing permits to their favourities in Ceylon to allow certain amount of people from India to pass through without undergoing quarantine at Mandapam and make such passengers to appear before the Medical Officers at Ceylon for 5 days. This clearly shows that their quarantine rules are not perfect. I therefore request the Government of India to communicate with the Ceylon Government and to put a stop to the quarantine restrictions at Mandapam for ordinary passengers. If necessary such passengers may, as the Ceylon Government do in some cases, be asked to undergo medical observation in Ceylon after their arrival there. This will avoid unnecessary detention to passengers at Mandapam. Of course it may be argued that the Ceylon Government have spent large sums of

money in building Quarantine stations at Mandapam with a view to prevent the spreading of epidemics in their country. After all, their country is not free from epidemics ; a few years ago plague broke out ; there was a case brought into Dhanushkodi and I moved the Madras Government that there should be restrictions imposed upon passengers coming into India from Ceylon ; but on consideration I found that after all it was only Indian passengers who were coming in and it would have been a double hardship to them and so I withdrew my Resolution on that ground. We have at least as much cause as the Ceylon Government. Ceylon also, has all sorts of epidemic diseases, plague, Cholera ; though the people there consider that Ceylon is heaven itself, it is not at all perfect. Their main object in building quarantine stations at Mandapam is for the use of emigrants. By all means let them keep the emigrants under quarantine about which no question whatever was raised. It is cruel that the Ceylon Government should treat other passengers also like emigrants.

I therefore request that the Government of India will take such steps as they think proper with the Ceylon Government and put a stop to the ill-treatment that the Indian passengers are undergoing at present at the Mandapam Quarantine Camp.

It may be argued that this is an old case. From the time when the Honourable the Revenue Member was a member of the Madras Council we have been discussing the same question, but there has been no remedy so far. The ill-treatment is still going on, and as a matter of fact this subject has been before the Government of India for the last one and a half years. Circumstances were such that I could not move this matter immediately, and I therefore bring it to the notice of the House now with the request that the Government will accept my Resolution and take such steps as they think proper with the Ceylon Government and see that the ill-treatment which the Indian passengers are undergoing is mitigated.

With these few words I commend my Resolution for the acceptance of the House.

The HONOURABLE SIR S. M. ANNAMALAI CHETTIYAR (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, this question has come off and on before the Legislatures. But the evil continues to exist and no solution of the trouble has been arrived at yet. Whatever justification there might have been in the early days of the establishment of the quarantine camp there can be no manner of justification for its continued existence. The very presence of a quarantine camp at Mandapam presupposes a very highly insanitary India, whose touch will contaminate the island. All sorts of restrictions are imposed upon Indian passengers. The poorer classes are the people most hard hit by these restrictions. It may perhaps be said that some improvements have been made in their treatment for some time past. Whether conditions have improved or not, the restriction itself is humiliating and revolting to an Indian. The upper and middle class passengers also are not free from these restrictions. Why the Ceylon Government should impose all these restrictions is not clear. To talk glibly of the uncleanly habits of the Indians is beside the point. The Government of

[Sir S. M. Annamalai Chettiyar.]

India, on the other hand, allow free ingress and egress to Ceylonese without any restriction whatever. Where, then, is the necessity for the Ceylon Government to impose these irritating restrictions? The one is as careful as the other about the spread of any infectious disease and about the health of the people. Therefore, Sir, the Government of India will, I sincerely trust, take early steps and will make the Ceylon Government realise the intensity of public feeling here in this matter and see to the early abolition of these humiliating restrictions. With these few words, I strongly support the Resolution of my Honourable friend Sir Ahmedthamby Maricair.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Education, Health and Lands Member) : Sir, I hope that the statement I shall make of the existing state of things would satisfy my Honourable friend, the Mover of the Resolution. I know this is an old friend of mine; I was acquainted with the problem when I was in the Madras Council, and I watched with interest the debates in the Madras Council with regard to it. There is a keen feeling in Southern India that the restrictions which the Ceylon Government impose on passengers going from India to Ceylon are unnecessary and sometimes work harshly, and that therefore the Government of India should induce the Ceylon Government to withdraw them. The Madras Government has, I know, been doing what it could to induce the Ceylon Government to work the machinery with as little hardship as possible, if they cannot altogether remove the restrictions. The Government of India have asked the Madras Government to put themselves in communication with the Ceylon Government on this question; a conference was proposed, to which reference was made by my Honourable friend, and the position stands thus. Nobody can deny that the Ceylon Government has got a right to take such precautionary measure as they consider necessary for the purpose of preventing the spread or introduction of infectious diseases into their country. That is a right which they have and which has been recognised internationally, and the League of Nations Health Commission has also been trying to make regulations so as to secure an International agreement for the purpose of preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Consequently, we cannot say that the Ceylon Government are not acting within their rights in placing such restrictions as they consider necessary for the purpose of preventing the introduction into their country of infectious diseases, such as plague, cholera, and small-pox. Now at very great expense a quarantine camp has been built at Mandapam, and it has been working, at any rate in the latter part of its existence, very satisfactorily. But the question has been taken up with Ceylon as to whether the regulations could not be modified if they cannot altogether be abolished. A conference was provisionally arranged with the Ceylon Government, who however said that they would take up the question as soon as the Batavia conference which was originally suggested had made its report, but that conference did not come about. Then there was a Medical Mission to the East which was sent out by the League of Nations Health Commission. Pending a Report of that Commission, it was thought that there was no use in proceeding further, because the question would largely depend on the advice of the Medical Advisers of the Mission, and therefore the Madras Government agreed to the postponement of this conference which was originally intended between

the officers of the Madras Government and the Ceylon Government. Meanwhile, we received a report along with this request for a postponement showing that the quarantine regulations had been so modified as to be practically free from all possible danger of their being worked harshly. My Honourable friend wrote some time back saying—even now he laid stress on that fact,—that there will be no objection whatsoever to passengers undertaking to submit themselves to a medical examination in Ceylon after their arrival and to their giving an undertaking to that effect; only they should not be stopped on their way to Ceylon, for about 5 days at the Mandapam Camp, and the Ceylon Government have agreed to modify those regulations accordingly, and the permit system has been introduced in accordance with the wishes of my Honourable friend.

This is what they say :

“ Since July last the practical operation of the rules with regard to quarantine to which passengers from India have been subject, have been considerably modified, and now practically persons who are themselves healthy and whose belongings are clean are not detained, provided they are in a position to satisfy the Medical Officer in charge that they are proceeding to a definite address in Ceylon.”

There is thus no question now of passengers bringing any medical certificates from any officer or anything of the kind. All that they have got to do is to satisfy the Medical Officer that they are healthy and have got a definite address in Ceylon, and if he is satisfied to that effect, they will be permitted to proceed, and the surveillance, call it what you like, would be in Ceylon itself and not in Mandapam. As a matter of fact, we have a Report which says that only 20 per cent. of the passengers have been detained because they were not healthy and clean or were not able to give a definite address in Ceylon satisfactory to the authorities during the months of January and February. My Honourable friend will therefore see that there are no longer any restrictions such as those enforced at one time, in the case of third class passengers or even first or second class passengers, and any person who is healthy and clean is allowed to proceed without any detention to Ceylon subject to the condition to which my Honourable friend himself has agreed or suggested. Of course, this does not apply to the labourers who go from Southern India to Ceylon. They are detained there in order that they may be watched carefully, and it is helpful to the Government also in the administration of the Emigration Act. At any rate, there is no suggestion that the labourers who are proceeding from Southern India to the plantations in Ceylon should not be subjected to the quarantine regulations, because that is the look-out of the Ceylon Government themselves. The only suggestion made by my Honourable friend was with regard to the ordinary passengers, and I have read from the Report of the Ceylon Government that the requests of the Madras Government and of the general public have been substantially fulfilled. If any infringement of the rules is brought to the notice of the Government of India or of the Madras Government, I am sure the Government of India or the Madras Government will put themselves in communication with the Ceylon authorities to see that such inconveniences and hardships are removed at the earliest practicable date. I may also inform the Honourable Member that we have now appointed for the purpose of watching emigration an Indian Civil Service Officer, and he would naturally be for sometime in the Mandapam Camp. I do not think, therefore, there is any reason to fear that these regulations would in actual

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

practice work harshly. I have also already given an assurance that the Government of India would put themselves in communication with the Ceylon Government and the Madras Government would do the same if any case of hardship is brought to their notice. Then with regard to the question as to whether the restrictions should be entirely removed, it is one which would be dependent largely on the recommendations of the Medical Commission to the East which is going to report to the Health Commission of the League of Nations, when some International Regulations may be framed in modification or in confirmation of the regulations which were framed at the Paris convention.

I need not weary the House by reading out at length many extracts from the remarks made by high officers who visited the Mandapam Camp, to show that the arrangements at the Mandapam Camp are extremely satisfactory. But I will read a part of this. Two Judges of the Madras High Court, I mean Mr. Justice Venkat Subba Rao and an *ex-Judge* Mr. Sadashiva Iyer and the Honourable Mr. Todhunter, Member of Council, Madras, who visited the camp lately, have written in very favourable terms about the working of the Mandapam Camp. Mr. Justice Venkat Subba Rao says :

“ I was deeply struck with the look of happy contentedness on the face of the passenger and cooly alike—despite his compulsory sojourn—a result which reflects the greatest credit on the administration, and of which it may justly be very proud.”

Mr. Sadashiva Iyer says :

“ I was a visitor to the Mandapam Camp and went round the place, and observed carefully the nature of the accommodation, the feeding arrangements made for the immigrants and passengers, the sanitary, lighting and other conveniences provided. I confess that I was very much struck with the perfect administration of the Camp.”

This was in August 1922, but some time before that the regulations were modified, I take it.

Then the Honourable Mr. Todhunter, Member of Council, who visited the Camp says :

“ I have always heard that everything connected with the camp at Mandapam was admirable, and, having been shown over every part of it, can only say that it far exceeded my expectations.”

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who seems to have been there in October 1922, also spoke in very favourable terms about the arrangements made at the camp for the coolies.

