

Thursday, 27th February, 1930

THE  
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1930

*(17th February to 3rd April, 1930.)*

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EIGHTH SESSION  
OF THE  
SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1930



CALCUTTA: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
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1930

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# COUNCIL OF STATE.

*Thursday, 27th February, 1930.*

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

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## MEMBER SWORN.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur T. R. Ramachandra Ayyar (Madras : Non-Muhammadan).

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

### REVISION OF THE SALARIES OF THE MINISTERIAL STAFF OF THE HIGH COURT, CALCUTTA.

51. THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING : (a) Will Government be pleased to state :

(i) whether the President of the High Court Association, Calcutta, submitted a representation for the revision of the salaries of the ministerial staff of the Calcutta High Court, to the Government of India, Home Department, through the High Court, Calcutta, on the 15th May, 1929, and whether an advance copy was sent to the Home Department direct in May, 1929 ?

(ii) if so, whether the original representation has since been forwarded by the Calcutta High Court to the Home Department ? If so, when ?

(b) If the answer to (i) be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state whether the Calcutta High Court is justified in detaining with them the representation addressed to the Government of India, Home Department, and what action, if any, the Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. G. HAIG : (a) (i) The Government of India received an advance copy of the representation though the sending of such advance copies is not contemplated by the memorial rules.

(ii) The answer is in the negative.

(b) The Government of India are not aware of the circumstances, but the matter is primarily for the consideration of the High Court and is no doubt receiving their attention. Government do not propose to take any action.

PRINTING WORK DONE FOR GOVERNMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE PRESSES.

52. THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING: Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) how much of the ordinary printing work of Government in 1926-27, 1927-28 and 1928-29, respectively, was done at Government Presses and how much outside ;
- (b) the total amount paid to non-governmental Presses for printing work for Government ; and
- (c) the names of private individuals and presses that executed those printing orders ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. A. SHILLIDY: The Government of India regret that they cannot undertake to collect the information desired by the Honourable Member, as it would involve an amount of time and labour disproportionate to the result.

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MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have messages for the Council from His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General.

The first Message takes the form of a letter from the Private Secretary to His Excellency :

ATTEMPT TO WRECK THE VICEREGAL TRAIN NEAR DELHI.

*" I am desired by His Excellency Lord Irwin to convey his deep gratitude to the Honourable Members of the Council of State for the Resolution passed in the Council of State congratulating him, Lady Irwin and their party on their escape from the recent attempt to blow up the Viceregal train near Delhi. Their Excellencies deeply appreciate the feelings expressed in the House in support of the Resolution "*.

The second Message is in the form of the following Order :

TIME FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET.

*" With reference to my Order, dated the 19th February, 1930, appointing Friday, the 28th February, at 5. P.M., for the presentation to the Council of State of the statement of the estimated annual expenditure and revenue of the Governor General in Council in respect of subjects other than Railways, I, Edward Frederick Lindley, Baron Irwin, hereby direct that the meeting of the Council of State on Friday, the 28th instant, for the purpose stated in the aforesaid Order shall commence at 4.30 P.M., in place of 5 P.M.*

(Sd.) IRWIN,

Viceroy and Governor General".

(The Messages were received by the Members of the Council standing.)

## ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INDIAN RESEARCH FUND ASSOCIATION.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: One nomination only has been received for the election of a Member of this Council to the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association. That nomination is in the name of the Honourable Raja Nawab Ali Khan. I therefore have pleasure in declaring the Honourable Raja Nawab Ali Khan duly elected.

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## ELECTIONS TO THE PANEL FOR THE CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The number of nominations for the panel in connection with the Central Advisory Council for Railways also coincides with the number of vacancies which are eight. I therefore declare the following Honourable Members duly elected :

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Sir Ebrahim Jaffer.

The Honourable Mr. Mahmood Suhrawardy.

The Honourable Mr. Surput Sing.

The Honourable Mr. G. A. Natesan.

The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das.

The Honourable Sardar Charanjit Singh.

The Honourable Munshi Narayan Prasad Asthana.

The Honourable Nawab Sir Muhammad Muzammil-ullah Khan.

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## RESOLUTION *RE* PROHIBITION OF THE IMPORT OF VEGETABLE GHEE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING (Bihar and Orissa : Non-Muhammadian) : Sir, I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name as follows :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to put an entire stop to the import of that commodity which passes by the name of ‘ Vegetable Product ’. ”

This commodity is widely known under the poetic name ‘ *Vanaspati* ’, but ‘ vegetable product ’ is the commercial name adopted for it and I have therefore used that term in my Resolution in preference to any other. I do not think I need enter into any detailed description of this article as it is by now well known to my Honourable friends.

It was a little after the Armistice that this commodity first made its way into this country from abroad. The foreign importers were then at great pains to introduce this new product in the Indian markets as a possible substitute for ghee. But the unfortunate feature of the situation is that these importers found in our trading community ready participators to push on the sale of this article. In some big and important towns even owners and editors of Indian newspapers were got hold of to give write-ups to this questionable foreign commodity. But all that tended to give a lease of life to this article

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is the action of a European Health Officer of a big Municipal Corporation of a big importing centre who had the presumption of going to the length of declaring this article *as fit for human consumption*. But after that he availed himself of long leave but never returned to his duties.

Nothing is known in the country about it except that it is some supposed preparation from vegetable substances as indicated by the trade name itself. No analysis has so far been supplied, and nothing has in fact been told to the consumers of its food value. The impression that it is a preparation from vegetable substances has induced the middlemen and petty bazaar confectioners to go in freely for this article in order to use it as an adulterant of, and a substitute for, ghee. Its cheapness has in no small degree also contributed to its increasing sale.

The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany are the chief exporting countries, but the United Kingdom of Great Britain has not failed to add its quota to the figures of import of this product. A glance at the official Sea-Borne Trade Statement of Statistics, Vol. II, of the last few years will convince you of the steady increase of the importation of the stuff. At the present moment the import figures stand at about two crores—including, of course, the figures from all the exporting centres.

It goes, therefore, without saying that the expanding sale of this article threatens to entirely supersede the most fatty of our food substances, namely, ghee. To the Indian, ghee is not a substance of comfort or luxury but is an absolute and bare necessity of life. The present alarming situation has therefore drawn the pointed attention of responsible public men and philanthropists, and investigations are now being carried on in most important centres to probe deep into the merits and demerits of this vegetable product. It cannot therefore be denied that some drastic measures are necessary to stamp out the evil from the country.

My object in bringing this important Resolution before this House of the Indian Legislature is that the Local Governments, in spite of their pious wishes and earnest endeavours, are quite helpless in the matter. Their difficulty seems to be that they cannot initiate any legislation to put a stop to the import of this commodity. The utmost they can do is to levy heavy duties in the shape of terminal taxes or otherwise in the municipal areas under them to discourage its growing sale, but I would make bold to submit that that would be hardly sufficient to strike at the root of the evil. It is the Central Government alone that has the power to inaugurate such legislation to put an effective check on the importation of this article. That is why I am before this House at the earnest request of my constituents and the vegetarian Indians in general.

