

18th February 1928

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

(Official Report)

Volume I

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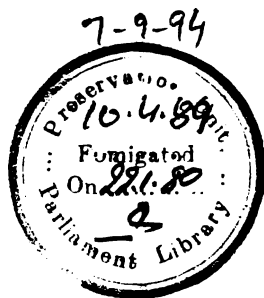
SECOND SESSION

OF THE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1928



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1928



# **Legislative Assembly.**

## ***President :***

**THE HONOURABLE MR V. J. PATEL.**

## ***Deputy President :***

**MAULVI MUHAMMAD YAKUB, M.L.A.**

## ***Panel of Chairmen :***

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**SIR DARCY LINDSAY, KT., C.B.E., M.L.A.**

**MR. K. C. NEOGY, M.L.A.**

**MR. M. R. JAYAKAR, M.L.A.**

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**MR. L. GRAHAM, C.I.E., I.C.S.**

## ***Assistants of the Secretary :***

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**MR. S. C. GUPTA, BAR.-AT-LAW.**

**MR. G. H. SPENCE, I.C.S.**

## ***Marshal :***

**CAPTAIN SURAJ SINGH, BAHADUR, I.O.M.**

## ***Committee on Public Petitions :***

**MAULVI MUHAMMAD YAKUB, M.L.A., Chairman.**

**SIR HARI SINGH GOUR, KT., M.L.A.**

**MR. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.**

**MR. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA, M.L.A.**

**DR. A. SUHRAWARDY, M.L.A.**

# CONTENTS.

---

	Pages.
<b>Wednesday, 1st February, 1928—</b>	
Members Sworn ... ..	1-2
Questions and Answers ... ..	2-50
Unstarred Questions and Answers ... ..	50-57
Motion for Adjournment—South African Liquor Bill—Leave granted ... ..	57-59
Death of Sir George Paddison ... ..	59-61
Governor General's Assent to Bills ... ..	61
Statement laid on the Table ... ..	62
The Gold Standard and Reserve Bank of India Bill—Introduction disallowed ... ..	62-77
The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ... ..	77
Statement of Business ... ..	77-78
Motion for Adjournment—South African Liquor Bill—Withdrawn ... ..	78-85
<b>Thursday, 2nd February, 1928—</b>	
Address by H. E. the Viceroy to the Members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly ... ..	87-92
<b>Monday, 6th February, 1928—</b>	
Member Sworn ... ..	93
Questions and Answers ... ..	93-110
Unstarred Questions and Answers ... ..	110-125
Message from H. E. the Governor General ... ..	125
Statement by the Leader of the House ... ..	125-127
The Gold Standard and Reserve Bank of India Bill—Discussion on the consideration of clauses— <i>contd.</i> ... ..	127-166
<b>Wednesday, 8th February, 1928—</b>	
Member Sworn ... ..	167
Question and Answers ... ..	167-170
Unstarred Questions and Answers ... ..	170-171
Bill passed by the Council of State laid on the Table ... ..	172
The Gold Standard and Reserve Bank of India Bill—Discussion on the consideration of clauses adjourned ... ..	172-213
<b>Thursday, 9th February, 1928—</b>	
The Indian Succession (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee ... ..	215-16
The Indian Merchandise Marks (Amendment) Bill—Motion to circulate adopted ... ..	216-18

CONTENTS—*contd.*

## PAGES.

**Thursday, 9th February, 1928—*contd.***

The Indian Law Reports Bill—Motion to circulate adopted ...	219-32
The Inland Steam Vessels (Amendment) Bill—Motion to circulate adopted ...	232-43
The Interest Bill—Motion to circulate adopted ...	243-50
The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill—Amendment of Section 141—Motion to refer to Select Committee withdrawn ...	250-54
The Children's Protection Bill—Motion to circulate adopted...	254-60
The Special Marriage (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ...	261
The Indian Limitation (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ...	261-62
The Reservation of the Coastal Traffic of India Bill—Introduced ...	262
The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ...	262
The Indian Divorce (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ...	262-63
The Interest Restrictions Bill—Introduced ...	263
The Hindu Inheritance (Removal of Disabilities) Bill—Introduced ...	263
The Caste Disabilities Removal Repealing Bill—Introduced...	263
The Abolition of Deferred Rebates Bill—Introduced ...	263
The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill—Immunity of Members of Trade Unions from the Consequences of the Conspiracy Law—Introduced ...	264

**Friday, 10th February, 1928—**

Member Sworn ...	265
Questions and Answers ...	265-71
Bills passed by the Council of State laid on the Table ...	271
Petitions relating to the Indian Law Reports Bill...	272
The Gold Standard and Reserve Bank of India Bill—Further consideration postponed <i>sine die</i> ...	272-87
Statement of Business ...	287
The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee ...	287-90
The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill—Motion to appoint Sir Walter Willson, M.L.A., to the Select Committee adopted ...	290

**Monday, 13th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers ...	291-97
Statement <i>re</i> the South African Liquor Bill ...	297-99
The Indian Income-tax (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee ...	298
The Indian Tariff (Amendment) Bill—Introduced ...	298-299
The Indian Mines (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee ...	299-307



CONTENTS—*contd.*

PAGES.

**Tuesday, 14th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	309-10
The Hindu Family Transactions Bill—Discussion on the Motion to consider as passed by the Council of State adjourned	...	...	...	...	311-43

**Wednesday, 15th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	345-46
Unstarred Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	346-64
Messages from His Excellency the Viceroy	...	...	...	...	364
The Indian Territorial Force (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee	...	...	...	...	365-73
The Auxiliary Force (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee	...	...	...	...	373-74

**Thursday, 16th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	375-76
Unstarred Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	376-80
Resolution <i>re</i> Establishment of a Supreme Court in India—Further consideration adjourned	...	...	...	...	381-82
Resolution <i>re</i> the Statutory Commission—Discussion adjourned	...	...	...	...	382-432

**Saturday, 18th February, 1928—**

Death of Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas, M.L.A.	...	...	...	...	433
Bill passed by the Council of State laid on the Table	...	...	...	...	433
Resolution <i>re</i> the Statutory Commission—Adopted...	...	...	...	...	433-506

**Monday, 20th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	...	...	...	...	507-29
Panel of Chairmen	...	...	...	...	529
Committee on Public Petitions	...	...	...	...	530
Presentation of the Railway Budget for 1928-29	...	...	...	...	530-43
The Indian Income-tax (Amendment) Bill—Passed as amended by Select Committee	...	...	...	...	543-63
The Indian Income-tax (Second Amendment) Bill—(Amendment of Sections 2, 23, 28, etc.)—Referred to Select Committee	...	...	...	...	564-65

**Tuesday, 21st February, 1928—**

Motion for Adjournment—Arrest and Deportation of the ex-Maharaja of Nabha—Disallowed	...	...	...	...	569-76
The Indian Navy (Discipline) Bill—Introduced—Motion to refer to Select Committee negatived	...	...	...	...	577-621
The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Execution of Decrees and Orders—Referred to Select Committee	...	...	...	...	622-24

# [ v ]

## CONTENTS—*contd.*

	Pages.
<b>Tuesday, 21st February, 1928—<i>contd.</i></b>	
The Indian Tariff (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee ... ..	624-25
The Inland Bonded Warehouses (Amendment) Bill—Passed as amended ... ..	625-26
The Indian Territorial Force (Amendment) Bill—Constitution of the Select Committee ... ..	626
The Auxiliary Force (Amendment) Bill—Constitution of the Select Committee ... ..	627
Election of the Panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration ... ..	627-28
 <b>Wednesday, 22nd February, 1928—</b>	
Bill passed by the Council of State laid on the Table ... ..	629
The Railway Budget—General Discussion ... ..	629-59
 <b>Thursday, 23rd February, 1928—</b>	
Questions and Answers ... ..	661-71
Unstarred Questions and Answers ... ..	671-72
Statement of Business ... ..	673
Resolution <i>re</i> (1) Repair of old Buildings in the neighbourhood of Delhi, (2) Excavation work on the site of Hastinapur—Negatived ... ..	673-85
Resolution <i>re</i> the Depressed Classes—Adopted as amended ..	686-726
 <b>Friday, 24th February, 1928—</b>	
Questions and Answers ... ..	727-32
The Railway Budget— <i>contd.</i>	
List of Demands—	
Demand No. 1—Railway Board ... ..	732-84
Entire Railway Policy ... ..	732-77
Representative Control over the Railway Administration	777-79
Racial Distinctions in Subordinate Establishments ...	779-82
 <b>Saturday, 25th February, 1928—</b>	
Questions and Answers ... ..	785-86
The Railway Budget— <i>contd.</i>	
List of Demands— <i>contd.</i>	
Demand No. 1—Railway Board— <i>contd.</i>	
Racial Distinctions in Subordinate Establishments— <i>contd.</i> ... ..	786-808
Education of the Children of Railway Employees ...	808-20
Local Traffic Service ... ..	820-26
Stores Purchase Policy ... ..	826-27
Railway Concessions to Scouts belonging to the Seva Samiti Boy Scouts' Association ... ..	837-39

CONTENTS—*contd.*

Page.