As I have said, Sir, the hardships to which my Honourable friend referred here and to which passengers were put in the early days when he and I were colleagues in the Madras Council are, I think, no longer existent now, and therefore he will do well to withdraw his Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARI-CAIR : I quite agree with the Honourable Member who spoke on behalf of the Government that the restriction is not so hard as it was in olden days, but it has not been completely removed. That is my request. I said already in my speech.....

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I understand the Honourable Member is going to ask for leave to withdraw his Resolution. If so, he

had better do so briefly. It is not reasonable to have long speeches on the withdrawal of Resolutions, when Honourable Members are substantially satisfied with the explanation of Government.

The HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : I thought, Sir.....

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I asked the Honourable Member if he proposes to withdraw his Resolution. If he proposes to do so, he may make a few short comments, but he ought not to make a controversial speech.

The HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : Yes, Sir, I shall only make a few short comments. Only a week or ten days ago a first class Chetty passenger who went to Ceylon was detained at Mandapam. What I say is that I am quite willing if the system is introduced once for all that all ordinary passengers are allowed to go to Ceylon. There they will undergo medical inspection for five days. If this arrangement is carried out, I have no objection to withdraw this Resolution.

Again, with regard to the International Conference, we do not know when it will come ; are we to wait for such a long time ? There was a suggestion that the Ceylon Government should send members of their Legislative Council to hold a conference with the Members of the Madras Legislative Council and come to a conclusion. I should like that Conference really to take place. I have no objection to withdraw this Resolution, provided that the Honourable Member says that he will take up the question with the Ceylon Government and wipe away even that 20 per cent. restriction they are now imposing, which bring serious complaint all over. It is an old, old, question.

With these few words, I beg, with the permission of the House, to withdraw my Resolution.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Member : Education, Health and Lands) : With regard to the question of the first class passenger referred to by the Honourable Member, the Government of India have no information, but, if further particulars are given and the Government thinks it is a fit case, they will pursue the inquiry.

With regard to the second question, there is no restriction on first class, second class or third class passengers, so long as they are healthy and cleanly and provided they can give a definite address in Ceylon. We cannot say that is an unreasonable restriction.

With regard to the third point, the Ceylon Government have a right to protect their country from the introduction of infectious diseases, and we cannot force them to do anything. What their future procedure will be is dependent on the Health Commission's Report, and you may be sure the Health Commission will not allow this matter to rest idle very long.

The HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : May I say one word, Sir

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member cannot speak again. Does the Honourable Member ask for leave to withdraw ?

The HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR AHMEDTHAMBY MARICAIR : I have said already that I withdraw.

The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS : I object to the withdrawal of the Resolution.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I must put it in the formal way. Is it your pleasure that the Honourable Member have leave to withdraw his Resolution ?

The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS : I object, Sir. I want it put to the vote.

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

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that necessary steps be taken with the Ceylon Government to withdraw the quarantine restrictions enforced by them at Mandapam Quarantine Camp on Indian passengers proceeding to Ceylon.”

The Council divided :

AYES—9.

Chettiyar, Sir S. M. Annamalai.
Dadabhoy, Sir Maneckji.
Jogendra Singh, Mr.
Lal Chand, Lieut.

Lalubhai Samaldas, Mr.
Maricair, Sir Ahmedthamby.
Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.
Ram Saran Das, Mr.

Vedamurti, Mr. S.

NOES—14.

Amin-ul-Islam, Mr.
Bahram Khan, Nawab Sir.
Barron, Mr. C. A.
Berthoud, Mr. E. H.
Chadwick, Mr. D. T.
Ley, Mr. A. H.
MacWatt, Major-General R. C.

McWatters, Mr. A. C.
Ogilvie, Major G. D.
Sarma, Sir Narasimha.
Shafi, Dr. Mian Sir Muhammad.
Shepherd, Mr. W. C.
Tek Chand, Mr.
Zahir-ul-din, Mr.

The motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION *RE* AN AGRICULTURAL POLICY RELATING TO
LAND REVENUE AND ALLIED MATTERS.

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH (Punjab : Sikh) :
Sir, I move :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee be appointed to consider the question of rural reconstruction with a view to the organisation of agriculture and to formulate an agricultural policy regarding land-revenue, village education, co-operative credit and other allied matters.”

“ I am sure this House will recognise the importance of agriculture. Agriculture is our primary industry. Nine-tenths of our population live on agriculture and have no other profession, and yet so far as I am aware the Government of India have never taken any steps to ascertain the progress which agriculture has made within the last twenty years. We

have often pressed the Government of India by asking questions to determine the agricultural wage, but no inquiry on the point has been held. The official reports are silent about it. I am now asking the Government to appoint a committee to visit the villages and ascertain how things are there. I should like Honourable Members of this Council to go back with me 49 years and see the conditions of the villagers which obtained in those times and the changes that have now taken place. Some of those sitting on the official benches here have perhaps been district officers and have travelled through the villages. I think they will be able to vouch for what I am going to say as to village conditions in the early days. Even now if you go to some remote corners which have not been penetrated by railways and other influences, you can see the village life as it used to be—a life of contentment, a life of happiness. You will see the villagers taking their simple pleasures and enjoying the games. And the village was, in those days an entirely self-sufficing unit. They produced their own food, they manufactured their own cloth. They pressed their own oil, and they manufactured their own sugar. There were few things which they had to get from outside the village. The village produced everything it needed. Now go to the village, and you will find that almost everything has to be imported, and the village industries are practically dead. A certain amount of revival has taken place, thanks to the movement started by Mahatma Gandhi. The weaving of khaddar in some districts is now in progress. In the Punjab of course we had always khaddar manufactured and people used to wear it. But in other parts also khaddar is being manufactured. But—and there is a great “but”—the handloom cannot compete with the powerlooms. The village weaver, the village oil presser, the village manufacturer of sugar has to compete with the modern organised methods of manufacture. But that is another question. I am really going to talk to you now of the agricultural condition in general. The increase of population, the splitting up of the holdings, and drain of outside trade have all combined to undermine the economic wellbeing of the villages. I am sorry I have mislaid my notes otherwise I could have shown you the cultivated area per head of population. I can safely say, that in some places, the pressure on the land is so great that there is not half an acre to a family, and you cannot expect half an acre to support a family of five. The question of the consolidation of holdings is therefore of the greatest importance to the country. I invite this committee to look into the question of the consolidation of holdings, the creation of agricultural credit, the introduction of modern methods of agriculture, the provision of seed, manure and things of that kind. The yields per acre at present are—barley 1,350 lbs., rice 1,425 lbs., wheat 1,366 lbs. If you allow 8 maunds of food per head of population per year, you will find that the margin is extremely narrow. As I said, the first step in reconstruction must be consolidation of holdings, the organisation of well irrigation and the supply of good seed. Canal irrigation is the finest thing so far achieved. Irrigation is the first necessity of crops; there are a great many wells in the United Provinces and the Punjab, but so far no attempt has been made to organise well irrigation and introduce organised power lift irrigation. The profits to be made by employing power for lifting water have been fairly well demonstrated by the experiments made by Sir Ganga Ram

[Sardar Jogendra Singh.]

in the Punjab, and the possibilities of extending well irrigation are immense. Where there is no irrigation either from wells or canals, agriculture becomes a gamble in rain. You can see the villagers watching the clouds, and when the rains fail and the crops wither, the villagers return to their homes in utter despair. Why should we not organise irrigation and provide a secure growing of crops. We, in this Council, have been greatly concerned with the making of laws. Now I invite the Council to do something substantial. The question of the greatest possible importance is, the question of improving the condition of agriculturists and the condition of the agriculturists leaves much to be desired. I can point out from various Government publications how things at present stand. Mr. Moreland, who used to be Director of Agriculture in the United Provinces, has compared present day agricultural conditions with the conditions that obtained at the time of Akbar, and I can assure you that the contrast is not very favourable. The restoration of the village to be again an independent unit can only come if brains and capital are brought to bear on agriculture. Without brains and capital, agriculture can never advance and unless the village is modernised, and by modernisation I mean the bringing of power to the doors of the agriculturists, we cannot advance. We have heard a great deal about the introduction of agricultural machinery, but I can say, that the ordinary tractor, and I have some experience of the use of tractors, is not really suited to our conditions, this does not apply to steamploughing. But what is there to prevent us creating power houses in every District and Pargana and, bringing electricity to the homes of the villagers, for pumping water, working power-loom, helping to press oil, and for the manufacture of sugar? The village might be linked in its turn to central refineries, where the crude produce of the village could be refined and marketed. Here again we must look to the Government and to our merchant princes to supply what we need : capital and brains. We agriculturists cannot do these things ; the pioneer work must be done by Government. I ask the Revenue Member to tell me if ever any attempt has been made to build a single model village worked with modern machinery, set amidst beautiful surroundings, with a pure water supply, with proper trade facilities for marketing the produce. Government aid is absolutely essential so far as agriculture is concerned ; and in France and Denmark Governments have been consistently promoting agriculture. Leaving the general question I will come to specific problems. Take Land Revenue.

A great deal of misapprehension exists, whether land-revenue is a tax or a rent ; but we have the great authority of Mr. Baden-Powell, that land-revenue is nothing else but " a tax on agricultural incomes," and that definition if finally accepted would place land-revenue on a fairly fair footing. When we come to the standard up to which it could be raised, the rule that it can go up to 50 per cent. of Landlords' assets still holds good. Now, even in war times, when the super-tax was raised the people grumbled. Agriculture for long years has been highly taxed. The time has come when the standard should be revised. I am not speaking without authority. Sir Harcourt Butler

in a recent memorandum, when he was leaving the United Provinces, laid great stress on the revision of the standard and on increasing the periods of settlements.

Other remedies have been proposed and they deserve consideration. I do not see why we should stick to ideas which are time-worn. Sir Ganga Ram has given a great deal of attention to agriculture and has put forth two proposals, both of which deserve very serious consideration. One is that agriculturists should be allowed to redeem Land Revenue by payment of a fixed sum yielding the same amount of revenue in interest, making payments by instalments and thus converting land into a freehold. His other remedy was the abolition of land-revenue altogether and the imposition of an export duty on grain. Both these proposals are original ; both have a great deal in their favour, and both deserve very careful consideration by a Committee of Experts. If you abolish land-revenue, you take away all the trouble and worry of collecting a direct tax, of making assessments of land-revenue, and at the same time doing away with the inequality of the tax—a thing which I think the Honourable the Revenue Member will admit. Land-revenue is enormously unequal in all parts of India. It varies from district to district ; in one district you will find it at 40 per cent., in another place at 50 per cent. and in another place as high as 70 per cent. There is absolutely no uniformity of land tax in India, and I think uniformity of land tax should be obtained.