To enter into the chemical aspect of the article I must confess that I am not a chemist. But the great personal interest I have always been evincing in its composition made me undertake an investigation into the article; and I would crave the indulgence of the House to place before it what materials I have been able to gather about the chemistry of this much-talked-of vegetable product. All fats and oils are mainly mixtures of three compounds: *Stearin*, *Palmitin* and *Olein*. Ghee has, besides these three, a fourth constituent, called *Butyrin*. Of the three main ingredients mentioned above, the first two, namely, *Stearin* and *Palmitin*, are solids and *Olein* is a liquid. If in a mixture the first two preponderate, it is solid at an ordinary temperature and is called a fat; but if *Olein* preponderates, it is liquid and is called an oil. The difference



between Olein and Stearin lies in the fact that Olein contains less hydrogen than Stearin and by introducing hydrogen chemically into liquid Olein it can be converted into solid Stearin. Thus any oil can be converted into solid fat in the presence of fine nickel dust. In spite of careful refining some residue of nickel dust is left over after the chemical process is completed. This process of converting liquid oil into solid fat is carried on on a very large scale in the Netherlands and Belgium. In the same way inedible oils like cotton seed oil and whale oil are treated with hydrogen in the presence of fine nickel dust. Similar is the process by which an oil is converted into a solid fatty-looking substance, suitable for use in the manufacture of soap and candle and other industrial purposes. It is now for this House to consider whether a hydrogenated chemical product with very minute traces of nickel dust present in it, like one of the above products, can serve as a full substitute for ghee, which is an organic substance, and the legal definition for which is : " Fat derived from the milk of mammals, namely, cows and buffaloes ". It is therefore amply clear that in chemical composition the so-called vegetable product is not identical with and cannot approach ghee, because of the fact that it lacks Butyryn, which is so essential an ingredient in ghee.

I will next place before the House the considered testimony of some well-known medical men, physiologists and scientists to show that the vegetable product and ghee have different physiological effects upon the human system. Ghee is more easily assimilable than oil and is abundantly rich in vitamins which the vegetable product lacks so absolutely. This is not all. According to expert opinion the presence of traces of nickel in the substance is liable to lead to affections of the eyes and the hydrogenated oil serves as a fruitful source of affections of the heart and is believed to be responsible for Beri-Beri and other similar ailments.

It is a great relief to me to be able to say that opinions of European medical men are not wanting to support the views embodied above. Dr. Plimmer says that the danger of rickets and of stunted growth and bad teeth will increase if the people rely for their fat on vegetable product. Colonel F. P. Mackie, I. M. S., Director, Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory at Parel, joined hands with Dr. Plimmer so far back as 1924. I have already stated before that to an Indian ghee is a bare necessity of life. I would repeat once again before the House that apart from anything else the article plays an important part in Indian sentiment and has a sanctity of its own attached to it. It is in daily use in our *Pujas* (worship), in *Homa* (sacrificial fire) and in our offerings to the gods. And Jains, Sikhs and Hindus are strictly enjoined to use nothing but the purest quality for all such religious purposes. Need I add that no feast or festival in an Indian home, Hindu or Moslem, Jain or Sikh, Parsi or Christian, is complete without some preparations made from pure ghee. It is absolutely necessary therefore that an article which plays such an important and healthy part in our dietary and to all intents and purposes is an essential ingredient in our religious observances should be made immune from the inroads of adulterating ingredients and that no cheap and spurious imitation should be allowed to take its place under any conditions whatsoever.

Nevertheless, the cheap foreign imitation is easily mixed with ghee and, being odourless, colourless and tasteless, escapes detection even on the closest examination. But the unfortunate culmination of this episode has been that no effective measure has yet been taken either by the Government or by the people to distinguish pure ghee from the adulterated stuff and that there is no law in the land to check the adulteration of such an important article of Indian food and religion on the lines of the Public Health Acts of Great Britain.

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The result is that at the present moment from the busiest town to the thinnest hamlet genuine ghee has been steadily making room for this commodity. We have thus to notice to our infinite regret that the population dwelling in hundreds of villages have been made to consume this vegetable product believing that they are spending their hard-earned money on their much-prized ghee. A systematic fraud is thus being allowed to be perpetrated in the country with the result that quite a lot of innocent consumers of ghee are forced to pay Rs. 60 to Rs. 90 a maund for a commodity which is not worth even a quarter of the amount and have thus the hard lot of imbibing a poison in the name of the much-valued ghee.

It goes further and deals a severe blow to the manufacturers and dealers in pure ghee. They are either being ousted from this trade by the cheapness of the imported article or are perforce required to submit to the process of adulteration to get on with their business. This has thus proved economically to be a hard hit both to the consumers and the manufacturers, although it is a source of decided profit to the importers and the middlemen. The economic loss to the country is enormous and no less than two crores of rupees are drained year after year from the country for a spurious product which is contaminating the most nutritive substance in Indian food.

I then place before the House a significant instance of the harmful effect of vegetable product as indicated in the experiments undertaken by Captain D. R. Thomas, I.M.S., Chemical Examiner to the Government of the Punjab. Of the two female kittens of the same species and of nearly the same size and weight, on which he tried his experiments, the one fed upon ghee flourished in health, whereas the other fed upon the vegetable product lost weight heavily and quite degenerated. The considered opinion of this British medical man is: "*Vanaspati* cannot be used as a substitute for genuine ghee. It must not be given to infants and lactating mothers." The Bombay Government went further and resolved at a conference, held at Poona, upon the entire prohibition of this imitation of butter and ghee.

Honourable Members, who had had occasion to be present in the House on this particular day last year and to listen to the most able and illuminating debates of some of my Honourable friends on the floor of this House on a particular side-issue of the question, will remember what a flood of light was thrown on the point at issue. It was evident that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief would have only *pure* ghee for his Army and that tested at the Government Laboratory at Kasauli. His Excellency was afraid lest the chemical substance so much devoid of vitamins should sap the vitality of his Army. It will be an old history to repeat that in the Punjab, whence the finest manhood for the Indian Army is recruited, a popular Minister incharge of Local Self-Government has been moving most earnestly in the matter with a view to check the consumption of the article by levying a prohibitive octroi duty or terminal tax on it in the municipalities under him. The lack of necessary nutriment in the substance which cannot but prove detrimental to the health of the population in his charge was the only impetus that led the Minister to take such public-spirited action in the way he did.

I do really feel happy and proud to place before the House that some of the Indian States have gone ahead of the British Government in an important question like this. The Jammu and Kashmir State has prohibited the total import of this vegetable product into its territories. The Kapurthala State has followed suit. A number of Indian States, too numerous to refer to here

by name, in the Rajputana, Central India and Bombay Presidency have also legislated prohibiting the inroad on ghee by that article in their territories. A few others of the Indian States, instead of absolutely prohibiting its import, have carried out this object by levying an exorbitant duty on the stuff. The Alwar State has ruled that shops which vend vegetable product shall not under penalty be allowed to sell ghee ; likewise confectioners who prepare foodstuff with that stuff shall not be allowed to make any preparation from ghee. All this has been able to strike at the root of the evil and stop once for all the sale of this article in that State.

I would beg to ask in all seriousness if all these testimonies, chemical and physiological, all these prohibitive measures elsewhere in India, are not sufficient in themselves to convince the House to recommend the adoption of measures, entirely prohibiting the import of this commodity into the country as *unfit for human consumption* just like a deleterious or dangerous drug. I would appeal to my Honourable friends to say if any case can be made out for this differential treatment of this article in British India. If the Indian Princes could put their foot down on this deleterious article, I do not know what earthly reasons there are for the benign Government to lag behind.