**Saturday, 25th February, 1928—*contd.***

Through Booking on Government Railways and Railway Fares	839-40
Indianisation of Superior Services	841-42
Form of the Demands for Grants	842-45
Need for a Separate Establishment for looking after the Welfare of the Employees	845-47
• Refusal of the Agent of the East Indian Railway to grant facilities to the East Indian Railway Union, Moradabad	848-49

**Monday, 27th February, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	851-64
Unstarred Questions and Answers	864-72
Election of the Panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration	872-73
Statement <i>re</i> the Steel Industry (Protection) Bill	875

**The Railway Budget—*contd.*****List of Demands—*contd.***

Demand No. 1—Railway Board— <i>contd.</i>	873-903
Opening of a Branch of the Railway Clearing House at Lucknow	873-75
Complaints Department or Committee of Enquiry into Railway Grievances	876-93
Leave Rules	893-94
Adverse Effect on Indian Industries on account of the Freight Charges levied on the different Railways	895-903

**Tuesday, 28th February, 1928—**

Elections to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the Central Advisory Council for Railways...	905
---	-----

**The Railway Budget—*concl'd.*****List of Demands—*concl'd.***

Demand No. 1—Railway Board— <i>concl'd.</i>	905-10
Making the Reports of the Department and Committees available to the Members of the Assembly and to the General Public	905-08
Control, Management and Use of the Fine Fund	908-10
Demand No. 2—Inspection—	910-12
Control over the Hours of work of the Employees to secure safety of the Passengers	910-12
Travelling Ticket Inspectors and their Increments	912
Demand No. 3—Audit—	912-18
Separation of Audit from Accounts	912-18
Demand No. 4—Working Expenses: Administration—	918-70
Top-heavy Administration	918-21
Facilities afforded to Third Class Passengers	921-41
Arrangements for Indian Refreshment Rooms and Restaurant Cars for Third Class Passengers	941-44

CONTENTS—*contd.*

## PAGE

**Tuesday, 28th February, 1928—*contd.***

Reduction of Railway Fares	...	...	944-53
Advisory Councils	...	...	953-54
Third and Intermediate Class Carriages for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Punjab Mail	...	...	954-55
Subordinates officiating as Officials	...	...	955-56
Covenanted Labour in State and Company-managed Railways	...	...	956-59
Transfer of District Medical Officers from Company-managed Railways to State Railways	...	...	959-61
Attitude towards the Coal Trade	...	...	961-66
Great detention at Itarsi of Passengers from Nagpur going to Delhi and up-country	...	...	966-67
Improvements to the Itarsi Waiting Room by the Addition of a lavatory, and the pavement of the platform	...	...	966-67
Project to construct a Railway Subordinates' School at Betul	...	...	966-67
Treatment of the Cotton Trade	...	...	967-69
Porters at Railway Stations	...	...	969-70
Demand No. 5—Working Expenses: Repairs and Maintenance and Operation	...	...	970
Demand No. 6—Companies' and Indian States' share of surplus profits and net earnings	...	...	971
Demand No. 9—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund	...	...	971
Demand No. 10—Appropriation from Depreciation Fund	...	...	971
Demand No. 11—Miscellaneous	...	...	971
Demand No. 12—Appropriation to the Reserve Fund	...	...	971
Demand No. 14—Strategic Lines	...	...	972
Demand No. 7—New Construction	...	...	972
Demand No. 8—Open Line Works	...	...	972
Demand No. 15—Strategic Lines	...	...	972

**Wednesday, 29th February, 1928—**

The Budget for 1928-29	...	973-86
The Indian Finance Bill—Introduced	...	986

**Thursday, 1st March, 1928—**

Questions and Answers	...	987
Unstarred Questions and Answers	...	987-1008
Statement of Business	...	1008
The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	...	1008
The Indian Law Reports Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Committee on Petitions	...	1008
The Burma Salt (Amendment) Bill—Considered and passed...	...	1009-13
The Indian Securities (Amendment) Bill—Considered and passed	...	1013-14
The Ply-wood Industry (Protection) Bill—Introduced	...	1014
The Steel Industry (Protection) Bill—Introduced and referred to Select Committee	...	1015-31
The Hindu Child Marriage Bill—Name of the Revd. J. C. Chatterjee added to Select Committee	...	1032

CONTENTS—*contd.*

PAGES.

Wednesday, 7th March, 1928—

Questions and Answers	...	...	...	1033-56
Unstarred Questions and Answers	...	...	...	1057-1111
Death of Lord Sinha	...	...	...	1112-14
Bill passed by the Council of State laid on the Table	...	...	...	1114
The Indian Tariff (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of the	...	...	...	1114
Report of the Select Committee	...	...	...	1114
General Budget—General Discussion— <i>contd.</i>	...	...	...	1114-58

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Saturday, 18th February, 1928.*

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

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## DEATH OF MR. HARCHANDRAI VISHINDAS, M.L.A.

**Mr. President:** On the last occasion we adjourned the House as a mark of respect to the memory of our departed comrade Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas. I am sure it is the unanimous wish of this House that I should convey our expression of regret and condolences to the family of the deceased.

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## BILL PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF STATE LAID ON THE TABLE.

**Secretary of the Assembly:** Sir, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table the Bill to amend the Burma Salt Act, 1917, for a certain purpose, which was passed by the Council of State at its meeting of the 16th February 1928.

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## RESOLUTION RE THE STATUTORY COMMISSION—*contd.*

**Mr. President:** The House will now resume further consideration of the two alternative proposals, one emanating from Lala Lajpat Rai asking this House not to have anything to do with the Royal Commission in any shape and in any form and the other from Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan asking the House to co-operate with the Commission. Rao Bahadur Rajah.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah** (Nominated: Depressed Classes): Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. President:** I hope the Honourable Member will now conclude his observations. He had his full say on the last occasion.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** Sir, I am only one here to represent the depressed classes, and I shall be glad if you will give me three more minutes.

**Mr. President:** Very well.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** Thank you very much, Sir.

On Thursday my Honourable friend, Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, interrupted me by asking why we should not come in by the door of election, of which he ought to know perfectly well there is as much

[Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah.]

chance as the river Jamuna flowing into the river Cauveri. Might I ask him, Sir, and his Leader, Sreeman Srinivasa Iyengar, why the Congress Party in Madras did not put up a member of the depressed classes either for the Assembly or for the Provincial Council?

**Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar** (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly; Non-Muhammadian Rural): Did you ask them?

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** Why should we ask them? You pose yourselves as the leaders of the people.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta** (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): Become Congressmen.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** That clearly shows that in the Congress camp there cannot be found even a single member of the depressed classes. (*An Honourable Member:* "That is quite wrong.")

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** No. That is quite right.

**Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar:** There are many members of the minority communities.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** That might be, but not the depressed classes. Have they ever ventured to put up a candidate from the depressed classes for the municipal elections of which not less than ten take place every year in Madras? Sir, it is a blessing in disguise that there is no mixed Commission, for we are now enabled to know the mind of Great Britain towards India undeflected by any mixture of Indian element on it. There can be only two possible schemes. One on the basis of a Commission collecting evidence to study relevant records by associating with itself, by close conference, the Committee of the Legislature. That is the scheme that has now been adopted in the constitution and procedure of the present Commission. The other scheme is a round table conference. The honest issue before us is, whether a scheme that provides for an inquiry as well as a conference is not far better than a mere round table conference of half a dozen representatives of Great Britain and half a dozen representatives of this House without any inquiry which is indispensable. A handful of politicians may give and take across a round table, may redistribute provincial boundaries and proclaim that they have come to an agreement. But is there the ghost of a chance of the people concerned, agreeing to these arrangements, forgetting realities in a moment of absentminded political idealism? India wants, so far as I could see, the continuance of British rule for a long, long time to come. (*An Honourable Member:* "No.") Excepting a microscopic fractional fraction of the country, India thinks that its future lies in working out its salvation by a wider and better directed diffusion of the benefits of British rule under British responsibility, so that India may become eventually one people politically. If a round table conference is to be held, it ought to be not with these elected leaders (*An Honourable Member:* "With nominated Members.")—wait, I will tell you—but with those who are of the people, live amongst the people, toil from day dawn to nightfall, not known to the leaders and not knowing the leaders also. Let the round table conference without a round table take place in innumerable hamlets and

villages, under banyan trees of ancient lineage and immemorial standing, on the tank bunds, in harvested fields. And let the plenipotentiaries learn from the lips of the masses what they would want first and foremost and under what terms they will agree to the transfer of responsibility and power from the British into Indian hands. Sir, it is our feeling for the country and our legitimate desire to have some place under the sun that makes us adopt this attitude. Rather than criticising us, if you are only honourable and search your hearts, you will find room for criticising your own conduct and deploring your sentiments and that complaisance which leads you to such boycott resolution.