Then again, you know that we are greatly concerned about village education. We have primary schools and these schools give a certain kind of education ; but I am not prepared to say whether the education which the villager received under the village tree was not of the best. It kept him contented and happy ; he received the vocational education from his forefathers and he stuck to his profession. Now, you come with your primary education ; you keep him up to a certain standard and do not give him the vocational education he requires, he becomes one of that large class for whom employment has to be sought. Village education ought to be given according to the needs of the villagers and according to the traditions which have made village life full of happiness and contentment. |

The third question which I should like to draw the attention of the House to is the creation of agricultural banks. Land is real property ; but so far as credit is concerned the landlord cannot obtain it ; he does not own the security which could be easily handled, and the result is that he goes to the bania and borrows money at an enormous rate of interest. I do not blame the bania at all, because if he were able to collect the interest appearing in his paper he would be immensely rich ; and I have never known him grow richer beyond a certain limit. He takes risks and he realises perhaps not half of what he originally expected to collect. His wealth is in his books only. What you need is organised agricultural credit for the whole country ; the co-operative banks have done certainly good work ; but the demand is so great that their capital is altogether inadequate. The Government of India, so far, has made no attempt to create an agricultural credit, as has been done in Denmark and other countries. There is no reason why our

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Government should not also create credit, which would facilitate the modernisation of agriculture and add to the prosperity of the country. The system which was mooted in England and has to a certain extent given satisfaction in other countries is the Government starting a land bank. We have got the Imperial Bank. Why should not the Imperial Bank with its branches in the districts turn these branches into land banks, the Government giving the necessary guarantee and providing the necessary capital by issuing land bonds? The double guarantee given by the Government and the Bank would attract capital and provide the credit which agriculture needs.

As I pointed out before, we have made no attempt to reconstruct or organise agriculture, though we have talked about improvements that might be made. Similarly, we have made no effort to create agricultural credit, without which no progress is possible. I am talking now of the Sugar Committee's Report. The cultivation of sugar could have been made the beginning of intensive agriculture all over the country. It could have provided model farms yielding large profits and at the same time bringing capital into the villages. But Government so far has completely slept over the report, as far as I am aware. What I plead for is, that the Government of India should appoint a Committee to thoroughly overhaul its agricultural and revenue policy, after a careful inquiry in selected villages. The Committee will not fail to see the drudgery to which agriculturists are subject to realise their poverty, and also to appraise the resources of the country with the object of organising them. That is the way to help agricultural prosperity in India. It is needless to repeat the question, without a positive agricultural policy, how can any improvement be made? Where is the help to come from? The trading classes and our merchant princes are too busy with their own affairs. They have no time to give any attention to agricultural matters. The Government officials too are too busy with politics; the District official is now out of account. Under these circumstances, who is going to look to agricultural improvements? The Honourable the Member in charge might perhaps say that Agriculture is now a Provincial subject, and we have nothing to do with it. I hold that the Government of India for many years must be the centre of every good movement, the vital influence diffusing itself throughout the Provinces? If you go to the villages, where there is no irrigation, and as this year's monsoon is failing, you will realise the despair that exists there. I am sure the Members of the Council will not be satisfied with the conditions as they exist in the villages to-day. I certainly think it would be very interesting for all who can afford to do so, to spend at least a week in the year in a village to see how things there are, because the foundation of everything in India is the village, and for long years to come the prosperity of India will depend on the prosperity of the villages. I hope that the Member in charge will not be content with an expression of sympathy which we have so often heard, for every Resolution that comes before this Council, but will actively associate with this House and point out the outlines of a positive policy by accepting this Resolution and defining the policy he is going to adopt. Such an assurance will not only help

the Government, but it will give a new hope to the country side, because the Members who are going to seek election will be able to tell their electorates the great interest the Government of India was taking in their welfare. I will not detain the House any longer. I am sure the sympathy of the House will be with me. It may be taken for granted that as Russell pointed out, "there can be no health in the cities, without corresponding health in the villages, and our princes and captains of industry might all disappear without a man disappearing, but cut away man from the fields and the fruits of the earth and in six months there will be silence in the streets."

The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise with a certain amount of diffidence to speak on this Resolution. One of the reasons for my diffidence is, as the Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh himself has said, the subject is a Provincial one. The other ground of my diffidence is that I do not know whether a Committee appointed by the Government of India, as suggested by him, can go round all the villages and make inquiries into all subjects mentioned in the Resolution and speech of the Honourable Mover. Although I feel somewhat diffident on these grounds, I still do feel that a great deal of useful work can be done by a committee whose functions will partly affect the provinces and partly by the Central Government.

Another difficulty which I feel on speaking on the Resolution is, that my Honourable friend has covered such a wide field that it is very difficult for me within the compass of 15 minutes that are allotted to me to dilate in any great detail on all the subjects to which he so ably alluded, I will, therefore, take up only a few items which, I believe, are of general interest. His desire to have a village as a self-contained unit is, as every one will admit, a very laudable one. It is, however, not quite feasible. We all desire it, but for the time being the village will have to depend not only on the neighbouring villages but also on the towns. His desire is that Government should adopt a scheme of consolidation of holdings. That subject is receiving the attention of many Provincial Governments. His own Government, I believe, is taking up that subject, because Mr. Calvert's scheme is well known to all throughout India, and it is being adopted in other provinces also. In my presidency this question has been very carefully considered, and at the last Co-operative Conference a Resolution was passed wherein it was decided that the co-operative movement should be utilised for the purpose of trying as an experimental measure the scheme propounded by Mr. Calvert modified to suit local conditions.

Then my Honourable friend wants the Government of India to find money for large agricultural improvements. I do not know whether it is an Imperial subject, but speaking for my own province, I may say that great credit is due to the Minister there, the Honourable Mr. Chunilal Mehta, who is now Member of the Executive Council for having induced his Government to sanction 5 lakhs of rupees annually to be advanced to the agriculturists for purposes of agricultural improvements all over the presidency. He is using the Co-operative movement for this work. The whole sum is placed at the disposal of the Provincial Bank, and that Bank in consultation with the Registrar grants loans

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which are recommended not by the Co-operative societies but by experts of the Public Works Department or of the Industries Department.

My Honourable friend further wants large modern agricultural implements to be introduced into the villages. Before this is done very careful inquiries ought to be made regarding the suitability of such implements. In my Presidency the Minister has laid down that all recommendations for agricultural implement loans should be certified by an expert of the Industries Department if a loan is to be used for purchasing implements, while loans have to be certified by the Public Works Department if large irrigation or drainage works are to be carried out. My province has set an example, and great credit is due to the Honourable the Minister in Bombay for taking the initiative in this matter. Therefore, as the Honourable Mover will see almost all the work that he wants the Government of India to do is being done in my province, namely, the consolidation of holdings, the utilisation of the Co-operative Societies not for agricultural credit and provision of funds for agricultural improvements.....

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : Have they determined the agricultural wage ?

The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS : Well, I will refer to it later on. But what I wanted to say was that in my province this work of consolidation of holdings, using the co-operative movement, granting Takavi loans for providing agricultural credit and agricultural improvements generally has already been done.

Then, Sir, reference was made to cottage industries. That also is being handled to a certain extent in my province by the co-operative societies. I do not mean to say that all that could be done has been done.

The Khaddar Movement, to which my Honourable friend Sardar Jogendra Singh gave credit, and right credit too, has been able to do something. But with the permission of the Council I would like to refer to certain defects in that movement. The Khaddar movement insisted that the handlooms should only be utilised for hand spun yarn. The handloom weavers object to it, as it pays them much better to use mill yarn, and that is why the insistence of the Khaddar movement to use hand spun yarn only has not done all the good that it could have done. I think I have already made it clear that we are all anxious to have cottage industries fostered on common sense grounds and not on sentimental grounds. The only question which in my opinion comes into the category of Imperial subjects is the question of Land Banks. My Honourable friend Sardar Jogendra Singh suggested that the Imperial Bank should be asked to utilise all their branches as Land Banks. I do not know how far this is possible. My Honourable friend the Finance Secretary can tell us whether he can command the Imperial Bank to do so ; it is for him to say whether he can do so or not. The Imperial Bank has been ordered to do something else, but I shall not refer to it here. Whether the Government of India can order the Imperial Bank to utilise their branches as Land Banks or not is a matter really for the Honourable the Finance Minister to say. But that question is an Imperial question and ought to be handled by the

Government of India ; the Provincial funds will not suffice for the purpose. The Honourable the Finance Member said in his budget speech that he wanted each and every pie that he could lay his hands on by the issue of Post Office Cash Certificates. I then said that a part of that money should be ear-marked for the co-operative movement, and I hope that the Honourable the Finance Member and the Honourable the Finance Secretary will bear that in mind. The starting of land banks would be the first constructive measure to help agriculture on these lines.

Sir, I am not going to enter into the question whether land-revenue is rent or tax ; that is a question which we can very well leave to economists. Nor do we want to discuss the question as to whether 50 per cent. suffices for the landlord or whether we should make a larger present to the taluqdars. In my province, where we have the *ryatwari* system, we do not want anything of the kind.