I do not ignore the fact that there is a section of our people who will come forward with a brief for the poor. They would retort by asking what right have I to deprive the poor of an article of food, which they get cheap and which has so far shown no signs of forthwith undermining their manhood. I bow down to these people for their kindness of heart to the poor, but I must say that I yield to none in my endeavour for the amelioration of the poverty-stricken millions in the country. I would appeal to them in all earnestness to say, if after having been apprised of the baneful effect of the stuff ; knowing that much of the increasing eye troubles in the country, the spread of Beri-Beri in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa are ascribed mostly to the consumption of this vegetable product ; knowing also that a kitten which generally lives upon a number of things unfit for human consumption grew appreciably debilitated after being fed upon the product ; knowing fully well as they do that there is a consensus of opinion among Indian and European medical men as to the evil properties of this article, will they still persist in their endeavour to stand by this pernicious foodstuff in the name of the poor ?

I hope I shall be pardoned if I try to bear upon this debate the weight of my personal investigation and experience all over Northern India—Bengal, Bihar, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Rajputana. Wherever I went and tried to feel the pulse of the poor and the uneducated masses about this stuff—even in most inaccessible tracts of the country—I got the uniform answer : “ Sir, let us have pure ghee or pure oil, and not this cursed *Vanaspati* or any adulteration of either ; we are ready, Sir, to pay dearly for pure ghee as it is necessary for our religion, health and vitality.” It is no word of exaggeration that I repeat here. It will mean no great pains to my Honourable friends to verify my statement if they will condescend to launch for themselves an investigation in any village close by them. The apparent antagonism of the people towards this product will also be evident from the fact that no small retail shops have yet been started for its sale anywhere in the country. The fact is that the consuming public never buy it as a vegetable product or as a substitute for ghee, but its use is confined mostly as an adulterant of ghee and butter. I am aware that some of my critics will suggest that when adulteration of ghee with oils and fats is allowed, why should not its adulteration be allowed with this chemical product. I sincerely regret that there is no such

[Mr. Surput Sing.]

law in the country strictly penalising such adulteration and enforcing the sale of each article as such as is provided for in the British Public Health Acts. But to my critics my reply will be : " Because there is some slight degree of adulteration of ghee with edible oils and fats, that is no reason why this vegetable product should be permitted to conceal its identity and enter into our daily food in the same way as ghee, when we have been fully apprised of its dangerous demerits." Let there be a law to check even that slight degree of adulteration for which I am particularly anxious.

Again, Sir, if I were assured that the stuff was principally consumed in the country for the manufacture of soaps and candles for which it is evidently imported, I would have been the last person to raise my voice against it. But fully convinced as I am that by far the largest quantity of it is used for adulterating our most valuable and indispensable foodstuff under the deceiving misnomers of vegetable product, vegetable ghee, vegetable oil, artificial ghee, *Vanaspati* and the like, I submit that I can have no soft corner in my heart for a deleterious article like this.

Then, Sir, we have already had an earnest of how much His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, is interested in the promotion of Agriculture in all its phases. Need I tell the House that cattle welfare and dairy-farming inside the country are two of the chief requisites in the programme for the improvement of agriculture. But when tinned butter from Denmark, condensed milk from Switzerland and vegetable product from the Netherlands and Belgium and other similar tinned preparations for our consumption from other parts of Europe and America are without let or hindrance allowed to come into India, I make bold to say that the good intentions of His Excellency the Viceroy will, to our great misfortune, never materialise. If it is the intention of the Government that the agricultural conditions of the country are to be sincerely improved, then it is incumbent upon them to see that the cattle-wealth of the country is improved and that local dairy-farming is also encouraged. Only the appointment of a Royal Commission on Agriculture and the writing of voluminous reports and recommendations will not be able to further the intentions of either the rulers or the ruled, unless and until specific action for the amelioration of present evils and the improvement of present conditions are boldly taken on behalf of the country and its people. It is therefore necessary that, as an earnest of the good intentions of the Government, indigenous products and manufactures must be so stimulated as to replace the foreign produce. But how can we have that condition of things unless we prohibit at least the wholesale import of such things as are to our knowledge and information doing immense mischief to the people at large ?

At a time when a new epoch is about to dawn in India, when the Government is creating new appointments of Directors of Physical Education and of Medical Inspectors for schools and colleges all over the country for the steady development of the manhood of India, when the Government has not been stingy in opening the doors of military education to Indian youths, I would appeal to the Honourable Members with all earnestness to say if this indifference in a vital question like this coincides with their avowed policy of administration outlined above. Does it in fact behove them to stand aloof, especially in a case in which no less a person than His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief puts his foot down on it as a deleterious article, sapping the vitality of the Army, and in which the Indian Princes have in their wisdom

taken drastic measures to stamp it out from their States? In these circumstances I have not the slightest hesitation in pressing upon the House to accept my Resolution for total prohibition of the import of the article as *unfit for human consumption* in order to save our people and the country from an incalculable evil which is staring the people in the face and which will undermine their health and life at no distant time.

With these words, Sir, I beg to move my Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI (Punjab : Sikh): Sir, the amendment which stands in my name runs thus :

“ That at the end of the Resolution the following words be added, namely :

‘ or to make such rules as the mixture of it with indigenous *ghee* prepared from the milk of cows and buffaloes for purposes of sale may become penal ’ ”.

Sir, it has been suggested to me that I should word it differently and with your permission and the permission of the House, I should like to word my amendment in the following language :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to make rules to provide that the mixing of this commodity which passes by the name of ‘ vegetable product ’ with indigenous *ghee* prepared from the milk of cows and buffaloes for the purposes of sale may become penal ”.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I presume that the words the Honourable Member has now read out are intended to be in substitution of the original Resolution and not an addition to it?

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI: Yes, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think it would be convenient for the Council if the Honourable Member moved his amendment in the form he has now suggested.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI: Sir, as I have been permitted to move my amendment in the language which I have just read out, I do not wish to take up much of the time of the House in dilating upon the chemical differences between the vegetable product and indigenous *ghee* prepared in India. As my friend the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution has given many valuable quotations from medical men stating the difference in vitamins and strengthening power contained in the vegetable product and indigenous *ghee*, I will not take up the time of the Council on this subject. What strikes me is this, Sir, that the people are being cheated very largely by the mixture of this product with indigenous *ghee*. This does not tell only on the pockets of the purchaser but tells most adversely on the constitution of the people. Indians as a rule are not meat eaters and they get the necessary vitamins from milk products and milk fats. *Ghee* is one of the products essential for an Indian to maintain his health. The health and strength of the individual is an essential element in the strength of the community, and therefore the physical health of the individual must be maintained by all reasonable means. I do not think the prohibition of the import of these vegetable products is possible in present circumstances. First of all, it would interfere a great deal with the free trade policy of the Government, and, secondly, this product is very widely advertised now as better than butter or *ghee* for the use of hotels, restaurants and public places like that,

[Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh Uberoi.]

and I dare say there are sections of the residents in India who would not object to food prepared in this material instead of in ghee. But it is a very vital matter for an Indian who is accustomed to take ghee, to have ghee, or, in the case of those who cannot afford ghee with their meals, to have clear oil which perhaps contains more vitamins than this product. The fact that this Resolution has been moved on the floor of this House many times before is a sure proof of the importance of the subject. I have before me the record of the proceedings when this subject was discussed on the floor of this House last year on this very date. The Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das—I will just read it to refresh the memory of my Honourable friends—ran thus :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that—

- (a) the import into India of solidified vegetable oil, *Vanaspati*, and other similar products be entirely prohibited unless they are given such permanent harmless colouring as may readily distinguish them from and render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural ghee ;
- (b) a prohibitive excise duty be levied on solidified vegetable oil, *Vanaspati*, and other similar cheap products manufactured in India, unless they are also permanently coloured in the same way as is suggested in clause (a) for imported articles, in order to render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural pure ghee ”.