Sir, I feel that we have a case to present before the Simon Commission. Shall we be denied an opportunity to present our case? Shall we gain by taking up the attitude which has been suggested by some of the politicians? The problem of the depressed classes to the Simon Commission will not be in vain. If they could tackle that one single problem, I am certain that all the sacrifice that Sir John Simon and Lord Birkenhead have made would not have been in vain. So we the members of the depressed classes will do our duty by ourselves and our country by appearing before the Commission, which is no respecter of persons, which welcomes to its bosom the Pharisee and the sinner, it will judge the motives of all, and before whose eyes I am certain that the conduct of myself and of my community will stand.

**Mr. K. C. Roy** (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, it will be in the recollection of this House that my esteemed friend, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, who is not present here this morning, addressed a fervent appeal to the Indian Members of the House to vote with him and vote for 'Swaraj. I reciprocate that sentiment. But, Sir, I wish there had been a fairer debate and a fuller debate free from the party ties or from the tyranny of party whips. But, Sir, I stand here unasked by the Leader of this House to give him my vote.

**Pandit Motilal Nehru** (Cities of the United Provinces: Non-Muhammadan Urban): What about the tyranny of his party?

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** The Government have not asked me to give them my vote.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta:** Nobody will believe it.

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** I can look after myself. Now, Sir, the issue before the House is a very grave and important one that has been before the country since the birth of the present Legislature. But, I am sorry, Sir, that it has been narrowed down by the unholy politics of my friends Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah. It is not a question of communal preferment; it is not a question of communal representation in the Legislature or in the services, but it is a question of the grant of responsible government to this country with which this Commission is charged. If my friends Rao Bahadur Rajah, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz will refresh their memories by a reference to the Government of India Act, they will find that the task with which the Simon Commission has been charged is far graver than the issues which we are discussing to-day.

**Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan** (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): I did not discuss those things at all.



**Mr. K. C. Roy:** Yours, Sir, was a very minor issue.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta:** That is the whole issue with him.

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** But I am sorry, Sir, that even Sir John Simon has been caught in the communal meshes. Instead of waiting to see the fuller development of Indian public opinion, he has been receiving deputations from minority communities. And for what, may I ask?

**Rao Bahadur M C. Rajah:** He has done the right thing—to know the people.

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** I trust time alone will show it. But, Sir, my difficulty is about the Resolution which my friend Lala Lajpat Rai has presented to the House. What does he want? He wants us to give a vote of no confidence in the Simon Commission. He wants us to give a mandate to the nation for the organisation of a national boycott. Sir, I come to the Simon Commission first. They are seven as we all know. Among them there are men who have made a great mark in the history of the British nation, men whose names are held in universal respect all over the British Empire—at least those of Sir John Simon and Lord Burnham are. I have known one of them for a long time and one for a short time, and I know this, that they have come with the most honourable intentions. (Hear, hear.) I know they have come with the blessings of all the parties in the British Empire. Only a few weeks ago I was in London and I thought I would find England full of “Mother Mayos” and of hostile and prejudiced men and women; but what I found was, there were sensible Englishmen and women who were anxious to do India constitutional justice, and even a foremost statesman told me that he would rather see India learn by her mistakes and he also told me that a constitutional advance in India was absolutely inevitable. This is the position so far as the Simon Commission is concerned. Are we going to boycott them? (*Cries of “Yes”.*) We know nothing against them. I only claim that they are honest men, charged with a very great task; let us assist them in the performance of their own duty.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of boycott. (*An Honourable Member:* “Will you assist them in the performance of their duty?”) I shall never serve as an assessor. I come now to the question of boycott. Those of us who come from Bengal know the boycott movement too well. There are at least four men in this House—my friends Mr. K. C. Neogy, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, Mr. Ghuznavi, and Sir Darcy Lindsay. Sir Darcy Lindsay’s name will always be remembered as a promoter of communal peace both in India and without. Mr. Neogy and Mr. Amar Nath Dutt were student politicians and Mr. Ghuznavi a combatant in the ranks and a sympathetic eye-witness . . . . .

**Mr. Amar Nath Dutt** (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I was under your guardianship. (Laughter).

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** What are the lessons of the Bengal Partition movement? Men who could have given us guidance in this matter are no longer with us. The late Sir Surendranath Banerjea and the late Mr. Aswini Kumar Dutt, if they had been alive to-day, would have given Bengal proper guidance in this matter. (*An Honourable Member:* “Do not libel their memories.”) I am very sorry you should think so. I honour their memories by telling the truth. (Applause). They

would have undoubtedly given a proper lead to the country. But, alas, they are no longer with us. I cannot conceive a more suicidal policy than the policy of boycott for Bengal. What is a boycott? Boycott is a movement of hate, a movement of disrespect, a movement which is an entire negation of the doctrine of obedience and disobedience. What are we going to get by boycott? Show me a way beyond the barren path of boycott and I vote with you. (*An Honourable Member*: "The Bengal Partition was annulled.")

Then, Sir, we have been told that we must vote for this Resolution because the Commission will interfere with our inherent right of self-determination. Well, Sir, the Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the President of the Delhi Congress of whose Committee I was an important member, and I remember we discussed this question then of self-determination. But, Sir, I have never been able to find out the "inherency" of the case. I know that self-determination is acquired and defended. From my study of history I have come to the conclusion that we have got to acquire self-determination by a victory in war or by a collapse of the Government after a civil revolt. These are the two conditions which postulate self-determination. Where are those two conditions to-day in India? (*An Honourable Member*: "You are hopeless.") It is possibly they are there "inherently", but there is no outward expression of them. I will not be a pessimist. I see very soon India will determine for herself and the first expression of that determination is the existence of this House. By boycotting the Simon Commission we are going to throttle this big institution of which we are the proud Members. (*Cries of "No. no."*) That is my fear and that is the reason why I am anxious and I ask you to consider the position and review the situation with the counsel of statesmanship with which the name of Motilal Nehru is known all over the world—I mean he will give the proper guidance to the country. (*Cries of "Yes."*)

Another argument which has been used in favour of the Resolution is the question of self-respect. This was a question which I asked of a great Member of this House shortly after the Viceroy's announcement; do you know the answer he gave me? He said, "Roy, does any nation live under the conditions we live in?" I was speechless. I thought he was right. But of course I am as conscious as any one of the self-respect of India and the self-respect of this House of which I am a humble Member. By co-operating with a Commission which has come here in the honourable discharge of a duty, we shall lose nothing of our self-respect. We shall rise in the esteem of our people and of the civilised world. I shall not, Sir, argue the point any further.

I will now come to the amendment of my friend, Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan. Much has been said against non-official Members as regards their prompt decision against the Simon announcement. But those of us who know the history of the thing need not blame the non-officials for their decisions. The points which were really examined in that memorable document were known to most of us long before it was published in India; and even Sir John Simon did not take very long to draft the memorandum; he did it on his way from Bombay to Delhi, I know for a fact; and it is no wonder therefore that our men here in examining the document took an equally short time to give their answer; I do not wonder at it at all. But, Sir, that document is a masterpiece and reflects the very highest

[Mr. K. C. Roy.]

credit on Sir John Simon and his colleagues. There is, however, one dark spot—the dark spot of camera evidence. I know from my own experience that Sir John Simon has taken that precaution only to protect himself in the end. That is all. I was told by a very competent authority that it was nothing but a question of human psychology.

**Mr. B. Das** (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Do you support the principle that the Civil Service and the Executive can give evidence *in camera* when they desire?

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** The official evidence will be undoubtedly taken in public.

Perhaps it may be that some Indian Princes might come and give evidence *in camera*. (*An Honourable Member:* “What about the military?”) I am not a believer in *camera* evidence at all. I believe that evidence given *in camera* on such a large constitutional issue which is going to determine the future relations between India and England should be given in the open, and the evidence of one who cannot give it in the open is not worth taking.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah** (Bombay City: Muhammadan Urban): The objection is not that no evidence should be taken *in camera*, but that the Indian wing should be excluded.

**Mr. K. C. Roy:** I am no supporter of that proposition. But I am quite sure as time goes on, as the Commission goes on with its work, they will revise their procedure. I appeal therefore to my Honourable friends, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Sir Basil Blackett, two responsible leaders of this House, to consider the suggestions thrown out in the speeches of Mr. Jayakar and Mr. Jinnah and not to bar the door against negotiations. I beseech them to take an adjournment of the House; let us have time; let us consider the grave issues involved and then take a decision honourable to India and honourable to Great Britain.