I believe the Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh wants an examination of the economic condition of the agriculturist and not of the agricultural labourer. I am not quite sure what he wanted. (*The Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh* : " Both the agriculturist and the agricultural labourer.") Speaking for myself, I am entirely in agreement as to making inquiries into the economic condition of the agriculturist as such in my province. As regards the agricultural labourer, we do not want to make detailed inquiries because we know what wages he gets. He gets much more than he used to get in pre-war times, and he gets sufficient to maintain himself and his family. As regards the condition of the real agriculturist, the man who actually works in the field, it would be interesting to know his economic condition. You cannot improve his condition by letting him off the land-revenue altogether, as my Honourable friend Sardar Jogendra Singh suggested, not in his own name but in the name of a higher authority. The land-revenue will have to be levied. Whether the incidence of the land-revenue is high or low is a provincial question and is being discussed in the Provincial Councils. (*The Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh* : " It is not entirely a Provincial question, because it comes to the Government of India for sanction.") I know that in some provinces the Legislative Councils have decided, and in some cases have been able to adopt a Resolution, that any increase in land assessment should be submitted to the Legislative Council before its adoption by Government. That question has been raised in the Provincial Councils and the Provincial Councils have discussed it. I know of two instances in which it has been done. It is more or less a provincial question. The only questions which I think can be very well considered by this Committee are about the land banks and the making of an inquiry into the economic condition of the agriculturist as such, and, if my Honourable friend is prepared to cut off all subjects which are purely provincial and ask the Committee to inquire into only Imperial questions, I am prepared to support him.

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT RAO BAHADUR CHAUDHURI LAL CHAND (Punjab : Nominated Non-Official) : The Honourable the Mover has very rightly drawn attention to the importance of the subject. In the first place, the subject touches a vast population consisting of no less than 90 per cent. of the whole population of India, and, secondly, any improvement in agriculture will add so much to the wealth of the country

[Lieut. Chandhuri Lal Chand.]

and to the income of the State. Therefore, the subject is one which ought to be welcomed not only by my non-official colleagues but by the Government also. I quite admit that, during the last 20 years, something has been done in the Departments of Agriculture and Co-operation and also Education to ameliorate the condition of the villager, but we are not keeping pace with the times. In the Department of Agriculture the agricultural officers have not made themselves heard up to this time by the man who actually cultivates the soil. The man who wields the plough in the village does not know enough of the activities of the Agricultural Department to effect an improvement in his own methods. Similarly, the Co-operative Department has not even touched perhaps one per cent. of the population. Indeed, I was surprised to read in the Annual Reports of the Co-operative Department of my province that, when there was an increase in the number of individuals, then the Department expressed satisfaction that the circle of its activities was widening. Next year, there was a decrease and they equally expressed satisfaction at the fact saying that the undesirable persons had been weeded out and that the Department was free of persons who would have given trouble. All this is due not to want of sympathy on the part of Government, but chiefly to a want of knowledge of the difficulties and the actual needs of the villager. I cannot hide one more fact which has stood in the way of these improvements. It is the want of a proper response on the part of the villager himself. What is it due to? It is due to the administrative machinery being defective. If my Honourable friends will excuse me, I will give them an account of how officers of these various departments approach the villagers and the work that they do there. First of all, the Co-operative Inspector of Societies goes into the village. He deals with Credit Societies only and he collects together the village people, asks them to combine and consolidate their credit and to form themselves into a Society, and that is all. He mentions instances of villages which have profited by having opened Co-operative Societies, and in 50 cases out of 100 he succeeds in opening a new Society. But all this takes him only one hour. He has performed a journey of 20 miles. He goes back to his headquarters, has spent about six hours in the village and has been occupied for only one hour. Next day comes a Cattle Insurance Inspector. He says it is not only credit that is necessary but also Cattle Insurance Societies to the villager. He says "the value of bullocks is increasing, you cannot afford to pay the value of a pair of bullocks if one dies," and he preaches the benefits of Cattle Insurance Societies. In one case out of 100 he succeeds in opening a Society. Then comes the Veterinary Inspector. He says :

"Well, you cannot succeed, you cannot become rich unless you have good bullocks, good cows and good buffaloes. You should get bullocks from Hissar. We have got a departmental farm there which charges only Rs. 200 for a bullock and you can get one from there."

And that keeps him for only half an hour but he spends the whole day there. Then comes the Agricultural Assistant. He says :

"Come to my farm and you will see improved seed growing there, improved implements of agriculture; they are too unwieldy to be brought to the village; I have not brought them but you may come to my farm and you must use improved seed."

That takes him about half an hour but he spends the whole day there. Then comes the Sanitary Inspector. The Sanitary Inspector gathers together the elderly people, walks about the village and says :

“ It is not proper for you to keep manure heaps so near your house ; take them away, say to a distance of a hundred yards from the village.”

You might say that there is difficulty in securing land. He replies :

“ That I don't know about. I have only to tell you that this is injurious to your health. It is not my business to find a place where you could place your manure heaps ; go to your Deputy Commissioner or to your District Board.”

That takes him half an hour but he spends the whole day there. I ask Honourable Members both on the Government Benches and non-officials, could not all this work be done by one man ? Does it require technical skill to preach all this to the villagers ? Could not a Service be devised for the villagers which would teach them all these rudiments in every useful department ? No attempt has been made to do so, and although the Government has all the time been sympathetic the failure is due to the want of knowledge of the condition and difficulties of the villagers. I am to point out here one example. The Rohtak District Board wanted to have a Sanitary District Board appointed. I moved for it. Non-officials were opposed to it. I had to ask for an adjournment. Of course I had approached the Non-official Members to accept it, and one of the Members told me—“ Are there not enough mouths to feed ? Are you going to add to the number of mouths that we have to feed ? ” That was the reply, and that is why I submit that it is due to the want of real knowledge of village conditions that villages have not improved and that it can be remedied if enough men from rural areas are taken into service. That I was told the other day the Government of India is not prepared to do. My Honourable friend the Mover has very ably drawn attention to the land-revenue system. He is a big landlord and I think he has done injustice to the small landholders, the peasant proprietors, by not touching their case. At present as the system is, every inch of land, agricultural land, I mean, is assessed to land-revenue. A man possessing one bigha or even half a bigha of land has to pay land-revenue and has to pay at the rate at which the big landlords are paying. The time has come when big landlords themselves should come forward and suggest to the Government to let the land-revenue remain as it is, “ let the sum total of land-revenue not decrease but let the burden of the small landholders, the small peasant proprietors, be fixed upon us.” There is a class in India whose profession it is to own lands. Their chief occupation is shikar. They should bear the burden of the land-revenue. If precedent was wanted, income-tax provides one. The capitalists and the richer classes bear the burden of their poorer brethren by making those whose income is less than Rs. 2,000 a year free. There is no reason why big landlords like the Honourable Mover himself should not come forward and say to the Government “ Well, we are prepared to accept this burden and we ask Government to have a graded system of assessment.” I hope my Honourable friend the Mover in his reply will make this clear. I take it was only an oversight and I think he is sympathetic towards the small landed proprietors to which unfortunate class I belong. With these few words, Sir, I support the Resolution, but request Government that if a Committee is to be appointed—which I, hope it will—they will appoint

[Lieut. Chaudhuri L& Chand.]

really good men who are in the know of village conditions, men who know the actual difficulties and conditions of village life.

The HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab: Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to support this Resolution although I do not agree with a number of the sentiments which the Honourable Mover has expressed, but as the principle that he himself laid down is noble I give my support to it. Trade and industry, and agriculture must go hand in hand, and without their co-operation there can be no real prosperity in any of them.

As regards the question of land-revenue which the Honourable Sardar has referred to, I must say that in the Punjab Zamindars are now feeling the pinch of high land-revenue. It is a fact that the land-revenue policy, although in principle it may be a uniform one, differs in different parts as a matter of practice. It usually depends upon the mercy of the Settlement Officer who settles a particular district. Certain districts are settled at a time when unfortunately during the past quinquennium the rates of produce have been high and the result is that in those districts in which the settlement is going on at that particular period, the assessment is heavier than those which have been assessed at other more favourable times. The Honourable Chaudhuri Lal Chand has requested that the big landlords should pay a differential revenue as compared with the small peasant landholders. In this connection, Sir, I beg to mention that the small peasant proprietors can secure a much bigger yield and return from their land than a big landlord can possibly do, and there should be no such difference as the Honourable Chaudhuri Lal Chand asks for in taxing the big landlords and the small landlords. In this world everybody wants to make as much money as he can, and although the Punjab Land Alienation Act was passed to save cultivators from high interest we find now that instead of the bunnias the big agriculturists Zemindars themselves as Bankers are enforcing light rates of interest.

Of course some measures will be considered to put an end to that, and in practice in the Punjab we find that the big fishes among the agricultural magnates are swallowing the small fishes. As regards the cottage industries in the Punjab, not much has been done, and we of course look to our Provincial Government for that question. But as Land Revenue is an all-India problem, and the various policies have to be co-ordinated, I think the Honourable Mover has been right in moving this Resolution in this House. With these few remarks I support the Resolution.

The Council then adjourned for lunch till 2-50 P.M.

The Council re-assembled after lunch at 2-50 P.M., the Honourable the President in the Chair.

The HONOURABLE SIE PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan) : I think there can hardly be any Member in this

House either on this side or the other who can take exception to the laudable aim at which the Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh's Resolution is directed. That aim appears to me to be the betterment of the agriculturist either by reconstruction or on any other lines. I understand the main object of the Honourable Mover's Resolution to be that in brief. Agriculture being the backbone of India either as an industry or as a source of production, it can hardly be said that anything that is brought before this House for the betterment of the agricultural population in India is either waste of time or energy spent in the wrong direction. Eighty per cent. of the population of India depends on agriculture for its maintenance and therefore all problems connected with agriculture concern the masses of India. The bulk of the remarks of the Honourable Mover appeared to me to be that the condition of the agriculturist is poor, that it has become worse than before, and that unless something very radical is done, it is likely to deteriorate to a very serious extent.