That Resolution, which was similar to the one now being discussed, was adopted last year on this very date. I find in the speech of the Honourable spokesman on behalf of the Government that he did not oppose the Resolution and he informed the House that the matter had been considered by the Government of India and the Local Governments had been asked to give their opinion on the subject. A year has passed since then. I am not aware, Sir, of the action which the Government of India have been pleased to take on this subject. Neither am I aware of the opinions the Local Governments have submitted to the Government of India. The Honourable the Mover of this Resolution, I venture to say, has surely got this information whether the Government of India have taken any action on this. But I am aware, that so far, no rules have been made nor have any amendments in the penal laws of the country been made to make this adulteration a penal act. That is the reason for bringing this Resolution again to the notice of His Excellency the Governor General in Council. I have just tried to submit my views that it is harmful to Indians both economically and physically, because they have to pay the price of pure ghee for a commodity which is much cheaper than ghee and which contains much less food value than ghee. Physically, of course, if one takes any stuff but ghee with the impression that he is taking ghee for the nourishment of his physical health and body, he is deceived, because he is not taking actual ghee which contains much more nutrition than this vegetable product. These are the few reasons, Sir, which I can submit to the consideration of the House in support of my amendment. I am not sure and positive in my mind whether the entire importation of this stuff can be stopped in this country. It is quite possible that the country itself may start producing such stuff as an indigenous industry to afford a substitute for ghee for the poor people who cannot afford to purchase genuine ghee. My submission is that people should have a fair article for the fair price they pay for it and the open cheating and deceit which are practised by the adulteration or mixing of this stuff with the indigenous ghee should be put a stop to. It strikes me that one way of doing it is this, to make this adulteration penal ; a man who is found and proved to have mixed this stuff with indigenous ghee should be tried in open

court and punished for it. I was doubtful in my mind before coming to this House whether such a law does exist in the present penal laws, but I have found, Sir, that the present Penal Code has got some sections about offences affecting the public health, safety, convenience, decency, morals. I have read section 272 of the Indian Penal Code which of course deals with the adulteration of any article of food, but it constitutes an offence if that article of food becomes noxious. As I read that section—

“Whoever adulterates any article of food or drink, so as to make such article noxious as food or drink, intending to sell such article as food or drink or knowing it to be likely that the same will be sold as food or drink, shall be punished with imprisonment . . . . .”

I doubt whether the mixing of this vegetable product with indigenous ghee makes it noxious.

I think I have had the opportunity of tasting some of the things fried in vegetable product in some hotels and refreshment rooms. I have never found them noxious at all. I have questioned them about the ingredient in which the things were fried and the answer was that they were fried in vegetable ghee. So I do not think that the present law of the land is sufficient to make this particular offence of adulteration penal. I therefore request the favourable consideration of this amendment of mine by the House, so that it may be passed and sent on to His Excellency the Governor General in Council for taking necessary action.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Amendment moved :

“That for the original Resolution the following be substituted, namely :

‘This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to make rules to provide that the mixing of this commodity which passes by the name of ‘vegetable product’ with indigenous ghee prepared from the milk of cows and buffaloes for the purposes of sale may become penal’.”

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadian) : I rise to oppose the amended form of the Resolution. As far as the Punjab is concerned, Sir, we find that although every effort has been made to stop the adulteration of pure ghee with ordinary vegetable compound, in practice it has been found impossible to do so, because now the adulteration takes place in villages and at the door of the manufacturer of pure ghee, and until we strike at the root of the evil, no success will be achieved. I therefore oppose this amendment.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member has confined himself to the amendment, but I see no reason why the debate should not proceed on general lines, that is to say, on the original Resolution and the amendment which has been moved. It is quite easy for Honourable Members, I think, in the course of one speech to deal with both subjects and to express their preference for the original Resolution or for the words that the Honourable Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh Uberoi would substitute for it. The Honourable Member may continue his speech.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : I should like to reserve my remarks and observations on the original Resolution till I hear the Commerce Secretary and then to deal with it. I hope the President will allow me to do so, because there may be matters on which I might like to throw some light when the Honourable Mr. Woodhead has spoken.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** In view of the fact that I did not explain to the Council that I intended the debate to take a general turn when I had put the amendment, I am afraid I must allow the Honourable Member further opportunity to speak on the original motion. But that ruling applies to him alone. I see no reason to allow any other Honourable Member two opportunities to speak on the matter before the House.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS :** Thank you, Sir.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. J. A. WOODHEAD (Commerce Secretary) :** Sir, vegetable product or, as it is often called, *Vanaspati* has on more than one occasion been a subject for discussion in this House and its use is obviously a matter which excites a good deal of public interest in many parts of India. As on previous occasions, the Honourable the Mover has urged that vegetable product is injurious to health and that on this ground—this is one of the grounds on which he seeks to support his Resolution—its import should be prohibited. This question whether the use of vegetable ghee is injurious to health was raised during the debate on the Resolution moved in this House in February, 1928 by my friend the Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das. At that time Sir Geoffrey Corbett promised on behalf of the Government of India that when consulting Local Governments as regards a certain proposal made by the Government of the Punjab in connection with *Vanaspati* they would ask the Local Governments for their opinions as to whether this product is injurious to health. That promise, Sir, has been fulfilled and opinions have been received. All the Local Governments consulted, with the exception of the Central Provinces, are of opinion that, although vegetable product is deficient in certain vitamins, it is not injurious to health. The Government of the Central Provinces has given a rather guarded reply. This is what they say :

“To what extent this practice (that is, the adulteration of ghee with the vegetable product) is harmful to public health is a matter which cannot, in the opinion of the Local Government, be determined precisely without further systematic inquiry and experiment : but the Local Government is inclined to agree that the substitution of an article deficient in vitamins must necessarily be harmful to that section of the population whose diet is so meagre that the deficiency is not made up otherwise”.

In addition to the opinions of Local Governments we have received numerous opinions, opinions from commercial associations, local authorities, medical officers of health and public analysts. As perhaps was to be expected, these opinions are not absolutely unanimous but I think I shall be correct in saying that, with very few exceptions, the view taken is that vegetable product is not injurious to health, although admittedly deficient in certain vitamins. Expert opinion—and by expert opinion I mean the opinion of medical officers of health—is very definitely of the view that vegetable product is a wholesome and pure article possessed of a definite food value and not directly injurious to health, though some opinions have expressed the view that, as vegetable product is deficient in vitamins, its use may indirectly affect the health of persons who do not obtain those necessary vitamins through other sources—that is, by means of fresh vegetables, milk or other foods containing these essential vitamins. These opinions disclose one point of considerable interest, and that is this—a considerable amount of expert opinion is doubtful whether ghee when used for culinary purposes is a source from which those essential vitamins can be obtained. It is pointed out that high temperatures break up and destroy these vitamins. Now, in the manufacture of ghee, the



milk from which it is made is subjected to high temperatures, and further when ghee is used as a cooking oil, it is again subjected to a high temperature and a considerable body of opinion tends to the view that, owing to the time during which, and the number of times ghee is subjected to a high temperature before it is consumed, it contains very few vitamins when it is actually consumed. The Honourable the Mover referred to an experiment made by Captain Thomas, and he said that the experiment was of this nature—a kitten was fed on ghee and a kitten was fed on vegetable product, and the kitten which was fed on ghee gained in weight whereas that fed on vegetable product lost in weight. I would remind the House that that was not the experiment. The experiment was, or rather the comparison was between a kitten fed on milk, not on ghee, with a kitten fed on skimmed milk and *Vanaspati* ghee. Now, Sir, it has been suggested by expert opinion in the replies that we have received that Captain Thomas's experiment is not conclusive because when you wish to compare the relative merits of ghee and vegetable ghee, you should not compare the relative merits of fresh milk and a combination of skimmed milk and vegetable ghee. I am not an expert myself but I think that there is something in this point of view.