**\*Mr. T. C. Goswami** (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, my honourable friend, Mr. K. C. Roy, who is an important Member of this House and whose words are listened to with great respect in this House, has told us that Sir John Simon is an honest man and that his colleagues are honest men. I do not think any one on this side of the House has ever questioned the individual honesty of Sir John Simon and his colleagues. Sir John Simon has been described in this House as a very able man. No one has quarrelled with that proposition. But the implication of the insistence on that statement is this that because you have an able man coming to India from across the seas, an able man such as we in India cannot produce, therefore you must not think it derogatory to appear before him. I say that implication is something which we must repudiate. We must repudiate that implication most emphatically for two reasons. One reason is a moral reason. The moral reason is that however clever a man may be, he has no right to come from another country to dictate terms to this country. (*An Honourable Member:* “He does not.”) The second reason is this—I mean no personal disrespect to Sir John Simon—that there are, as has been already said by my Honourable friend Mr. Jayakar, equally able men in this country. Sir, it has been my fortune at the beginning of my public

career to have served under a Chief who was not only a great lawyer—at least as great a lawyer as Sir John Simon—but who proved to the world that in order to be a great man one has got to be a great deal more than a great lawyer. Sir, it was my privilege to serve under that Chief whose death has caused a shadow over this country, the late Mr. C. R. Das, and I have known therefore what a great man can be. So that, an argument that Sir John Simon is a great man or that he is an honest man should not weigh with us, and I humbly submit that this House will accept the position that I have taken. Neither the greatness of Sir John Simon nor the mediocrity of his other colleagues (Laughter) should be taken into consideration. I felt when this Commission came out it was like “Six characters in search of an Author.” Many Honourable Members may have read a very interesting book by Luigi Pirandello, “Six Characters in search of an Author”. Here we have seven commissioners in search of a commission, seven commissioners whose painful duty it is to stand at the door of their shop and say, “Come in, come one, come all, we are ready to receive you.” I must say that to a very large extent I sympathise with Sir John Simon and his colleagues that contrary to their habits, contrary to the notions of social intercourse to which they have been accustomed, they have come under official guidance here to distribute their smiles in the Western Hostel, Raisina. That is a position which certainly I should not like to have been placed in—to receive deputations from impromptu parties (Laughter). We have had experience, Mr. President, and you will remember 1919, how whenever there is an inquiry, mushroom parties spring into existence. We had on the floor of this House mushroom parties springing up to announce the advent of the Simon Commission. I read the other day of a Self-respect Party which had cropped up very recently in Madras, a party which teaches others self-respect.

Now, Lord Birkenhead has committed another of his usual indiscretions by making a speech, which was reported in last night's papers, before the debate in this House has concluded. I think that his speech has done greater harm to the Government cause to-day than any speeches that can be delivered on this side of the House. Lord Birkenhead has told us that we would discover how little representative we are of that vast heterogeneous community of which Lord Birkenhead and his countrymen are responsible trustees. He has spoken of the prospect of numerous deputations waiting on the Simon Commission. Sir, may I remind the House of the 300 telegrams which Sir John Simon is supposed to have received welcoming him to this country? If it is any consolation to Sir John Simon he can plaster the bare walls of his apartments in the Western Hostel with these 300 telegrams welcoming him. But I am sure I should give him the credit for understanding that these telegrams mean nothing at all (*An Honourable Member*: “Question.”)—that these telegrams can be arranged to be sent upon any occasion for any purpose whatsoever. (*An Honourable Member*: “For anybody”. *Another Honourable Member*: “Or by any party.”) We have done that. But as I said it was a game at which two can play. If Sir John Simon wanted to find out what the feelings of the country are he has only to read the debates of the Legislative Assembly, he has only to acquaint himself with the proceedings of the Indian National Congress and of many other responsible political bodies. If he wanted to know how India is governed he has again only to refer to the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. If we wanted to satisfy himself how this constitution has been working he has only to ask the special

[Mr. T. C. Goswami.]

Department now opened in the Home Department to give him information with regard to how the constitution has worked. He will find not only how we have behaved under the constitution but he will also find how those to whom great autocratic powers were given under the constitution have behaved. He will find how the Viceroy, who has unlimited power of certification and veto, has used his power. I will give one instance. I remember, Sir, when I first came into this House 4 or 5 years ago Lord Reading speaking from the Throne and it was on a matter of vital importance to this country. Young men had been taken away from their homes in Bengal without any trial, without even a charge being framed against them, and I remember Lord Reading's words. He said that the whole question had been gone into by two Judges of the High Court, that all the papers had been placed before two Judges of the High Court, and I remember that emphasis which was so characteristic of Lord Reading, *two Judges of the High Court*. Within a few days it came out that the two Judges who saw the papers were not High Court Judges. Now, Sir, I want this House to remember that the question was not whether the Judge's who saw the papers were competent or not but that a man in the position of Lord Reading made himself responsible for a statement on a matter of that importance which was found to be untrue. Are we to trust men who are capable of making themselves responsible for untrue statements in matters of this kind when later on they go to a dinner of the European Association and say "These people whom we have spirited away are outlaws"? This is one instance. You have other instances much more ridiculous of certification. You have Lord Lytton, for instance, putting his signature to this statement, that the Rs. 30,000 required for carpets in Government House was essential to the discharge of his responsibility for the State. A man who is capable of putting his signature to a statement of that kind has no business to discharge autocratic powers. Well, those are some of the things which Sir John Simon can easily find . . .

**Mr. K. Ahmed** (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): Why not put your grievances before the Simon Commission then?

**Mr. T. C. Goswami:** Sir, I will not detain this House for more than two minutes. We are fully aware on this side of the House of the grave responsibility which we take upon ourselves, let there be no mistake about that. We have always stood for an adjustment of interests between England and India. We have always said this that England should send her representatives to meet our representatives in order to settle the broad outlines of the future constitution of India. There is no ambiguity in that position and that is an offer which is still open to the British Government. After all, England subdued India through India's weakness rather than from England's strength. That is history. After all, we may find England in a weak position in the near future, so that history which has pampered England in the past may pamper some other country in the future. Now, having regard to that possibility, we have felt that a peaceful adjustment of interests between the two countries would be regarded as desirable. That position is still open, and we, specially of the younger generation, feel that we have probably to suffer a great deal before we have seen the end of the struggle. That is another position which Sir John Simon and his colleagues would do well to ponder. We of the younger generation are anxious to

establish the national determination to be free, and the Government of India ought to judge India not merely by our speeches (*Some Honourable Members on the Non-official European Benches*: "Hear, hear."), but by those silences (*An Honourable Member*: "Never heard those silences"), those silences among the students who are oppressed and depressed. Those silences are much more dangerous than the speeches in this House, because they are the foundation of national determination, and they are the foundation of national self-determination. The problem of India's freedom is a greater problem than the freedom of, say, Poland, or Czecho-Slovakia, or countries like that, because the freedom of India has a significance which is world wide, and the freedom of India, when attained, will mean a complete reorganisation, a complete political reorganisation of the whole world. (Hear, hear.) The problem of India is much more complex—here I agree with the other side—than that of any other country. It is a great problem. Just as our opponents take advantage of the complexity of our problem, we, on our side, realise the great complexity, the great difficulties of the problem. And we do not want freedom easily won. We want to strive for freedom, we want to attain it and to be worthy of freedom.

**Mr. T. Gavin-Jones** (United Provinces: European): You will not get it by boycott.

**Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar** (Madras City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): That is the best evidence of our capacity.

**Mr. T. C. Goswami**: We will follow up the boycott . . . .

**Sir Victor Sassoon** (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): In what way?

**Mr. T. C. Goswami**: . . . . by such measures . . . .

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah**: Sassoon Mills.

**Mr. T. C. Goswami**: . . . . by such measures as the situation will demand, and the leaders of this country will not flinch from the consequences of the action they are taking. I am confident of victory in this House to-day. I am confident that those *ex-officio* loyalists who are going to support the Government will not carry the day. There is great stuff even in this House on the Indian side; there is grit, there is great power of resistance of temptation (Laughter), and lastly the baits that have been offered by a power which has so much patronage have proved unavailing to a large number of men on this side of the House. (*An Honourable Member*: "What were the baits?") I am making a present to the Government of all the *ex-officio* loyalists in this House, the 26 Government officials, and all those mofussil celebrities who ought not to have been in this House under any constitution. I make a present of them to Government and I am sure that this House will stand by the Honourable Lala Lajpat Rai.