This same complaint I feel, Sir, was recognised as far back as 1879 when the first Director General of Statistics, Sir William Hunter, said that "the prosperity of the prosperous in India was based on the increased poverty of the poor." I therefore feel that there can be no difference of opinion with regard to the subject-matter of the Resolution, even though it may refer in some details which concern Provincial Administrations under the Reforms Scheme. The subject-matter of the Resolution is one which this House will do well to discuss very fully. But I feel, Sir, that the arguments advanced by the Honourable Sardar in moving his Resolution appear to me, if he will not mind my saying so, to suffer from some sort of confusion of thought. He lamented the gradual disappearance of the good old village life of 40 years ago; village life which he said was one of contentment and was self-contained. He next cited the days when education used to be imparted under the banyan tree. He however did not remind himself of the Brahman or the Moulvi that gave that education in small dribblets just enough to justify the accidents of one's birth. Certain books in those good old days when children had to learn under the priests were sealed books, and I really wonder, for I do not know, the caste to which the Honourable Sardar belongs. But I can assure the Council that I at any rate would not be in this House, either to plead before representatives of the tax-payers or before the Government, the case for the tax-payers as it may strike me, if I had learned under the banyan tree in those good old days which the Honourable Sardar pines for. I really wonder, Sir, if he also overlooks the fact that in those circumstances there would not have been either a Council to bring the Government to their correct senses or to compel responsible Government officials like the dignified members on the opposite Benches to plead before this House that a Resolution may not be passed or that a Bill may be passed. However, I am sure the Honourable Sardar could not be overlooking those countervailing advantages or disadvantages. I feel however that his main aim must have been to bring home to Government that education as imparted to-day must be as cheaply available as possible, and I am not sure whether the Honourable Sardar himself is in favour of primary compulsory education or not. But if he is there was no conception of it in those good old days for which he sighs and repines to-day.

[Sir Purshotandas Makurdas.]

Whilst the Honourable Sardar reminded himself of many of these good things in the past, there was one subject in connection with his Resolution for which he did not regret that the past had disappeared, and that is modern credit and finance. When he came to that he almost ran down the poor old bania of the past and he sighed for more banks, more banks of any sort, in the absence of Indian banks and Indian shroffs, even the Imperial Bank. In this domain he had nothing good in the past on which to fall back and on which to look back with a sigh. I really wonder, Sir, whether with these ideas of those good old days and with these ideas of more finance being available, not through the Indian shroff—I wish he had emphasised that part, for there I would have supported him whole-heartedly—but through banks started and run on western lines.—I really wonder, Sir, whether the Honourable Sardar himself will easily be able to reconcile the two ages, the age of the contented self-contained village life with education under a tree and the age of a bank run on western lines.

He very much regretted and reminded himself that the village industries were dead or were dying. He, as I understood him, appeared to regret that the machine-made cloth had come to displace or replace the hand-spun cloth. I really wonder if he considers it a feasible proposition to-day to try and set his hands to oust machine-made cloth and to compel the people of India to take to good lasting home-spun hand-woven cloth. But I am sure that what he must have had in his mind when he said this was a reference to cottage industries. He reminded himself that khaddar was a very useful article and that khaddar had received great encouragement owing to the activities of Mahatma Gandhi. As a pure cottage industry khaddar has stayed in spite of the mill industry having been in India for 30 or 40 years. For those who have leisure, for those who have no work for 12 months in the year, nor work for full 8 hours in the day, for the khaddar or cottage industry, hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, there will always be ample room in spite of the keenest competition by machine made cloth. But to put the same proposition on political grounds, the proposition is bound to fail, even though popular enthusiasm for it, inflamed on any grounds whatever, may temporarily show that the thing is a sound proposition.

Coming, Sir, to the subject-matter of the Honourable Member's Resolution, agriculture, I feel that the Honourable Sardar has not sufficiently emphasised before this House the banes of agriculture which prevent its betterment. He did mention small holdings, but I wish he had done full justice to that great handicap to agriculture, a handicap which in my province, Sir, has been put down as so bad a handicap that holdings are reported to have been sub-divided and sub-divided until they have got to the size almost of a small billiard table. As the Honourable Sardar himself is a zamindar owning vast acres of land, I do not think that I ought to tell this House what a handicap these fragmentary small holdings are to agriculture or to the development of agriculture. But in my province, Sir, at any rate, the Government did make some whole-hearted efforts to set the matter right. I happened then to be in the Legislative Council and what did we find come up against us? Custom, religion—oh, what

is not done in the name of religion—and above all popular sentiment. Government felt almost helpless. On this same floor yesterday from responsible quarters a warning was sounded that Government should not interfere with what is based on religion. But if small holdings are to be encouraged and if small holdings are not to be prevented in spite of the bad handicap that it is to the agriculture of India, I am sure the Honourable Sardar himself will agree with me that a Government committee or the wholehearted sympathy of or action by Government will be able to do little for the betterment of agriculture.

He referred next to canals, irrigation and wells. Canals always struck me as having been one of those few boons with which British Raj will be connected and the name of the British Raj will always be connected with and remembered in India for generations to come. I am not unaware that there were canals in the times of the Great Moghuls, but they were canals perhaps for the palaces or for a few selected areas around the palace. I speak subject to correction; they may have been on a much larger scale.

But to have canals on the scale on which we have them at present—and consider the immense scope there is for extension in this direction—well, that also wants the wholehearted sympathy of the classes which own land; and, if Government happens to move too slowly for the aspirations of the zemindar class, this House or any House for the matter of that, any Legislature, would be only too pleased to push Government on as fast as they can.

The Honourable Sardar then appealed to Government for help and the appeal to Government for help appeared to me to be restricted to this, "build a model village with up-to-date sanitary appliances or conveniences." That is about the only thing that I remember. It is quite possible that he may have referred to something else, but this is the one concrete direction in which he asked for Government help. I do not wish at all to take any exception to any suggestion which emanates from the Honourable Sardar. He knows district life and village life better than I do; but, as a merchant, may I ask if the initial expenditure of building the model village is to be found from the Government coffers, what about the recurring expenditure and the expenditure on the upkeep of this model village? And, after all, who is going to occupy it? The present villager, as he is, or the villager who is educated and who will know how to use these up-to-date sanitary appliances? It will not do to build a model village; it has not done to build model *chawls* in Bombay. What you want to build is the right thing for the right man. Build for people what they are accustomed to, what they will appreciate and what they will know how to use. It, therefore, amounts to this. Give them education, bring them up to that standard either of comfort or of cleanliness, and, then you need not build a model village; they will build model villages for themselves.

My Honourable friend next appealed to the merchant princes. He did not say what he expected them to do. I wish he had just indicated at least one direction in which the merchant princes might be able to help the agricultural classes immediately and more wholeheartedly than

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they have done up till now. If the Honourable Sardar is under the impression that the merchants of India, or what he calls the merchant princes, do not realise their grave responsibility towards agriculture, if he thinks that they are oblivious to the fact that the prosperity, nay the very existence, of the merchant class depends upon the prosperity of the agriculturist, all that I can say is that the Honourable Sardar has not come in contact with the average merchant of India. Woe to the merchant who thinks that he can squeeze the agriculturist and prosper; woe to the merchant who thinks that he can afford to overlook with impunity the necessities and the requirements of the agriculturist. But we are living in a material world. Even my friend the Honourable Lieutenant Chaudhuri Lal Chand had to remind the Honourable Sardar that as between zemindars and zemindars, the big zemindar and what the Honourable Lieutenant Chaudhuri Lal Chand called the peasant land owner, there is a difference of opinion as to which of the two owes a duty to the other. I do not know much about the relations between the two, nor do I know much about the problems of either. I leave it to these two stalwarts of the Punjab to settle that difference amongst themselves. If, therefore, there can be any misunderstanding between these two species of land-owners, I would not be surprised if the Honourable Sardar cannot convince me that there was some sort of misapprehension in his mind regarding the duty that the merchant princes are convinced that they owe to the agriculturist. But, Sir,

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I must remind the Honourable Member of Standing Order 61.

The HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS : I do not think I will take more than five minutes longer, but, if it is your pleasure, I will conclude my speech.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I am only reminding the Honourable Member of Standing Order 61 and of the desirability of his bringing his speech to a conclusion as soon as he conveniently may. He has already exceeded the time-limit.

The HONOURABLE SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS : There is one class, however, to whom the Honourable Sardar did not appeal, and that was his own class. He did not say that the zemindars could do more than they had done till now, nor did he say that they would do something more hereafter; but there, perhaps, it is possible that he is himself convinced that they have done all that they possibly could and more. I therefore, do not wish to labour the point.

As far as the appointment of a Committee is concerned, I feel that the only subject that is central is land-revenue and, if a case is made out that land-revenue is a subject that requires to be inquired into, I am sure this House will be the first to agree with the Honourable Sardar regarding the appointment of a Committee. I have very great pleasure, therefore, in supporting the underlying principle of this Resolution, namely, the betterment of agriculture in India.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA (Member, Education, Health and Lands) : Sir, the Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh has been so very keen about rural reconstruction that he has tabled a Resolution on the subject more than once and has been writing to the newspapers also about the Government of India (and I suppose the Provincial Government are included in the general term "Government of India") not having done in the past or their not doing at present all that they should do by way of encouraging and advancing the prosperity of the agricultural classes. To-day also, in his introductory remarks he has stated that as far as he is aware, he does not know what exactly the Government has done during the last 20 years towards promoting the cause which he and all of us have at heart, and he therefore thinks that a Committee should help the Government and the public in formulating a policy for the purpose of making land-revenue more uniform, for encouraging co-operative credit, for devising the methods on which village rural education ought to be imparted and in general to advise on such steps as may be needed for the promotion of the interests of the agricultural masses of India. As the Honourable Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas has remarked, I do not think there will be any disagreement in this House with regard to the underlying principle of this Resolution, namely, that all of us should co-operate to the best of our power to improve the lot, the condition and the prosperity of the agricultural classes, with whose prosperity is bound up the prosperity of the whole of India. But, when we are told that the Government has not done as much as might be expected of them, I must enter a caveat. I think, if he had only surveyed the history of the efforts which the Government have for at least 40 or 50 years been putting forward for the purpose of improving agriculture, he would certainly have seen that they have had a policy, that they have a policy, and a very definite policy, on which there could not be much improvement. At any rate, I have listened in vain for any suggestions here on which that policy could be improved.

They have sought to survey the whole of agricultural land. They have sought to settle it.