To sum up the general consensus of opinion received is to the effect that vegetable product is a pure and wholesome article and that its use is not injurious to health. This, Sir, is the view of the Government of India and I trust that the House will adopt the opinion that on the ground of public health there is no justification for any interference with its import into British India.

The second ground on which the Honourable Mover has supported his Resolution—and I think this is his main ground—is that it is desirable to prevent adulteration. He maintains that vegetable product is being sold on a large scale mixed or unmixed with ghee as natural ghee, and what he desires to ensure is that the purchaser of pure ghee obtains the pure article. So far I am in entire agreement with the Honourable Member. I admit that vegetable product is used as an adulterant and I agree that it is desirable that everybody who wishes to buy pure ghee should be able to be assured that what he is buying is pure ghee. But where I join issue with the Honourable Mover is in the remedy which he proposes, that is, the prohibition of the import of ghee. As the House, I think is aware, the adulteration of ghee is no new thing. That point has been dealt with in previous debates. So long ago as 1885, that is, 40 years, before vegetable product was heard of in India, vegetable product made its appearance in India in 1923 (not as the Honourable Mover said, immediately after the Armistice) Sir George Watt, a name well known in Bombay, spoke of the adulteration of ghee as follows :

“ The chief articles used in the adulteration of ghee are vegetable oil, such as cocoanut, groundnut, cotton, safflower, poppy, sesamum, niger and kokam. These are all harmless enough, though cheaper than ghee ; but injurious oils are also used, especially mahua, salvadora and castor oil. Other animal fats, especially mutton, are largely utilised. . . . . One of the most valuable papers on the adulteration of ghee is that written by Mr. Shroff, who states that the Bombay ghee trade is in the hands of a dozen merchants and that adulteration is effected not by dairymen but by the traders. The fats used are often most offensive and deleterious substances, at times even obtained from the carcasses of deceased animals ”.

Again, Sir, in the early nineties of the last century, the adulteration of ghee was so extensive in the City of Bombay that a special Act called the Bombay Municipal Ghee Act was introduced. Again, in 1914, nine years before vegetable product was introduced into British India, Mr Sampson,

[Mr. J. A. Woodhead.]

Deputy Director of Agriculture, Madras, made inquiries in Madras and reported as follows :

"The petty dealer, it is usually stated, makes six tins out of four of the ghee which he collects. This is done by safflower oil or animal fat which latter is obtained from the *Malas* who melt it down from the carcasses of dead animals".

Sir, that was the position long before vegetable product was introduced into India and became available for use as an adulterant for ghee.

The Honourable Mover's remedy is to prohibit the import of vegetable product. Now, I maintain that the prohibition of the import of vegetable product will not attain the object which the Honourable Mover has in view. The adulteration of ghee did not begin with the introduction of vegetable product and will not disappear with the prohibition of the import of that product. If vegetable product is not available some other adulterating material will be used, and, Sir, I think we may be certain that the material used, instead of being a wholesome, pure and clean article made from vegetable oils may be one of those deleterious and objectionable articles which were so freely used before the import of vegetable product began or if the old adulterants are not used, we may have a new adulterant which will perhaps be equally harmful. In this connection it may be of interest to Honourable Members to know that we have received reports from Burma that a refined mineral paraffin oil known as white oil has recently been imported into Burma in considerable quantities and used for the adulteration of ghee and edible oils. That, Sir, is my first objection to the proposal that the import of vegetable product should be prohibited. Such a measure will not have the practical effect the Honourable Member desires, namely, the prevention of the adulteration of ghee. The adulteration of ghee will not cease. It will continue, and instead of the chief adulterant used being a harmless and wholesome product like vegetable ghee, deleterious and objectionable articles of the nature I have mentioned and which were in such common use before vegetable product was known will again be used.

Again, Sir, as vegetable product is made from the oils extracted from oil-seeds grown in and exported from India, it is possible that the effect of the prohibition of the import of vegetable ghee would be the transfer of the manufacture of that article to India. The Resolution does not recommend that the manufacture of vegetable product in India should be prohibited. Hence, I hope the Honourable Member will admit that there is a danger that the Resolution as worded will not effect the object he has in view.

Lastly, Sir, pure ghee is very expensive and is beyond the means of the poorer classes. In many parts of India the use of ghee for cooking purposes is confined to the well-to-do classes and in connection with the Honourable Mover's remarks on this particular point I should like to inform the House that the Government of Bihar and Orissa have stated in their reply to the reference made by the Government of India that 90 per cent. of the population of Bihar and Orissa, the province to which the Honourable Mover has the honour to belong, use vegetable oil and not ghee. They state that the use of ghee for culinary purposes is limited to about 10 per cent. of the population. The position is, I believe, somewhat the same in other parts of India. From my own personal experience I know that in Bengal vegetable oils are largely used for cooking purposes, and I believe this is the case in Madras and certainly in Burma except so far as the Indian population living in Rangoon is concerned.

Now, I take it, Sir, that the Honourable the Mover does not desire to prevent this very large portion of the population, which does not use ghee for domestic purposes and which did not use ghee prior to the introduction of vegetable product, from using, if they so wish, an admittedly wholesome and pure article as a cooking oil, and yet that would be the undoubted result of the prohibition of the import of vegetable product into India.

As I have said, Sir, the prevention of the adulteration of ghee by vegetable product or any other article is an object which every person will support, but I hope I have said sufficient to convince the House that the prohibition of the import of vegetable product is not the means by which the object which we all desire can and should be attained.