**Pandit Motilal Nehru**: Sir, there have been two important contributions to the debate on the Resolution which we are discussing to-day since we rose on Thursday last, one from within the House which came from my Honourable friend, Mr. K. C. Roy, and the other from across the seas, from the great Secretary of State. So far as the first contribution is concerned, I am afraid my Honourable friend has appealed to the wrong court. He has asked me to give a lead to the country. That I did before I returned from England

[Pandit Motilal Nehru.]

and almost immediately after the announcement of the Commission was made. But as a journalist he must have known that that lead was repeated time after time in press statements and interviews. And that is the lead which I stand now in my place to give to the country, and I hope the country will follow it. That lead is, have nothing whatever to do with the Statutory Commission. My Honourable friend has given Sir John Simon and his colleagues a certificate of honesty and ability. Well, I also have the honour of knowing Sir John Simon personally, of working with him and of having full opportunities of appreciating his great genius and his great powers of the mind. I do not know the other members so well, but I have heard what is thought of them in England. (Laughter.) I will not repeat the expressions used in respect of them but so far as Sir John Simon is concerned, I agree with my Honourable friend and with every word that has been said in his praise in this country as well as in England. I have myself described him as a very big man. I have myself said that he is out in his own way to do something big but I have added that the biggest thing that he as an Englishman and as an Imperialist, quite apart from his being a lawyer of great eminence, is capable of doing is bound to be the smallest possible thing from our point of view. In any case whether he is a big man or it is a big thing that he does, I for one will not advise my countrymen to surrender their rights to the biggest man in the world. That right, Sir, is a right very much ridiculed in these days, the right of self-determination. During the continuance of the war those words were on the lips of the statesmen of the allied countries and they furnished a most useful bait to the countries which they held under subjection to draw them into the vortex of the war. They also proved a very strong bait to the countries held in subjection by the enemy countries to break away from them. As soon as the war was over the expression "self-determination" lost much of its significance. It ceased to apply to India and to the countries held by the Allies, but so far as the other countries were concerned, which had been absorbed by the enemy countries before the war, it was applied to such extent as was necessary to weaken the enemy countries and no more. That done the word lost all its meaning and when it is now used in relation to India or to any other country similarly situated it is met with scorn. India, however, will not forego her right and however much it may be doubted that she will ever be able to stand on her feet, I am confident that we shall soon be in a position to exercise that right fully and freely.

Now, Sir, as to the other contribution which has come from across the seas, I think, as has already been said by my Honourable friend Mr. Goswami, it furnishes the completest justification for the attitude that we have adopted in this country. It tells us exactly where we stand. The real meaning of the very weighty utterance is this; the politically minded people of India who have devoted their lives to the service of the country do not count. The Simon Commission is to receive its inspiration from those whose self-interest or fear compels them to stand by the bureaucracy. Who are the people upon whom Lord Birkenhead relies? They are millions of Moslems, millions of depressed classes, millions of Anglo-Indians and commercial communities. I do hope that the capacity of Anglo-Indians to multiply themselves will increase, but I am afraid it is rather too high an expectation to come up to Lord Birkenhead's estimate. Now, Sir, another point which emerges from the weighty words of Lord

Birkenhead is that the ablest men in the country are to be associated to prove that they are fit to manage their own affairs, as if the ablest men in the country were on the same level as lunatics or those charged with being lunatics. They are to be treated as mere exhibits in the case which is to be examined by the Simon Commission as a whole. Our friends were flattering themselves so far that they will at least be entitled to the same weight as witnesses. No. I say that that statement relegates them simply to the position of articulate exhibits. The third point which arises is that Lord Birkenhead's will is supreme and must be enforced at all risks. These are points that can be gathered from the latest exhibition of temper, if I may say so, of Lord Birkenhead. It is easy to reply in the same strain but I shall resist the temptation and will only remark that heads that are swollen contain little wisdom and pride always rides for a fall. Leaving Lord Birkenhead to his millions of Moslems, millions of depressed classes and millions of Anglo-Indians, I will now, with your permission, address myself to the Resolution.

I find that in spite of the very able exposition of the point of view of the Congress by my friend the Honourable Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, there is considerable doubt and confusion in the minds of the benches opposite as to what the Congress really stands for, because opinions have been attributed to Congress leaders which they never entertained. Now, it is true that if the Resolution which has been so ably moved by my friend Lala Lajpat Rai had been framed by me it would certainly have been differently worded. We should have omitted the word "present" which has been so much relied on by my friend the Honourable Mr. Jayakar but it did not prove acceptable to some members of the Nationalist Party. We reconsidered the whole situation and came exactly to the conclusion which you, Sir, were pleased to announce as your ruling at the very beginning of the debate, namely, that the substance of the Resolution was whether or not the Statutory Commission should be co-operated with. The reasons did not matter. In fact every Party has its own reasons for the boycott; but so long as all Parties are agreed on the boycott it does not matter for what reasons. (*An Honourable Member*: "Or even if there is no reason".) I do not for a moment mean to imply that the reasons advanced in this House are not good reasons or that they have been met by anybody who has so far taken part in the debate from the other side. What I mean to say is this, that though they have considerable force, yet the Congress goes much further and it is not concerned with this man or that man, with the constitution or the scheme of this Commission or any other Commission. We take our stand upon the broad principle that Parliament and the British public and the British Government have no shadow of a right to force a constitution upon us against our own will. Sir, so long as India is held under complete subjection, as it has been all these years, undoubtedly Great Britain and her Parliament must be the sole arbiters of her destiny and can enforce their will upon the subject people at the point of the bayonet. But when you talk of giving even a measure of freedom to the subject nation, it is hypocrisy, it is dishonesty, to rely upon laws to which that people were no parties, to rely upon those laws, to restrict the limits within which such measure of liberty is to be given. If you come to consider the question broadly, surely the proper thing to do is to approach it unhampered by any considerations which may arise from such laws or rules which have been intentionally passed year after year to withhold what you pretend you are now giving. Now, Sir, the



[Pandit Motilal Nehru.]

Congress stands to-day for complete independence. That is its goal. It was in the year 1924 that I had the honour to move a Resolution asking for a round table conference. That was a Resolution which was assented to by all the parties and was carried in this House by an overwhelming majority. It asked that the round table conference should determine a system of full responsible Government for India. In 1925 again I had the honour to submit a Resolution, a very much modified Resolution, going into some detail, asking for what certainly was not full responsible government. I made it clear at the time that it was not a Congress resolution but that we had had to lower our demand considerably in order to attain the maximum of agreement between the parties. But I also made it perfectly clear that it was in the nature of an offer to the Government and that if the Government would not accept it we would not be bound by it the next day. The Government did not take the opportunity that I offered. The sands of time ran on and two years later we find that all political parties—when I say all parties I mean all the parties that matter—in the country, the Muslim League, the Liberal Federation, the National Congress, the Sikh League, a very large section of the mercantile classes and of the non-Brahmans, the Trade Union Congress and the Hindu Sabha—are all united now in the demand for full responsible government. Sir, with your permission, I shall read a very concise statement of that demand made by you only the other day in the course of a press communiqué. What you said was:

“I and my friends of the Congress have consistently maintained that the question of relations between Great Britain and India can only be finally adjusted on the basis of India's right to Dominion status being acknowledged without any reservation and the method of giving effect to this decision being examined in some joint and equal conference between the plenipotentiaries of the two countries.”

That certainly, Sir, was the position when you made that statement. But as I have said, the sands of time run on. The Congress met and with due regard to all that had happened, it definitely and clearly laid down that its goal was complete independence. By that I stand, and I say by that the whole country stands. It is true that various constitutions have been suggested and various parties talk of Dominion status, by which is understood the kind of Government which prevails in Canada, in South Africa, in Australia and in the Free State of Ireland. Now I want it to be clearly understood that while the Congress stands for complete independence, it is fully prepared to consult and confer with all the other parties concerned, including the Government, as to the kind of constitution which is to be framed and which is suitable to the circumstances. Now it is clear that however complete the independence may be there must be some transition period and some transitory provisions to apply to that period. When I say that all parties in India are agreed upon complete independence I mean that when some of them talk of Dominion status and things like that, all that is meant by them is that that would be only a kind of transitional constitution in order to attain to the goal of independence. Of course it is difficult to foretell what time it will take, how long the transition period will be; but that there must be a transition period admits of no doubt, and it is from that point of view that we have agreed, or at least are trying to agree, to come to a joint decision as to the nature of that constitution. Now, Sir, that being the case, my Party has no desire whatever to consult any extraneous

body as to what the constitution is going to be except in so far as the interests of that body itself may be involved; and for that purpose we are ready to negotiate, we are ready to enter into arrangements for the protection of British as well as any other interests that there may be in this

12 Noon. country. But beyond that, I submit that we stand upon our right to complete independence. Now whether what I am asking is a thing that is merely fantastic or whether it is within practical politics is a matter which entirely depends upon the policy which the British Government employs. I will cite a passage from a very interesting and valuable treatise by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, till recently a very eminent authority and a great pillar of strength to the Government. He says in the preface to his book called "The Indian Constitution":

"There are those who think that notwithstanding its many imperfections the present constitution should be given a fair trial, at any rate up to 1929. There are others who call for an earlier revision of it. There are yet again those who think that India must frame her own constitution. Whatever force there may be in any of these views, I am personally of opinion that the arguments which hold good to-day against a further advance will hold good equally in 1929. The real question is one of policy, and it is obvious that on such a question English and Indian opinion has differed in the past, is differing to-day, and I am afraid will continue to differ in the future."