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : For assessment purposes.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : They have sought to secure a record of rights so that the agriculturist may know his rights and his liabilities, and they have succeeded to a very remarkable extent in securing the safe possession of the land to the agriculturist. Most of the land in British India including the zemindaris has been surveyed with some small exceptions in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and elsewhere specially in permanently settled tracts. Land has been settled on varying terms. A record of rights has been attempted in many provinces. Tenancy laws have with considerable difficulty been passed in almost every province to protect the actual cultivator from unjust demands on the part of those who may be superior proprietors. They have completed irrigation schemes which are acknowledged on all hands to be the most beneficial, the most remarkable achievement which any Government could be proud of, and during the last 20 years owing to their exertions the land under irrigation has increased to the

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extent of about 18 million acres including the double crop area. The area under irrigation in 1902 was I take it about 34 millions, including the land cropped more than once. In the year 1920-21, a bad year, it was 52 millions. This is what they have achieved. The Government have undertaken some schemes now in progress which will bring considerable areas under irrigation. I need hardly allude to the recently sanctioned schemes—the Sarda, the Sutlej, the Sukkur, the large reservoir schemes that are nearing completion in Bombay, the large reservoir schemes which are under contemplation in the Central Provinces and elsewhere. So much for their irrigational activities. They realise to the full that the prosperity of the ryot and the improvement of cultivation are to a large extent dependent upon the supply of good seed and farms have been opened for the purpose, propaganda has been started and considerable success has been achieved in this direction.

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : What is the produce of these seed farms ?

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : I am not able to tell you exactly how much it is, but I may tell you this much, that both in the Punjab, the United Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa, almost the whole of the wheat area is being supplied with seed, the improved seed which research operations in Pusa and elsewhere have been able to find for the benefit of the cultivator. They are painfully aware that the agricultural masses are steeped in debt and therefore they have, through the encouragement of co-operative credit societies, tried to build up a system by the aid of which the masses could extricate themselves from debt, could secure money for improvement at cheap rates of interest and could build for themselves institutions relating to agricultural credit, marketing co-operation in various directions on the most advanced lines which European research has been able to place at our disposal. And remarkable indeed have been those achievements, because at present the co-operative societies comprise as many as about 2 million members with a capital of about 17 crores and a working capital of 31 crores, whereas not long ago when it was started—started, I think, about 1904—the average for the first 4 years was a small capital of some lakhs. That is indeed a remarkable achievement of which any Government, and the public which has co-operated loyally with the Government, might well be proud.

I am not for a moment suggesting to the House that what has been done is enough for the purpose. The way has been shown, the path has been laid down, the lines on which progress has to be made has been chalked out, the necessary laws have been enacted, and it rests with the public as to what use they make of the machinery which has been placed in their hands. Well, Sir, then there are the Acts for lending money for the improvement of land—land improvement loans—and for agricultural loans. I wish more could have been done in this direction, but it rests entirely with the Provinces. It rests entirely with the local Councils, with the public as to what use shall be made of that machinery. But there it is ; what has to be done has been laid down—that is, the policy of Government. With regard to marketing, I do not think any

Government could have had a clearer conception of its duties, or of the lines on which progress is to be made, as the British Government. They have perceived from the beginning that roads, railways and canals, have to be built in order to enable the agriculturist to make the best use of his produce, and this they have done in spite of much misunderstanding in spite of much opposition, and they have succeeded remarkably well in opening up the country. I do not here either suggest that there is not considerable room for improvement, that many more thousands of miles of railways cannot be built, should not be built or ought not to be built. I do not suggest that the roads we have are enough for the purpose. But here again it is a question of money, co-operation and enthusiasm.

Well, Sir, I come to education. They have started provincial colleges in almost every province, and they have appointed a committee to consider the lines on which rural education ought to be advanced. A Committee reported in 1917 as to the lines on which advancement ought to be made, and I would merely refer the Honourable the Mover to the proceedings of the Agricultural Conference of 1917 without going into details of its recommendations for want of time, to show that in this respect they have not been idle. The problem before the Government of India, the problem before the various Provincial Governments and before the Local Boards, has been as to how to adapt agricultural education to the needs of the masses, combining it with primary education, and in this, I am sorry to say that some of the lessons have not been very encouraging—I may mention the Punjab has tried the experiment more than any other Province but so far with very little success. I hope better luck will attend our efforts in future and that it will be possible for the Punjab population so to adapt their educational methods and educational curriculum as to combine a knowledge, the knowledge which is generally imparted in primary schools in urban areas with the necessary agricultural bent which is absolutely essential for the progress of agriculture in this country.

Then, there is research. Everyone in this House is aware that the Government—the Provincial Governments as well as the Government of India—have been devoting large sums of money for this purpose and for the improved seed, improved manures and so on, improved implements.....

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : Have you got the exact amount of expenditure in any year on research work ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If the Honourable gentleman wishes to put any questions he should observe Standing Order No. 27.

THE HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : I can give the information needed by the Honourable Member at any moment if he would only ask for it. He has not asked for it and I think we have been publishing blue-books which would give him the necessary information ; if they have to be supplemented, the department is always ready. He knows I think, or he ought to know, the amount of money which we have been spending on our Pusa Research Institute, and I have got figures here—I had already anticipated the question—but I do not think

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I shall deviate from my general course for the purpose of satisfying the curiosity of the Honourable Member at this moment.

I am sorry, Sir, we have not been able to find sufficient money for the purpose of starting work on several branches of research activity, entomological, mycological and others, on which I at any rate feel keenly and which should be started if there is to be a great saving in the wastage that occurs, wastage which we cannot afford, especially having regard to the meagre resources on which the population of this country has to sustain itself.

As for propaganda, we have been attempting it ; I wish more could be done ; only my Honourable friend, Mr. Lal Chand has told us that there is perhaps too much propaganda in some directions. I sympathise with him. The propaganda might be co-ordinated so that it may be less burdensome to the villages which these officers have to visit for the purpose of spreading the true doctrine. The suggestion, I dare say, will be borne in mind ; but he must remember that we are living in an age of specialised research and specialisation in all departments of life, and it is impossible so to demarcate the boundaries of one department from those of another as to achieve the object which he has in view. But I am sure that an attempt should be made to co-ordinate the activities so that as few officers as possible may be utilised for the purpose of doing the work which they have to do.

(At this stage the Honourable the President left the Chair which the Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy took.)

Sir, we think Government has never been remiss in the appointment of committees : they have had the Irrigation Committee, they have had the Cotton Committee, the Sugar Committee—a Committee with regard to village education that I was speaking of ; they have meetings of all the agricultural experts once every year, and sometimes oftener, for the purpose of devising ways as to how to improve the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, and how to co-ordinate their activities ; and I do not think the most unjust critic of the Government can charge them with any remissness or negligence in the appointment of committees for the purpose of ascertaining and informing themselves as to the correct means. There may be some justification for the charge that we have not always utilized the information given. My Honourable friend alluded to the Sugar Committee ; he must remember that he is not prepared to pay a little more to enable the Government of India and the Provincial Governments to discharge their duty. If only that can be done, I am sure the money will be forthcoming and we shall do our duty.

Well, Sir, I shall say just a few words with regard to the land-revenue question on which he seems to be very keen and on which really he has centered most of his remarks. If he were to turn to Hindu times, I am sure he will realise that it was open to the King to exact or rather to take one-sixth of the produce. I had the curiosity some time ago to work out the figures roughly to see what percentage the Government was taking on the whole. The total land-revenue comes to about

35 crores of rupees ; and in 1911, if I remember rightly, the total agricultural produce, apart from others, was estimated at about Rs. 87 crores according to my method of calculation—it should be at least 50 per cent. more according to present prices. I should, therefore, think that there is no foundation for any serious charge that unduly large sums of money are being exacted by a rapacious Government from the cultivator. Take the Punjab for instance. 29 million acres are paying only Rs. 4 millions ; the average for a fully assessed area is between 11 annas 7 pies and 15 annas 6 pies. No one could suggest that that is a formidable sum. If you take the crop area it is Re. 1-4-5 to Re. 1-15-7. Some provinces pay a little more. If you take the United Provinces it is 30 million acres and Rs. 69 millions. I shall not pursue the subject ; it is a provincial subject and it is certainly open to the Local Governments to make suggestions and it is for the Government of India to consider no doubt as to whether according to the rules now in force, which we hope to be able to relax, the Provincial Governments can embark on far-reaching changes. One provincial legislature has suggested permanent settlement ; others long-term settlements and so on ; but Honourable Members will remember that the agricultural classes are all powerful in many of the local assemblies, that labour has not yet come into its own and that the industrialists may have to say something. I would only ask them to remember that ; I am not suggesting that some of the poorer landholders do not deserve greater consideration or that in some places the land-revenue is not excessive. The whole question is one for the provinces to settle, and I shall not prejudice the case either of the Government or of the landlord by making any remarks here which would tend one way or the other ; but I have said enough to show that what the Government has done in the past cannot be justly stated to have been unjust, either to the larger landholder or the smaller landholder.

Therefore, Sir, I think no committee would serve any useful purpose. Each province will have to work out its own salvation. Co-operative credit, education, land-revenue are all provincial subjects. Agriculture is a provincial subject. When dealing with agricultural education and other subjects, the Government went fully into the question and found that it was difficult for them to make any general suggestions which would be applicable to all the provinces. The question of landbanks has been mooted as one of the subjects that we might deal with. The Government of India are not unaware of the importance of the subject. Last year, we went into that question and we noted from the information that we had that the Local Governments were fully alive to the importance of this question and were being expected to make a move when financial conditions became more favourable. The Government of India would only be too glad to assist the Local Governments in initiating a system of landbanks in which I believe myself that a good deal of progress is possible, and it is a direction really in which all our energies should be directed for the purpose of improving the credit system, especially for the benefit of the agricultural classes. The Government of India are not unaware of the necessity for making the villages as self-sufficing as possible. That is the reason why the latest Rural Board Acts enable the institution of village punchayets, and the grant of

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larger powers to them. Therefore, the direction in which the Government are moving is towards decentralisation as far as possible; and I hope, therefore, the Honourable Member will see that his suggestion for a committee which is to investigate the conditions of about 772,000 villages, spread over ten presidencies with vastly different conditions, with land-revenue varying from seven annas and six annas to two rupees and three rupees and higher, a committee of that description cannot do its work, however well-intentioned it may be, however enthusiastic it may be and whatever period may be allowed to it. The direction lies in inducing the provincial legislatures to take more interest in agriculture, and I am sure they will do that; and if the Government of India's assistance is required for any purpose, Honourable Members may rest assured that it will be forthcoming. At the present moment and under our present constitution we cannot spend except for certain definite purposes, and we merely superintend and control certain operations with regard to land-revenue administration, such as the fixation of land-revenue. With regard to others, the provinces have absolutely a free hand, and I think it would be a retrograde step for us to legislate to appoint a Committee such as the one which the Honourable Mover proposes to suggest to the Local Governments as to what their duty should be in this matter.