As the House is aware—and this is probably why the Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das wishes to reserve his speech for a later moment<sup>b</sup> in the debate—the Government of India have had this question of the adulteration of ghee by vegetable product under consideration since the end of 1927. Towards the end of that year the Punjab Government addressed the Government of India on this subject. They dealt with it entirely from the point of view of fraud on the consumer and concluded by saying that it appeared to them that the only effective method of dealing with this wholesale cheating would be to prohibit the import of such products into, or manufacture within, British India unless they are coloured in such a way that they could not be mixed with or passed off as natural ghee without immediate detection. A copy of the Punjab Government's letter was sent to all Local Governments and Administrations with the request that the Government of India be furnished with the views of Local Governments and commercial and other interests concerned. These opinions have been received and I think I may straight-away say that the majority are against any attempt being made to insist on a distinctive colouring being given to vegetable product imported or manufactured in this country. The Government of India have given their careful consideration to the matter in the light of the opinions received and, if I may say so, the opinions expressed in this House during the course of previous debates in this House and they have come to the conclusion that there is not sufficient reason for insisting on a special colouring for vegetable product chiefly because they are convinced that a measure of this nature would be of very doubtful utility. As I have tried to explain, vegetable product is not the only article with which ghee can be or is adulterated and any measure which seeks to prevent by the adoption of a distinctive colour or otherwise the use of vegetable product as an adulterant will only result in the encouragement of the use of other and possibly worse local adulterants. Nothing will be gained, and certainly the object which the Honourable the Mover has in view will not be attained, by the substitution of one adulterant by another adulterant. On the contrary, in so far as there is the danger that the other adulterants will be of a deleterious or objectionable character, the position will, if anything, be worse instead of better. Further, not only would the colouring of vegetable product be ineffective in preventing the adulteration of ghee, but it would in all probability have the result of depriving a large portion of the population which does not use ghee as a cooking oil of the use of a product which is admittedly wholesome and has a definite food value. This is a point to which I would draw the particular attention of the House because, Sir, it seems to me essential that any measure which may be taken to prevent vegetable product from being sold as ghee or used as an adulterant of ghee must not have the effect of restricting legitimate trade in this article and its use by persons who are not accustomed to use ghee as a cooking oil.

[Mr. J. A. Woodhead.]

Again, if any measure of this nature is to be effective, the colouring material used must be of such a nature that it cannot be readily neutralised or bleached. It is uncertain, however, how far this would be possible, and several of the opinions received have stressed this practical difficulty and have objected to the proposal on this ground.

Finally, Sir, there is the objection, which is now very widely held, to the use of any artificial colouring matter in food. The general tendency nowadays is to prohibit the use of all artificial colouring matters and it would, I think, be a step in the wrong direction to attempt to solve this problem of the adulteration of ghee by insisting on a particular colour being given to the artificial product.

I should now like to draw the attention of Honourable Members to what the Royal Commission on Agriculture said upon this particular question. Their view was as follows :

“ Many complaints of the adulteration of ghee have been made to us and our attention has also been directed to the increasing sale of substitutes known as ‘ vegetable ghee.’ No exception can be taken to the sale of substitutes for ghee if these are properly described and are sold under names which do not lead the public to suppose that they are ghee ; for in all countries such substances are recognised as cheap and wholesome food ; but there are grave objections to misdescription. The position in India is now very similar to that which arose in the British butter market when margarine was first introduced. To protect the producer of butter from unfair competition, and the consumer from imposition, the sale, under the name of butter, of any article composed partly of fat from other sources than milk was prohibited ; and to prevent sellers of margarine from using names which might lead customers to think that they were being served with some kind of butter, the law required that the names under which manufacturers proposed to sell their margarine must be approved by the Department of Agriculture. We are of opinion that similar action is required to protect producers of ghee and we believe that unless the municipal authorities possess and exercise powers of control, the difficulty already experienced by persons desirous of purchasing pure ghee will increase for the certain effect of unrestricted adulteration and substitution would be to drive the genuine product out of the market ”.

That, Sir, is the view of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. In the letter in which the Government of India sought the opinion of Local Governments as regards the proposal made by the Punjab Government that a certain colouring should be given to vegetable products, they also asked the views of the Local Governments as regards any alternative proposal which might commend itself as a means of ensuring that the purchaser of pure ghee really obtained pure ghee. The Local Governments and the great majority of authorities recommend that the solution should be found in the tightening of control over sales of ghee and vegetable product on the lines of the legislation adopted in England to prevent the adulteration of butter, that is, on the lines suggested by the Royal Commission. This also, Sir, is the view of the Government of India. After careful consideration they have come to the conclusion that the regulation of the sale of ghee so as to ensure that what is sold as ghee is pure ghee must be effected through provincial Statutes. The Punjab Government have already taken action in this direction and have included in the Punjab Pure Food Act of 1929 provisions on the lines of those contained in the British Food and Drugs Adulteration Act of 1928. This Act deals with the sale of margarine. The Punjab Government Act *inter alia* requires that the word “ ghee ” shall not be used either alone or in combination with other words to describe artificial substitutes, and defines “ Banaspatine ”—that is a coined word—as an article of food whether mixed with ghee or not which resembles ghee but is derived from vegetable fat. It prohibits the sale of any food under

the name of ghee, or any equivalent term, unless such food is derived solely from milk, and prohibits the sale of vegetable product in the same premises as ghee. It also requires that every package whether open or closed containing vegetable product shall at the time of sale, or even during carriage by public conveyance be clearly marked with the word "Banaspatine". It also provides that no place shall be used for the manufacture or wholesale sale of vegetable product or as a ghee factory unless licensed, and requires every manufacturer and wholesale dealer in "Banaspatine" to maintain a register. As I have said, Sir, the Government of India are of opinion that it is on these lines that the problem should be attacked, and the Government of India now propose to address Local Governments and request them to consider the advisability of undertaking legislation on the lines of the Punjab Act. And further, Sir, the Government of India are prepared to consider the question of central legislation prescribing conditions as to the nomenclature of this vegetable product at the time of import should a measure of this nature appear to be necessary to render provincial legislation effective. That, Sir, concludes my remarks on the main Resolution as moved by the Honourable Mr. Surput Sing.

As regards the amendment, Sir, I am in somewhat of a difficulty. The amendment so far as I understand it recommends that the Governor General in Council shall frame rules to make the adulteration of ghee a penal offence. Now I gather that what the Honourable Member desires is that the mere adulteration of ghee shall be made an offence under the Indian Penal Code. I am not certain if I have interpreted the Honourable Member's proposal correctly, but that is how I understand it. As he himself has pointed out, the Indian Penal Code only punishes adulteration which makes an article of food noxious, and I think, Sir, it would be difficult to treat adulteration, which did not make the article of food noxious, as a criminal offence. But the several Pure Food Acts throughout India do provide that a person who is guilty of adulteration is liable to a fine, while the Punjab Act goes further and if a person is found guilty of the offence for the third time—I think it is the third time—he is liable at the discretion of the magistrate to a term of imprisonment. My second difficulty is that the adulteration of food is a provincial transferred subject. The prevention of the adulteration of food is therefore presumably the concern of the Local Governments and legislation the object of which is to prevent such adulteration should be undertaken in the provincial Legislatures. A Resolution worded according to the amendment would therefore be largely infructuous because all that I could promise to do would be to assure the House that we would forward a copy of the debate to Local Governments. But, Sir, I have already explained that we do intend to address the Local Governments in this matter and to ask them to consider the advisability of legislating for the prevention of the adulteration of ghee on the lines of the Punjab and the English Acts. Therefore, Sir, although in principle I think the Honourable the Mover of the amendment and myself are not very far apart, it would, owing to the constitutional position, be impossible for me to accept the amendment.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I do not wish to enter at any length into this debate, but in view of the remarks by the Honourable Mr. Woodhead where he undertakes to forward copies of the debate on the Honourable Sardar Sahib's amendment, might I suggest to the Honourable Sardar Sahib that his amendment might carry more weight—and perhaps it might be more clear—if after the words "purposes of sale" he introduced the words "as ghee". The amendment

[Sir Arthur Froom.]

as it stands does not carry very much weight with me with these two words left out. Presumably it is not suggested that it should be made a penal offence to mix ghee, say, with vegetable product and sell it as vegetable product. The whole point, I take it, is that ghee should not be adulterated with vegetable product and sold as ghee.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI : I have no objection to accepting the addition of the two words " as ghee ".