I fully endorse that opinion, and I say that it is absolutely futile to endeavour to reconcile Indian opinion with English opinion. Our interests clash. We do not use the same words in the same sense: and promises which bear one meaning to us are made with some other meaning in the minds of those who make the promises. Now, Sir, our position is that we are to gain our independence whenever it has to come, in the near or the distant future, not by the aid of the British Government or through Parliament but by self-determination and by our own strength. That is the decision of the Congress. We are not for any feeble steps to be taken from time to time in order to lead at some unknown period to some kind of responsibility in Government. The recent events in India amply justify what I have been stating to the House. What do we see to-day? Parties that stood aloof entirely from all politics now taking an active part; parties which asked for reforms, small reforms, now standing upon their right to full responsible government. I say, Sir, that the time is near when all these parties will range themselves with the Congress in demanding complete independence. Now on these considerations it will appear that we are not very much concerned with the controversy as to the constitution and the scheme of the Statutory Commission. But we fully agree in the criticism which has been made of that scheme, and in the reasons which have been advanced for rejecting it. My friends of the other parties have put their case, and will put their case with ability and skill, and I do not see that I should be justified in going over that ground and taking up the time of the House, but there is one incident which has occurred to me and which I should like to mention, and that is that not long ago Lord Birkenhead publicly expressed the opinion that the Commission would be composed of the best brains of the Empire. Those are his words, "the best brains of the Empire". But a study of the Act persuaded His Lordship to believe that he could only appoint Members of Parliament and that a Parliamentary Commission could only mean a Commission composed of Members of Parliament. Now, Sir, so far as regards the construction of the Act, I have read that section very carefully—section 84A—and I find that the

[Pandit Motilal Nehru.]

words used are, "persons to act as a Commission". It was given to Lord Birkenhead to say that "persons" there means only Members of Parliament. Well, with due deference to His Lordship I can only say that an argument like this would not do credit even to a junior pleader in India. Then there is the Parliamentary Commission.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. I think I have given the Honourable the Leader of the Congress Party sufficient indulgence. I hope he will now conclude his observations.

**Pandit Motilal Nehru:** I am very sorry, Sir, but I will not take the time of the House at any great length. I have simply to refer to one other matter which I had forgotten, and that is the telegram received by the Right Honourable Hartshorn, from the Leader of the Labour Party in Parliament. This is the telegram:

"Reported here that if your Commission were successfully obstructed, a Labour Government would appoint a new Commission on another and a non-parliamentary basis. As you know, the procedure now being followed has the full confidence of the Labour Party, and no change in the Commission would be made."

Now this message, Sir, only aroused feelings of amazement and also of some pity in my own mind,—amazement at the complete ignorance of the great ex-Prime Minister of conditions in India and pity at his imagining that he can influence Indian opinion by any number of threats. Now, Sir, for the thousandth time I declare in this House that it does not matter to us in the least what the Labour Government or any other Government can do or will do, and we are not at all concerned with that. We now stand on our own legs. Governments which have not paid attention to the lessons of history have invariably come to grief, to an ignominious end, and I have no doubt that what has not been accomplished by the statesmanship of England will be accomplished by destiny and destiny and the people of India will add one more to the long list of fallen Empires.

**The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra** (Member for Industries and Labour): Sir, I have seen it stated that I lack political flair. I am prepared to plead guilty to that charge, particularly, as I am not sure what the correct flair in political matters is under present conditions in India, and my doubts on this point have been intensified after I listened to the speeches of my Honourable friend Mr. Jinnah last Thursday and of the Honourable Pandit Motilal Nehru this morning. Sir, I am a servant of the Crown and in that capacity I have served my King and my country for the best part of thirty years (Applause), most loyally according to the dictates of my conscience. (Mr. M. A. Jinnah: "Who questions it; nobody doubts it".) It is my loyalty to my country which has made me exert myself to the utmost during the whole of my service to try to secure for her the maximum advantage in the path of progress in every direction. I make the statement in all sincerity and seriousness and I am sure that none of my friends opposite would question my good faith in this matter. It may be that on occasion I have failed to secure my object either at all, or to the fullest extent desired by me; but then the decision has not always rested wholly with me. It may also be that on occasion I may have erred in my judgment; but then I am only human and am liable to err as much as any other human being. Nevertheless, the fact remains that I yield to none of my friends opposite in

my solicitude for the welfare of my country and its well-regulated progress in the path of self-government.

It is because of the peculiar failing to which I have referred, that I have generally refrained from taking part in political debates in this House. The present debate is, however, one of momentous importance to my country which at the moment is truly at one of the cross-roads of her destiny; and I am accordingly compelled to crave the indulgence of the House for a few minutes' hearing. Indeed, I feel strongly that I shall be failing in my duty to my country and to my countrymen if on this occasion, when vital decisions are about to be taken, I refrain from appealing to my friends opposite not to take any action which may ultimately jeopardise India's real interests.

In regard to the reasons which led the British Parliament to appoint a Parliamentary Commission to examine the working and development of self-government in India, I have no information which I can disclose to this House other than what has been vouchsafed in the utterances made in that Parliament or by high authorities in this country. I know that the decision of the British Parliament in the matter has led to a considerable amount of resentment on the part of many of the leaders of political thought in this country, whose opinions I, for one, hold in great value. Nevertheless, I am one of those Indians who hold that under present conditions Parliament cannot divest itself of its responsibility in determining India's future; and I may say that a member of the Labour Party in England, whose views have been quoted with favour in some of the Indian nationalist papers, has stated that the principle is a commonplace one which no one can dispute. Holding this view, as I do, I must in the present political conditions in India concede to the British Parliament the final voice in laying down the procedure (*An Honourable Member*: "We do not.") for the examination of the working and development of self-government in India and in determining the extent of progress in this direction, though I know that my views on this point will not be acceptable to a large number of the non-official Members in this House. (*Mr. M. A. Jinnah*: "To nobody".) I do not propose to discuss on this occasion whether by the procedure which it has adopted Parliament has deliberately offered an insult or affront to my countrymen. The matter has already been discussed threadbare on the floor of this House and elsewhere. To my mind there can be no affront greater than the fact that we Indians are still incapable of making any serious effort to settle our internal differences, communal and otherwise. For this failing, some of our leaders of political thought are inclined to put the whole blame on the present Government. The facts of history, however, largely disprove that statement, and I cannot help observing, though with a considerable amount of pain, that we Indians have not yet succeeded in making any serious effort to get rid of this failing and in devising such measures as may make for a gradual approximation to the ideal of a harmonious Indian nation, for I do feel that on our success in this direction depends largely the political progress of my country and the attainment of the goal of self-determination. I do not, however, propose to dilate on this matter. I prefer to look at the question now before us from a more practical point of view. Even admitting that an insult was deliberately intended by the procedure adopted, I submit in all humility to some of the leaders of political thought in my country, including the

[Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra.]

Honourable friends opposite, whether the action which they have taken, and for which they now want the approval of this House, in rejecting summarily the procedure of a Joint Free Conference is not likely to be detrimental to the best interests of India. The wisdom of that action has already been questioned by several speakers who have preceded me. I have seen it stated that the justification for that action arose from the need for giving a lead to the country. My submission is that the matter is one of such vital importance to the country that the proper procedure compatible with true ideas of democracy should have been just the other way; and I cannot help quoting in this connection the following passage from a letter from a member of the Congress Party in a provincial Legislative Council to the head of his Party in that province, the views contained in which, though expressed in another connection, apply equally well to the matter now under discussion. The quotation is as follows:

"A Council member of the Congress Party, as I conceive the situation, is under the obligation of a two-fold allegiance. No doubt he owes allegiance to the party to which he belongs, but he owes also an ulterior and larger allegiance to his constituents—and it has seemed to me at times that the Congress people of the present generation are apt to think too much of the party-machine and too little of the voter,—the constituent, the man in the street as distinguished from the man on the dais. I am perhaps an old-fashioned Congressman; but I think—and I have always thought during the last 20 years—that it is one of the main functions of the Congress to train up the people in the ways of democracy, and to me it appears as a total negation of the fundamental principles of all democracy to take vital and far-reaching decisions without caring to ascertain the views of the constituencies."