(At this stage the Honourable the President resumed the Chair.)

I therefore deeply regret that, although all of us are at one with regard to the desirability of taking as speedy steps as possible for the purpose of improving the lot of the agricultural masses, still the remedy suggested in this Resolution is hardly the right remedy, a remedy which can appeal either to the Government, or I take it, to the vast majority of those assembled here.

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH: Sir, I am greatly disappointed at the Honourable the Revenue Member's objection to the appointment of a Committee. I was merely asking the Government of India to take stock of the economic position of the country which they have consistently refused to do. I thought that with the changed conditions, the Government of India would welcome such an inquiry to find out what the exact position is. The other minor matters of course do not concern me as much as the main question of a careful inquiry into the condition of the villages.

The Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma in his reply referred to many improvements which have been made in agricultural matters. I have never denied that Government has often talked about improving agriculture. They have often appointed committees to inquire into specific subjects, but what I ask the Honourable Member is, what action has actually been taken by the Government on the recommendations of these Committees? He says that Government is now supplying seed. I ask him to tell us to what extent seed has been supplied. If he could tell me that, then I would certainly be satisfied that the needs of the country in the matter of pure seed supply are sufficiently provided for.

The Honourable Member then referred to the great work that has been done in Canal Irrigation. I do believe, as my Honourable friend Sir

Purshotamdas pointed out, that canal irrigation is one of the finest achievements of the Irrigation Engineers ; but he did not tell us the percentage or area which the canals are irrigating ; I may tell him that the canal irrigated area is only a small fraction of the area under cultivation.

The Honourable Member, in charge of course, has left the question of well irrigation as well as that of unirrigated areas entirely alone.

He then talked about the survey of lands and record of rights. Well, so far as we laymen are concerned, the survey of land and record of rights only means an increase of land-revenue. These records are very carefully kept, I admit. But what does it lead to at the end of 20 or 30 years, as the case may be ? These records are produced to increase land-revenue. What the people in the villages expect is sympathetic action in revising the land-revenue settlement by devising means to find out whether land-revenue could not be decreased.

Then the Honourable Member in charge referred to the question of tenancy laws. I have always admitted that the Member in charge is always profuse in expressing his sympathy. I would ask the Honourable Member to say what the Government have done in increasing production ? That is what I want the Committee to inquire and find out. What have the Government so far done in increasing production ? The Honourable Member in charge has been absolutely silent on that point.

Regarding Canal Irrigation again, I remember the opinion of an Inspector General of Irrigation, who said that if funds were available in five years or at the utmost in 10 years irrigation area in India could be doubled. Certainly, Government have provided funds for some works, and some works have been recently sanctioned, but the programme for future irrigation is still unsettled and it should therefore be taken in hand as soon as possible.

Then, again, the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma talked of the Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans. I wonder if he has ever approached the Government for Land Improvement Loans. If he has, then he would know how loans are given and collected. There is no elasticity in the loans granted by Government. The collections are most rigid and there are sudden reversals of policy. Therefore, here again, there is need for inquiry.

Now the main reason why the Honourable the Revenue Member says that an inquiry should not be held is that Agriculture is a Provincial subject. I want to submit to him that Agriculture is of Imperial importance, and being of Imperial importance, it is of vital interest to the country. It therefore lies with the Government of India in co-operation with the provinces to hold this inquiry and devise a policy and assist the provinces to actively promote agriculture.

Then the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma said that the appointment of a Committee such as the one I propose in my Resolution would do little good. Well, if the Government of India had recognised its duty, if it had recognised that in appointing Committees they were committing themselves to accept the recommendations of those Committees they would not refuse the appointment of a Committee such as the one I propose, as it will

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lead to increased production and consequently to contentment. But if the Government cannot act on the recommendations of the Committees whose fault is it? It is for the Government of India to justify the appointment of such Committees on which public funds have been lavishly spent. Committees on which public men have given their valuable time to make recommendations after careful inquiry, and to see that the recommendations made by those Committees are acted upon. Take a firm of business men. They do not appoint Committees only to shelve a question. If they appoint a Committee, they do so for the purpose of taking action on its recommendations. If the Government of India feel that they cannot take action on the recommendations of Committees, they are certainly justified in refusing to appoint any more Committees. But at the same time they must devise some other method of holding an inquiry. How are the Government of India going to take stock of the agricultural conditions of the country? For a series of years it has been said in the Councils and outside the Councils that the agricultural conditions are deteriorating. How is the Government going to inquire and find that out, so as to convince the country that it is not so? And if it is deteriorating, how are the Government of India going to discover remedies for such a state of things? It cannot be done by sitting in the office and reading reports which are sent up.

Then the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma referred to Manu. I do not see why in the twentieth century we should go back to the times of Manu. Why should we not adopt modern standards of taxation and revise our old rules. The Honourable Member said that in the time of Manu land-revenue was assessed at one-sixth of the produce. He also told us that he has made very careful inquiries about land-revenue and said that in some provinces the assessment was one rupee an acre, while in others it was eleven annas, but he left the main question entirely alone. He did not tell us what is the produce from an acre, what is the cost of production, what is the surplus available, and what proportion to that surplus the land tax bears? I suppose he will be able to enlighten us on these points. I suppose he will be able to enlighten us as to the proportion that land-revenue bears to the surplus available from the produce of land.

Then again, he has lightly passed over the question of a revision of the standard of land-revenue. He says it is a provincial subject. I should like him to convince this Council, that it is a provincial subject, and that the Provincial Governments can revise the standard of taxation below or above the 50 per cent. which has been fixed. If it is so, certainly the Provinces can do so: and if it is not so, it is for the Government of India to decide what standard of taxation is to be followed in the future. I should like the Honourable Member to tell us, if it can be done, without a careful inquiry by a Committee, without a careful determination of the produce of the land, and the available surplus that can be taxed. There is income-tax for instance; it bears a certain proportion to the income of a man. Well, then, why not determine the income of an agriculturist for the purposes of land-revenue. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas pointed out, in some cases an agriculturist has no more land than the size of a billiard table; what tax has he to pay on this billiard table patch of land? Then, as

Chaudhuri Lal Chand says, and I am at one with him that there should be uniform taxation but the rich should pay more. Can this be done without determining available surplus? It is no use shirking this question.

Then the Honourable Member said that he fully sympathises with the idea of making the villages self-sufficing. I would ask him what the Provincial Government or the Government of India are doing or have done within the last 20 or 30 years in making the village a self-sufficing unit? I am entirely one with Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas that we cannot go back. I never meant to. We must go forward. But it is in going forward that we need the support of the merchant princes to modernise the village and bring civilization home to the villagers. How can we do it without the assistance of the Government and our merchant princes? We want their capital to modernise agriculture; that is where we need them.

I think I have dealt with the remarks made by the Honourable the Revenue Member, but there were some very interesting remarks made by my friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas on questions of wider interest than this, comparing the new age with the old, the age of freedom, the age of machines, the age of modern comforts—that is the age of dependence on God, simple living, and high thinking? For myself, I find myself in a very great difficulty to say which is the better. . . . !

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think it is hardly necessary for the purposes of the Resolution under discussion that the Honourable Member should determine that question.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH: It is a question which we will not determine at this stage, and possibly we cannot appoint any Committee that could determine the points indicated by my friend, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. But in the matter of education certainly I am one with him that we should have free and compulsory education. Where I differ is that we must have education not entirely removed from the old village life. We want the villagers to have contentment. In this life it is a strange thing that when God sends us on this earth we need a philosophy to live, and that philosophy we should not take away from the villagers, because it is that philosophy alone which makes the drudgery of life for them possible.

In the matter of land banks again the Revenue Member assured us that it had the sympathy of the Government of India and that the co-operative credit societies were doing enormous work. He talked in crores and millions, but he did not tell us how far these went and what the needs of the country are in the matter of capital, even to liquidate existing debts. That is again where the inquiry is needed. Unless you know and inquire into the condition of indebtedness of the country, how can you make the necessary provision. You cannot shirk the inquiry. Why not go forward and take stock of conditions. I mentioned a few subjects like, land-revenue, organization of credit, etc., but there is a wide range of inquiry in the agricultural domain and the terms of reference could be carefully considered. If I went into the question of land-revenue alone I suppose I would detain the Council for more than an hour, which I do not want to do. So I simply emphasise the necessity of inquiry. The main principle of my

[Sardar Jogendra Singh.]

Resolution is that the Government of India should set up in co-operation with the Provinces a Committee of inquiry to take stock of the present agricultural position and then to devise means to make improvements. It is a very simple proposition which I do not see why the Government of India should not accept. And if they do not accept it, what happens? In the villages we say, the Government of India has nothing else but words, words, words; it is full of sympathy inscribed on reams of paper; but when it comes to action they simply say, "we cannot do it; we cannot make an inquiry; we are bankrupt." Well, if the Revenue Member wants it, I think the agriculturists would be quite prepared to pay a percentage to meet the cost of this inquiry, because we feel fully convinced that the time has arrived when an inquiry should be held. I can tell the Government of India, that discontent in the villages is growing, and contentment can only be brought to them by bringing prosperity to the villages. If they fail in doing so—well, I do not know, but difficulties are certain to arise. With these remarks, Sir, I commend this Resolution to this House and I hope the Revenue Member, if he is opposing the Resolution, will let the official Members vote as they wish.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : Sir, I think there would not be very much difficulty, though I do not know the particular course of action the Government would take, if only my Honourable friend can induce the agricultural classes to find the money for the inquiry which he proposed.

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : A lakh of rupees from three hundred millions would not be very much. One pie a head.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : A lakh of rupees for a Committee to tour round 727,000 villages, to ascertain the indebtedness of about 200 million inhabitants of this country, to go into the question....

The HONOURABLE SARDAR JOGENDRA SINGH : May I rise to explain, Sir, when I said that the inquiry may be held in co-operation with Local Governments I did not propose that the Committee should go out touring. There are other methods of arriving at conclusions. Each District Officer can hold an inquiry in his district and submit proposals to the Local Government. Those again can be collected by a Committee of experts, and their report forwarded to the Committee sitting at the headquarters of the Government of India, who would tour round selected tracts to test their conclusions.