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Has the Honourable Member moved that amendment ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROM : I suggest to the Honourable the Mover to alter his amendment to include these words. I do not wish to move an amendment myself.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The amendment has already been altered once and I am not disposed to allow him to amend it again himself.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : It has pained me, Sir, to find that the attitude of the Government of India is bitterly opposed to the spirit of the Resolution. Last year when this Honourable House carried my Resolution, I was hoping that the recommendation of the Punjab Government and the recommendation embodied in my Resolution would be favourably considered by the Government of India and accepted by them in order to keep up the manhood of the recruiting centre of the Army—and I mean the Punjab in particular. The Honourable Mr. Woodhead during the course of his observations has said many things with which I do not agree and with which, I think, many of my colleagues will also differ. The Honourable the Secretary for the Commerce Department has said that the Government of India will leave the matter of adulteration of food to Provincial Governments as it is a transferred subject. It is all right, Sir, to say so, but when we translate this policy of the Government of India into practice we find that the Government of India do not observe it in full. Some time back a large number of municipalities in the Punjab imposed a prohibitive octroi or terminal tax on this so-called artificial ghee or vegetable product. Under the rules the matter went up to the Government of the Punjab for approval and, if I rightly understand, the matter was referred to the Government of India and at their instance such increase in octroi or terminal taxes was disallowed. In case my allegation is correct, I hope, Sir, that the Honourable the Commerce Secretary will explain when that was and is the established policy of the Government of India why a departure was made in this manner. My Honourable friend, the Commerce Secretary, gives the instance of Bihar and Burma and of Madras where oil is the staple food of the population and where the demand by the consumer of vegetable product may be considerable. What I expected from the Government of India was that when they were considering the question of adulteration of ghee and they wanted to save the public from being cheated by the merchants in general who were selling *Vanaspati* mixed in a large proportion with pure ghee, as pure ghee, the opinions of those provinces whose staple food was ghee would have been given preference to others who generally use oils. Burma, which I had the pleasure of visiting some time back, does not consume large quantities either of milk or ghee.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI (Burma : General) :  
Question ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : What I say is based on my own experience in that province, so no question arises.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI : A stay of three days is not sufficient experience.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : I am so sorry that my friend Mr. Chari says that a stay of three days does not give proper experience. But I might inform him that it was my last visit which lasted a few days, and not my previous visit. My previous visit to Burma extended to a few weeks and not to three days. However, I am not talking about what the migrant population there consumes, but about the native population of Burma. When I was travelling there in the interior I found it difficult to procure milk even. I think my friend, although he practises in Rangoon, has not perhaps had many occasions to go into the interior of Burma. However, I shall not dwell at length on that. But I will certainly say that the reply to the Government of India of those provinces whose staple food is not ghee ought not to have carried much weight. The imports of vegetable products for the nine months ending December 1928 were 362,553 cwts. the cost of which was Rs. 1,40,51,773. I am glad to find, Sir, that in 1929 for the period ending December 1929 the import of this vegetable product fell to 271,620 cwts., with the price in rupees of 1,10,84,580. This, Sir, I think, is due mostly to the action taken by the enlightened Ruling Princes of many Indian States. I think now public opinion is asserting itself and the action taken by the various local bodies, and by the various Indian States is bearing fruit. The Gwalior State, for instance, is one of the biggest producers of ghee, as far as the Indian States are concerned, and the imposition of a prohibitive duty there has also played a great part in diminishing the import of vegetable product. I am glad that in the Punjab, the Punjab Pure Food Bill has been passed, though on many of its clauses there was heated controversy. But, Sir, I do not think this Act will achieve the object which I or the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution has in view. Although the Act embodies various sorts of prohibitive, penal and other clauses, it will not bear much fruit because now the adulteration is not carried out in municipal areas or in *mundis*, but it is carried out mostly at the producing centres, and unless and until the Punjab Pure Food Act applies practically to the whole of the Punjab, the object in view will not be achieved. I oppose the amendment of my Honourable friend, Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh Uberoi, on principle, although I understood that he meant that the adulteration of pure ghee with any other substance, whether it is vegetable compound or any other obnoxious matter, ought to be as punishable by enlarging a penal clause in the Indian Penal Code to make it an All-India affair. But even if this suggestion be adopted by the Government of India, it will generally lead to punishing the middleman more than punishing the actual producer. Therefore I think the best remedy lies in stopping the absolute import into this country of this vegetable compound. In my Resolution last year, I was under the impression that vegetable compounds such as are consumed by the poor people. I have tried to get information from all the consuming centres of the Punjab and my information is that this vegetable compound does not sell as vegetable compound as far as the consumers are concerned. Nobody uses this vegetable compound purely. It is solely used for adulteration with pure ghee or in the process of churning

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

milk. The producers, while churning their milk, add considerable quantities of vegetable compound in order to cheapen the price and retain the flavour of pure ghee. In case the Punjab Act is strictly enforced in all areas wholesale prosecutions will have to be launched, which will add a great deal to the unrest in the rural areas because it is the rural areas which mostly produce adulterated ghee. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, when replying to my question as to why vegetable compounds were not being used for the supply to the Army, said that owing to the want of nutritious vitamins its purchase could not be allowed. The Government of India did only allow the use of pure ghee in the Army. I may warn the Government, Sir, that, in case the real effective remedy of stopping the adulteration of ghee with a vegetable compound is not adopted, a day will soon come when Government will not be able to find suitable recruits for the army as the physique of the people would have greatly suffered. As regards the question whether vitamin A or B or C is in great part in any oil or in the vegetable compound, that is after all a matter of opinion. During the last few years opinions have vastly differed. Our friend the Honourable Mr. Woodhead wanted to correct the Honourable Mr. Surput Sing that Captain Thomas did not try pure ghee on the kittens but tried milk. He has also cleared himself by saying that to the other kitten skimmed milk was given. Skimmed milk is void of butter, which shows that it was the want of ghee (clarified butter) which weakened those kittens. But all the same, Sir, kittens do not take ghee and it was impossible to give them ghee. Sir, for ages we have found that in the Punjab and other provinces where ghee is the staple food the physique of the people has always been good.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** The Honourable Member has more than exhausted his time.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS :** I will bring the matter to a close, Sir, by simply making one more observation and that is as regards the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in this respect.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** I am afraid I cannot allow the Honourable Member to start a new argument at this stage.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS :** Then, Sir, with these observations, I strongly support the main Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYAN PRASAD ASTHANA (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) :** Sir, when the Resolution was moved I thought that I would be able to give it my whole-hearted support but, having heard the Honourable Member who was in charge of the Resolution on behalf of the Government, I think that the attitude adopted by the Government is quite reasonable. On purely economic grounds I would be opposed to the import of any such material as would compete with the indigenous products of India, but inasmuch as that would be rather an international affair and there might be certain practical difficulties, I do not think it would be fair or practicable for the Government to undertake legislation in that respect. However, the Government could do one thing and I think that will meet the object which the Honourable Mover and his supporters have in view, namely, either to change the name of the article so imported from "Vegetable ghee" to some other



nomenclature, so that people might not be deceived, or to put upon it a very heavy import duty so that it may sell in this country at the same value as ghee. I know that the objection to this course would be that the poor people would not be able to purchase it and to consume it. But, for such a long time, the Indian poor people have been supporting themselves and have been living in India upon ghee or adulterated ghee. It may be that they have perhaps been living on pure oil. Therefore, the Government of India can either change its name as has already been suggested by the Honourable Mr. Woodhead, or can impose a very heavy import duty on it so that people might not be cheated by sellers and a cheap article might not be sold for the same value as pure ghee. As to the amendment which has been moved, I find that there are constitutional difficulties which have been pointed out. The Government of India cannot make rules for this purpose. Such legislation ought to be undertaken in the provincial Councils. I am therefore in this position that I cannot give my wholehearted support either to the Resolution or to the amendment.