I have little doubt in my own mind that the reason for the precipitate action taken by certain leaders of political thought is that that action was conceived in a spirit of passion engendered by a feeling of affront to pride and self-restraint and of consequent distrust of the British Government. This aspect of the situation has been made abundantly clear in the speeches before the House last Thursday by Lala Lajpat Rai and Messrs. Jayakar and Jinnah. The problem is, however, one of such vital importance to the destinies of India that I must beseech my friends opposite not to allow themselves to be swayed wholly by passion and sentiment. It would not be inappropriate for me to quote in this connection what Lord Olivier said in the House of Lords on the 24th November, 1927. The quotation is:

"Indians say to me: 'We have our own feelings of pride and sensitiveness'. I do not think they have other feelings of pride or other canons of sensitiveness than the Englishmen. We in this country, if we are confronted with a Commission that does not fulfil our own ideas as to the sort of Commission we should desire, and if we go as witnesses before that Commission, do our best and run our heads against a wall, if necessary, but we do not give up without doing the best we can."

My Honourable friends Messrs. Jayakar and Jinnah have tried to establish from a construction of various documents that the present scheme of the Statutory Commission including the idea of a Joint Free Conference does not confer on the Indian representatives a complete equality of status and powers either in connection with the investigations, or the constructive proposals to be framed on the basis of those investigations. Now, Sir, I do not pretend to possess the legal acumen or the forensic ability of either of these learned gentlemen.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Then why do you do it?

**The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra:** But even admitting all that they have said, I submit to them and to this House that the question deserves serious consideration whether the method of collaboration on honourable and equal terms which the scheme provides, even though it is subject to certain limitations laid down by the British Parliament, cannot with sufficient good will on both sides be worked to India's material advantage. Sir John Simon and his colleagues have already promised their sincerity and good will in the matter and I see no reason to question their good faith; and I doubt whether it is in the interests of our motherland that some of our leaders of political thought should adopt an attitude of complete *non possumus*. Sir, I still hold that the road towards that goal which everyone of us Indians has in view lies through co-operation with the British Parliament. (*Members of the Congress Party: "No."*) I believe that I am correct in stating that a similar opinion had been expressed in this House by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru just about seven years ago; and for my part I prefer still to adhere to his robust optimism of those days.

The Resolution before the House is a purely negative one and as such it shows poverty of resource whatever else it may express. If it is adopted by this House, the effect must inevitably be that India would lose the services of some of her most eminent sons for the evolution of her political development. I trust that my friends opposite will not force us into this unfortunate position. Even admitting that there has been a lack of statesmanship on the part of His Majesty's Government, or of the Treasury Benches, I submit, again in all humility, to my friends opposite that they should ponder seriously before they decide to give the son of India who desires to write her history at some future day an opportunity for recording that statesmanship was equally lacking on the part of his brethren and that at a time of crisis in her history, some of her eminent sons failed to come to her rescue because they allowed their passion and their sentiment to get a mastery over their patriotism and their sagacity. For, Sir, in my humble opinion true statesmanship and true patriotism consist in the skilful handling of adverse circumstances, however adverse they may be, so as to get the best advantage for one's country therefrom. The attitude of bitter pessimism which was so markedly prominent in some of the speeches in this House last Thursday, will not help my Honourable friends opposite when their precipitate action on the present occasion is subjected to review of the future historian of India in a wholly dispassionate manner. For, have we not got a Sanskrit proverb which runs: "*Yatne krite yadi na siddhati ko'tra dosha*"? That, Sir, puts my point in a nutshell. We, Indians, must not fail in our efforts to secure progress for our country—political and otherwise—even if the adverse circumstances under which we may be labouring are likely to make our efforts of no great avail. Even if their efforts fail wholly, our political leaders will still be free to take such other action as the circumstances may then demand.

Sir, in conclusion I would again implore my Honourable friends opposite in all sincerity and humility and in the name of our poor motherland, not to pursue this negative Resolution but to try to establish contact with Sir John Simon as soon as possible and to secure for her the best advantage out of what many of them may consider to be a thoroughly bad business. I trust that none of my friends opposite will misunderstand me.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta:** We fully understand you.

**The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra:** It is not my desire to thrust on them unpalatable advice and if any of my words has given offence to any of them (*Members of the Congress Party*: "No, no.") I offer them an ample apology.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** You have done your best.

**The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra:** My sole object in making this speech has been to implore them to reconsider the matter in the light of calm judgment. I can assure them that this appeal is not the outcome of a slave mentality but is based on the robust optimism of one who during the best part of a quarter of a century has succeeded on several occasions in turning circumstances more adverse than my friends are now confronted with to some advantage of his country.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas** (*Indian Merchants' Chamber: Indian Commerce*): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution that is before the House and to oppose the amendment of my friend Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan. Prominent amongst the colours in the background of the picture presented by the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords about the third week of November last, there were three main ones which I think are very pertinent to the discussion to-day. The Secretary of State said that India needed British arms to defend her, British officers to administer her and the British navy to protect her. He further mentioned, Sir, the appalling illiteracy of the masses in India, and with a background of this nature he led their Lordships of the House of Lords to the conclusion which the Secretary of State wanted. I should have thought that these four grounds by themselves, admitted as they are, by the Secretary of State for India, after 150 years of British rule in India, were sufficient reason, if any were required, for the inclusion of Indians, not in equal numbers, but in a majority, on the Royal Commission that is now being discussed by the House.

Sir, the Resolution before the House only demands equal status and equal rights for us. I would like to read to the House a small quotation from a speech made by Sir Charles Wood in 1861 when he moved the India Council's Act in the House of Commons:

"The other day I found in Mr. Mill's book upon Representative Government a passage which I will read—not because I go its entire length, but because it expresses in strong terms what I believe is in the main correct. Mr. Mill says, 'Now if there be a fact to which all experience testifies, it is that when a country holds another in subjection, the individuals of the ruling people, who resort to the foreign country to make their fortunes are, of all others, those who most need to be held under powerful restraint. They are always one of the chief difficulties of the government. Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful over-bearingness of the conquering nation, they have the feelings inspired by absolute power, without its sense of responsibility'."

Sir Charles Wood, Sir, quoted this in 1861, and I submit, with due deference to the Secretary of State for India, that this quotation applies to-day with greater force.

It is admitted, Sir, that the opposition to the Commission comes from persons including many who are respected by Government, who are recognised as persons of *bona fides*, as persons of status, and as persons with a stake in the country. The only thing which they have, in addition

to all these, is robust patriotism and a keen sense of statesmanship, from the point of view of what is in the best interests of India.

**An Honourable Member:** And also non-co-operation!

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Non-co-operation will come if you persist in what you are doing.

The question is, why do these persons, whose names have been mentioned before now in this House several times during the course of the debate, why do they adopt the attitude which they have taken? Is it contended in any seriousness that they do it in sheer perverseness, or can it be said by any reasonable man that their sole aim and object, their main purpose in their attitude, is to humiliate the British Parliament for the sake of making them go back on what they have already decided. The only person who has till now alleged this is the President of the European Association. But I expected him to know better.

Painfully conscious as I am of all our present weakness and handicaps, of the helplessness of our people, and fully recognising the benefits of British rule as I do, I consider it, Sir, my duty to my country, and I also consider it my duty to the King Emperor and the British Parliament to say in unequivocal terms that the Commission as at present constituted is not acceptable to Indians. The question may be asked, what are the reasons? I will put before the House the reasons which led me to this resolute decision of mine. I look upon this Commission as a deliberate attempt on the part of the people in power in London to humiliate India, not only in the eyes of the world abroad, but also in the eyes of Indians themselves.

**Sir Walter Willson** (Associated Chambers of Commerce: Nominated Non-Official): Why? No humiliation is intended.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I will come to it in a second. You say no humiliation is intended. We have had it from His Excellency the Viceroy and several prominent persons. Sir, if there is no special significance in the exclusion of Indians, why exclude them? Why persist in it?

**Sir Walter Willson:** Because they are not Members of Parliament.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Why insist upon keeping Indians out? May I ask whether it is an effort to set up a new precedent to show to the world and to us, our inferiority?

**Sir Walter Willson:** No, who suggested inferiority?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I ask if there is no significance about it, I ask Sir Walter Willson to tell me why do you persist in it? (*An Honourable Member:* "Who suggested inferiority?") There it is. If inferiority is not meant or intended, if you are not wishing to set a precedent for some action in the future, why not meet the Indian sentiment? Does anybody contend that section 84-A of the Government of India Act precludes Indians from being included (*An Honourable Member:* "No.") If the Act permits it,—and we have had it from Lord Birkenhead, Lord Reading and Lord Olivier that this question of the constitution of the Commission troubled these three great men,—two of whom are constitutional lawyers, for the



[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

last four years,—will my Honourable friends on my left then concede that Indians are being kept out of this Commission on purpose, and from a motive?