The HONOURABLE SIR NARASIMHA SARMA : I am glad to be enlightened. I see further avenues of expenditure, the proportion of the salaries of these expert officers, the district and village officers that would have to be debited to this inquiry, which I am sure the Local Governments under the new Devolution Scheme would, be particularly careful to debit, would not at any rate bring the expenditure within the reasonable proposition of one lakh of rupees. But seriously, Sir, the Government of India have had under consideration this question of an economic inquiry on more than one occasion. In connection with the census the question was carefully gone into as to whether the census

officers could not be authorised to go into the economic condition of the villages on some definite lines in order that more light may be thrown upon the economic condition of the people. The question was fully examined and it was found that such a cursory inquiry as was possible under those circumstances would only result in misunderstanding, in false calculations and would do more harm than good. The question was again examined whether from the point of view of industries, or from the point of view of agriculture, better statistics could not be devised and more money should not be expended. It was again found that it was impossible in the then condition of the finances of either the Local Governments or of the Government of India to undertake an inquiry of this description. It is not because the Government of India are unwilling or do not see the desirability of an inquiry of this description, provided it is conducted on scientific lines and with as much exactitude as the case may permit, but that we are met with this difficulty to which I have alluded more than once, the question of funds.

He has asked me as to what has been done in the matter of well irrigation. Of course, this is a provincial subject, but I may inform him that all the local laws exempt improvements by the sinking of wells from assessment. Care has, therefore, been taken for a very long time to see that every encouragement was given to the sinking of wells and land improvement loans were partly or mainly intended for the purpose of improving wells and sinking new wells. In Madras and some other provinces also, the Industrial Department, and sometimes, the Agricultural Department, have investigated the possibility of tapping the underground supplies of water and they have succeeded in sinking several tube wells. Therefore, this is a matter in which the people and the Government have co-operated and can co-operate and much is being done, though I do admit that much more could be done. But that is not a question for the Government of India or a question for the Committee; it is a question of the co-operation of the people and the Local Governments. But the figures would show that there has been an enormous increase in the number of wells.

Then he asked me as to what the percentage of the canals is. The total area given fluctuates between 220 or 260 million acres, it varies from year to year, and the canals are about 54; therefore, you can easily find out the proportion. Further, almost all the big rivers have been tapped or are being tapped, and, therefore there is no very great possibility of a further expansion of canals on a rapid or large scale either by Government or by private effort. There is an enormous future in the case of wells, much has been done in the case of tanks, and, therefore, I think the irrigation problem stands on a very satisfactory footing.

With regard to survey operations, my Honourable friend said: "Yes, it is to the interests of the Government to survey the land because they want to exact more money at the time of each settlement, but does not do much good to the people." Well, if the Government wishes to increase the land revenue by a certain percentage they would do it whether the land is surveyed or unsurveyed, and, therefore, that question does not help the Government at all. On the other hand, I know, and I

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

realise fully as a *ryatwari* proprietor on a small scale myself, and as a landowner, how greatly the people appreciate survey operations, which settle boundary disputes which would have otherwise have cost them very large sums of money in fees to the lawyers, which class my Honourable friend does not appreciate very much.

With regard to the question of production, there has been a rough estimate made, and I may tell the Honourable Member that in 1902 the outturn of food crops was estimated at about 65 millions, with a surplus of 6, and in 1911 it was 82. I am not pinning my faith to these figures, I am examining them again, but I give them for what they are worth, because, after a careful and elaborate inquiry, probably due no doubt to a revision of the yield of crops, this result has been arrived at, but the Honourable Member may rest assured that with the growth of the canals food production has increased. Whether it has relatively adequately increased or not is a matter on which opinions may vary, but the figures are as I have stated.

The Honourable Member has asked me what the proportion of land-revenue is to the surplus. May I tell him with regard to the Punjab (*The Honourable Sardar Jogendra Singh* : "The whole of India please.") I have stated that already. The crops in the Punjab in 1919-20 have been estimated at 62 crores of rupees and, if the land-revenue is 4 crores, putting the two together, there must have been a surplus of about 58 crores of rupees among 3.4 million holdings. He can easily find out what the proportion is for each holder of surplus. I may inform the Honourable Member that the value of each acre is 245 times the annual revenue, and, consequently, things are not quite so bad as he asks this Council to believe.

Then, he says there is no elasticity in the collection of land-revenue. That is a question for the provinces again and my Honourable friend may rest assured that the agriculturists in the provinces will see that all the improvements needed are effected. However, it is not a matter for a Committee.

Then he said that the recommendations of the Committees are not acted upon. Whatever may be the fate of Committees in general—and I am not here to justify the appointment or the results of Committees,—so far as Committees relating to my Department are concerned, I do not think they have ended in nothing. I have already told you what has been done with regard to the Irrigation Committee; what the various Tenancy Committees have done I have already told you. That the Cotton Committee has not resulted in nothing I need hardly remind Honourable Members who have just passed various laws, and those laws are being put into operation. With regard to the Sugar Committee some action has been taken, though not as much as I should wish. I may inform the Honourable Member that the action of the Government or, at any rate, the researches of the officers have been so appreciated by the Bihar planters, that they are themselves voluntarily coming forward to undertake a portion of the expenditure for the maintenance of those researches and they have suggested and are coming forward with pro-

posals to levy a cess. Therefore, that has not ended in nothing either.

Then, with regard to the co-operative societies, I have given a survey of the operations, and I think that ought to satisfy the most fastidious of critics—I think, that it has not resulted in nothing.

Then, as regards agricultural education, I may just remind the Honourable Member that during the last five years there has been an increase of 700 primary schools and 25,000 scholars, or 70,000 boys in the primary stages in all the schools in the Punjab alone, and, therefore, there has been progress in rural education also.

Then, with regard to the land-revenue, I do not know whether he would like to exchange the present percentage of the land-revenue to the total production for the income-tax basis on which land is being assessed in the United Kingdom. I think almost all land except of a certain value is being assessed to income-tax. I am not quite sure that many of us who advocate such a measure would appreciate it when they see the results thereof.

Well, in making these remarks, Sir, I was very greatly pained to take up this sort of critical attitude, but I have done so simply because I have been driven to it. I have already mentioned that there is no real disagreement between the Government and the public or the Honourable Member, who says that he is voicing the views of the public in this matter, that all of us have to co-operate for the benefit of this most important industry.

We know that the wage paid to the agricultural classes is comparatively low. Only the other day I looked into the figures for the Central Provinces where it ranges from 4-6 annas to 8 annas, and I was very unhappy about it. People in the Punjab are very much happier in that respect, but there is such an enormous variation between district and district, taluk and taluk and province and province, that absolutely no conclusions from which any inference of a general character can be drawn can emerge from this Committee's inquiries, so far as the wage question is concerned. The conditions of the Provinces and the districts vary so much that this is a matter more for the Provinces really and not for the Central Government or for a central committee. The Legislative Councils in the various Provinces have it in their power to vote the money, have it in their power to compel the Government to undertake these inquiries. The rural and agricultural classes are in a majority there, and if there is really so much feeling on the subject, I am sure the Local Governments will be alive to their duties and will start inquiries. Every co-operation that may be needed from the Central Government by way of the loan of research officers or by way of the loan of money, so far as is consistent with the constitution and so far as finances may permit, will always be afforded. But to ask this Government to undertake a duty which is not theirs, to undertake a duty which they cannot efficiently discharge, in the way of appointing a committee which would be infructuous in its results, I think, is asking for the acceptance of a proposition which no Government can possibly

[Sir Narasimha Sarma.]

accept. I therefore most reluctantly am compelled to oppose the Resolution.

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

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee be appointed to consider the question of rural reconstruction with a view to the organisation of agriculture and to formulate an agricultural policy regarding land-revenue, village education, co-operative credit and other allied matters.”

The Council divided :

AYES—7.

Jogendra Singh, Mr.
Lal Chand, Lieut.
Lalubhai Samaldas, Mr.

Maricair, Sir Ahmedthamby.
Ram Saran Das, Mr.
Vedamurti, Mr. S.

Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sir.

NOES—17.

Amin-ul-Islam, Mr.
Bahram Khan, Nawab Sir.
Barron, Mr. C. A.
Berthoud, Mr. E. H.
Chadwick, Mr. D. T.
Cresser, Mr. J.
Dadabhoj, Sir Maneckji.
Holberton, Sir Edgar.

Ley, Mr. A. H.
MacWatt, Major-General R. C.
McWatters, Mr. A. C.
Ogilvie, Major G. D.
Sarma, Sir Narasimha. “ .
Shafi, Dr. Mian Sir Muhammad.
Shepherd, Mr. W. C.
Tek Chand, Mr.

Watson Smyth, Sir Robert Middleton.

The motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION *RE* REVISION OF THE SYSTEM OF TAXATION.

The HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces : General) : Sir, I beg to ask your permission to make a slight modification in my Resolution :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the whole system of taxation be thoroughly revised on an equitable and scientific basis, with special regard to the taxable capacity of the people.”

The modification I propose is of a merely phraseological character. I will read with your permission the modified Resolution :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that an inquiry be made into the whole system of taxation in India with a view to its thorough revision on an economic, equitable and scientific basis with special regard to the taxable capacity of the people.”

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Resolution as now proposed by the Honourable Member does differ in some material points from the Resolution on the paper but not, I think, sufficiently to surprise Members of this Councils, and therefore I propose to allow him to move it in that form if the Honourable Member in charge of the Resolution has no objection.

The HONOURABLE MR. A. C. McWATTERS : I have no objection, Sir.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : It seems to me to be a Resolution on the debate on which will be prolonged and therefore as the hour

is getting late, I will allow the Honourable Member to move it formally and to reserve its discussion till the next non-official day.

• The HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY : Sir, I beg to move :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that an inquiry be made into the whole system of taxation in India with a view to its thorough revision on an economic, equitable and scientific basis with special regard to the taxable capacity of the people.”

• The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That will secure the Honourable Member's priority and the Resolution will come on first the next non-official day.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 19th July, 1923.