(The Honourable Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh Uberoi then rose in his place.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Does the Honourable Member wish to speak ?

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI : Yes, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : He has no right to speak again.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING : Sir, the Honourable Member in charge of the Commerce Department has tried his best to convince the House that it is not possible for the Government to adopt this measure, saying that even if the import of this vegetable product is entirely stopped, Indians will be free to adulterate ghee with some other oils. He also said that vegetable product being a wholesome article of food, he did not see any harm in its consumption by the public. But at the same time it is said that it is devoid of vitamins. I cannot understand how a food is wholesome being at the same time devoid of vitamins. The experiment conducted by Captain Thomas led him to his conclusions. He fed the kittens on skimmed milk and pure milk. Where skimmed milk was given mixed with vegetable product, that brought on degeneration. He tried the same experiment on the other healthy kitten and he found that the animal degenerated and did not improve. And still the Honourable Member is of opinion that the Captain's experiment was not correct. There is no other means for effecting a complete stoppage of the adulteration of ghee unless the import is stopped and a Food Adulteration Act is passed here on the lines of the Act in Great Britain. We have no such law in the provinces which can check adulteration, and that is the reason why I have brought this Resolution in this form. Again, Sir, the Honourable the Commerce Secretary has said that the Resolution which was brought by my Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das last year and which was carried by this House is also not possible of adoption. I agree there to some extent that even if that proposition was given effect to, there would be some artificial chemical compound which could be manufactured in Germany or any other place and mixed with the coloured article which might remove the colouring matter completely, and that was the reason why I brought this Resolution. Unless a complete stoppage is put to its import, it is not

[Mr. Surput Sing.]

possible to check adulteration. As regards adulteration with other oils, there is some degree of smell which can be easily detected in the adulterated article and that saves many of the scrutinising public from the adulterated ghee. The Honourable the Commerce Secretary has also said that in Bihar and Orissa ghee is not used by 90 per cent. of the population as a cooking medium. I agree that in India, amongst the poor, ghee is not used as a cooking medium, but ghee is consumed with their daily food as butter is used by Europeans on their bread, and it is used in many other forms also.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Except in the Punjab.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING : The Honourable the Commerce Secretary also says that if butter is brought to a high temperature it becomes ghee and the vitamins are lost. I agree that as a cooking medium it may lose some vitamins, but there is no authority to show that cooked ghee has no vitamins. Of course it may lose them to a certain extent under certain conditions only. Ghee has been chemically examined by many experts and they have found that it contains a good deal of vitamins. The Governments of the Central Provinces, the Punjab and some other Local Governments are of opinion that ghee is essential for those people who cannot afford to take other foodstuffs containing sufficient vitamins. The poor people as well as other Indians do not like to take vegetable product instead of ghee and so I have brought a Resolution like this. My Honourable friend will admit that unless it is completely stopped my object cannot be achieved, because it will continue to be used for adulteration by the middlemen. Big municipalities and corporations can possibly restrict its use, but what will happen in the case of villages in the interior ? It is there freely mixed and there is no check. If the Government intend to take effective measures to enact legislation on the lines of the English Act to put an entire stop to it, then the object will be attained. This stoppage is also necessary considered from the economic point of view. Every year.....

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member must not introduce new arguments at this stage.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING : In those circumstances, Sir, I move that this Resolution be adopted.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI : In view of the fact that the Honourable the Commerce Secretary has given expression to the opinion of the Government of India that they would move Local Governments to introduce Bills in their provincial Councils on the lines of the Pure Food Act of the Punjab and of England, I do not think I should press my amendment. My purpose is served, whether it be through provincial or Central legislation. So I would beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

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

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. A. WOODHEAD : Sir, I will not detain the House more than a minute or two. I think the debate has disclosed the difficulty of dealing with this subject. The attitude of Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das to-day discloses how great these difficulties are, because it is

just a year ago since he said in connection with his own Resolution in this House that he did not want that the sale of so-called *Vanaspati* or solidified oil should be stopped. He said, let those people who cannot afford to pay a high price for ghee and who willingly want to buy *Vanaspati* buy it. So a year ago, Sir, the Honourable Member was not in favour of total prohibition but favoured the minor method of colouring *Vanaspati* on import. On the other hand the Mover of the Resolution is opposed to colouring because he does not think that method will be effective and is in favour of the complete prohibition of import. I think, Sir, that this clearly discloses the difficulty in dealing with this matter and I hope the House will support me in the conclusion that the prohibition of import is not the method by which this adulteration, which we all desire to stop, should be dealt with. In conclusion I would again refer to a remark made by my Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das. He took objection to the amendment on the ground that it would punish the middleman who was not the real offender but the producer. Sir, I would ask the House to bear in mind that the prohibition of import will punish the producer and importer, who are not the offenders, and will let the offender go free.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The question is :

“ That the following Resolution be adopted, namely :

‘ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to put an entire stop to the import of that commodity which passes by the name of ‘ Vegetable Product ’.”

The Council divided :

AYES—7.

Ayyar, The Honourable Dewan Bahadur  
T. R. Ramachandra.  
Jaffer, The Honourable Sir Ebrahim  
Haroon.  
Khaparde, The Honourable Mr. G. S.  
Pakrashi, The Honourable Mr. Suresh  
Chandra.

Ram Saran Das, The Honourable Rai  
Bahadur Lala.  
Suhrawardy, The Honourable Mr.  
Mahmood.  
Surput Sing, The Honourable Mr.

NOES—20.

Abdul Majid Khan, The Honourable  
Khan Sahib Khwaja Muhammad.  
Akram Husain Bahadur, The Honour-  
able Prince A. M. M.  
Charanjit Singh, The Honourable Sardar.  
Chettiyar, The Honourable Dewan Baha-  
dur K. Sundaram.  
Coyajee, The Honourable Sir Jahangir  
Cooverjee.  
Dadabhoy, The Honourable Sir  
Maneckji.  
Graham, The Honourable Sir Lancelot.  
Habibullah, The Honourable Khan  
Bahdur Sir Muhammad.  
Haig, The Honourable Mr. H. G.

Harper, The Honourable Mr. K. B.  
Maqbul Husain, The Honourable Khan  
Bahadur Sheikh.  
McWatters, The Honourable Sir Arthur.  
Middleton, The Honourable Mr. A. P.  
Natesan, The Honourable Mr. G. A.  
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, The Honour-  
able Saiyed Mohamed.  
Shillidy, The Honourable Mr. J. A.  
Symons, The Honourable Sir John.  
Uberoi, The Honourable Sardar Bahadur  
Shivdev Singh.  
Wacha, The Honourable Sir Dinshaw.  
Woodhead, The Honourable Mr. J. A.

The motion was negatived.

The Council then adjourned till Half Past Four of the Clock on Friday' the 28th February, 1930.