My time is limited and I will pass on to the next reason which is one which primarily matters. We are told that the constitution of the Commission is not likely to be changed, and the procedure which has so far been chalked out does not give Indians the fullest opportunities to bring out the Indian point of view, and to expose the anti-Indian evidence that may be put before the Commission.

**Mr. President.** (to an Honourable Member who was reading a newspaper): Order, order. This is not the place for reading newspapers.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** The procedure devised will, without doubt, prevent the Commissioners from benefiting from the experience and great local knowledge of eminent Indians who should have been put on it. May I ask whether it is possible to expect any assistance from such eminent Indians unless and until there is guaranteed to them equal status and equal rights? A great deal has been made of the procedure as put before us after Sir John Simon's arrival here. Two letters have been available to us. The first one contains, if I may say so, with all respect to that great and eminent lawyer, catch phrases of the nature of "Joint Free Conference" on "free and equal terms," and "securing equal status". My Honourable friends, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Jayakar, have sufficiently shown, and, I submit, have proved, that there is nothing "equal" and nothing "joint" about the procedure indicated in this letter. But, Sir, this letter also lets us into one further secret which I think should be marked carefully. We were told, Sir, in the discussion in Parliament that the representatives of Indian Legislature will meet members of the Joint Committee in London, and it would be like representatives of both Parliaments conferring with each other. What does Sir John Simon's letter say? I read from the bottom of page 2 of the printed copy of the letter:

"Before these decisions can be reached, the full process of which the present investigation is the first step, must be completed, including the opportunity for the views of the Indian Legislature, amongst other bodies, being presented by delegates in London to the Joint Parliamentary Committee."

The Indian delegation from here will be one of the several bodies which would be before the Joint Committee—other bodies representing the Muslim League, Congress, commercial bodies here and so on. Where is the Parliamentary part about this? And what is the importance attached to representatives from this House? This has, as far as I know, been indicated for the first time by Sir John Simon and I have no hesitation in saying that there is an unmistakable mark of inferiority about this whole business.

Sir, we have been asked why we gave the reply to Sir John Simon's first letter so soon as we did. I happened to be one—I do not know how many members were also of the same opinion—who saw certain friends of mine on the morning of the day when the first letter of Sir John Simon was due to be available to us and we arranged amongst ourselves that none of us should be in a hurry to rush to the Press unless and until we had had the fullest opportunity and time to consider the letter. But when we got that letter at 6 o'clock it contained nothing that we did not know.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta:** That is the point.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I repeat, it contained nothing which we did not know; and in spite of the contradiction of Sir John Simon, I would refer him to Major Graham Pole's letter in the New Leader of London, which said that all this was settled in London in November, 1927 . . . . .

**Sir Walter Willson:** Do you prefer Major Pole's word to Sir John Simon's?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Until and unless you prove to me that it is a lie, I will not overlook it.

**Sir Walter Willson:** That is your mentality.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Of course it is my mentality. Major Graham Pole is as much a gentleman as Sir John Simon . . . .

**Sir Walter Willson:** I did not say that he was not.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** All that I say is that Major Graham Pole has said this . . . . .

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer** (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muham-madan Rural): May I say that a statement has also appeared over the signature of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald in a New York newspaper anticipating Sir John Simon which was widely reprinted in India?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Here is something more for you, Sir Walter Willson. Now, Sir, I should have thought that in view of the fact that the Commissioners are here only for a limited number of days, we would have been given credit for the courtesy which we extended them in making public our opinion at the earliest possible opportunity. We felt that if there was any intention of meeting Indian public opinion, they should know what we felt,—and we all felt it unanimously—we were not one or two at the meeting where we decided this at the earliest possible opportunity. But, Sir, Sir John Simon says, "Trust me." The words he uses are: "When the Indian Members have learnt to have faith in my sense of fairness." Now, Sir, nobody wishes to refuse Sir John Simon all that is due to his eminent career and to the great sacrifice which he has made in taking up this work . . . .

**Sir Walter Willson:** Except that you prefer to believe Major Graham Pole.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I prefer to do nothing of the sort. I am putting before the House the views of both parties. You may believe what suits you, Sir Walter.

Sir, I might be quite prepared to put myself completely in the hands of Sir John Simon if I was looking after my own interest. I am my own master there. (Mr. K. Ahmed made an interruption which was inaudible.) Will Mr. K. Ahmed please wait a little? Sir, where the fate of thirty-three crores of people is concerned, I venture to submit to Sir John Simon himself, whether it is right to ask for personal trust and to depend upon mere chance and agree to the inquiry? I wish Sir John Simon all success, and health in the task which he has set before himself. But should anything unforeseen happen, Sir, what happens to the trust which Sir

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

John Simon asks of us. Sir, is the fate of thirty-three crores of people to be decided on personal trust? I believe this aspect is being overlooked completely. If Sir John Simon means what these catch phrases convey, surely, Sir, he can draft a more explicit letter easier and earlier than many on this side of the House.

Sir, we are told that all parties in the British Parliament are agreed on the constitution of this Commission. This may be quite true. At the moment it threatens to be but too true. But I say, Sir, and I say it deliberately, that it is most unfortunate. It makes us in India feel that where it is a question of interest between India and England, we may expect little from any in England. I wish, Sir, to pay my personal tribute to Colonel Wedgewood for the bold stand he took up for India in the House of Commons, and his name will go down to posterity for this. He said both in the House of Commons and in the historic letter which he wrote to Lala Lajpat Rai . . .

**Mr. President:** I would ask the Honourable Member to conclude his observations now.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I will, Sir, in a minute or two. Sir, one cannot help being struck by the thoroughness with which the Conservative Party under the lead of Lord Birkenhead has sought to drive a nail, and a big one too, into the coffin of the aspirations of India. (*An Honourable Member:* "No, no.") You may say "No, no", but it is a fact. I am afraid, Sir, they have sought to drive a big nail. All that helpless India says is: "Man proposes and God disposes"; we will wait and watch. India expects every man at this juncture, Sir, to do his duty (Hear, hear), and not to give way, despite all fears, all threats and all (*An Honourable Member:* "All favours") indications of being put to the greatest test. I have no doubt, Sir, India would come out right, and I say India will come out right. (Applause).

**Sir Hari Singh Gour** (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I have listened to the debate on Thursday and this morning, and, Sir, studying the situation, as I have been doing to the utmost of my ability and power, I find three clear-cut but equally divergent views expressing themselves from three wings of this House. We have in the first place my friends Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar speaking in unmistakable terms that they are not for a Commission whatever may be its composition and procedure. They stand firm on the principle of self-determination and that policy of self-determination repudiates the Parliamentary agency for the revision and expansion of the constitution of India. That, Sir, is the position of the right wing of this House. (*Honourable Members on the Congress Party Benches:* "They are right". *Some other Honourable Members:* "They are wrong.") We have now, Sir, an intermediate position represented by the Responsivists who recognise the Parliamentary agency, but demand equality of treatment as regards the status and power of our representatives in any constitutional machinery devised by Parliament. That is, Sir, so far as I have been able to understand, the position on this side of the House. We have, Sir, on the benches opposite a third view expressed, namely, of unconditional and unqualified co-operation (*An Honourable Member:* "Surrender.") with the Commission and the policy that the

Government may enunciate from time to time. Now, Sir, so far as the Resolution is concerned, if I have understood the words that fell from your lips, namely, that the two outstanding questions upon which this House has to decide are, first, not to have anything to do with the Royal Commission or non-co-operation—words which have been echoed and repeated by Pandit Motilal Nehru—then I submit that we, the Nationalists, stand somewhat in an ambiguous position because, while we are not for absolute non-co-operation, we are equally not for an unconditional co-operation. (Hear, hear.)

**Mr. President:** Order, order. Will the Honourable Member tell me on whose behalf he speaks?

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** I speak, Sir, on behalf of myself (Laughter) and I submit that so far as my own position is concerned I am not for complete non-co-operation nor for complete co-operation. I am a Responsivist and I stand for conditional co-operation, and it is in that view and in that spirit that I have tabled my two amendments and I explained to the House, Sir, that that is the position which this House must take. That is the position which I submit would be consistent with the status and dignity of Members of the Indian Parliament.

Now, Sir, I ask this House one question. A great many remarks have been made against the personalities of the Commission and against the procedure. (*Some Honourable Members:* "No, no. No remarks.") I am glad to hear that. A great many comments have been made upon the constitution of the Commission and its procedure. I ask Honourable Members one question. I ask them to read the words of the Prime Minister of England given in the House of Commons in which he has explained in clear and unmistakable terms the policy of the Government of Great Britain in regard to the future development of the constitution of this country. I read from page 2295. I ask Honourable Members of this House to carefully consider and weigh the words of the Prime Minister because they embody the promise and committal of the British Government as regards their future policy towards India. Speaking of the co-operation of Indians with the Statutory Commission, Mr. Baldwin said:

"Let Indians dismiss from their minds any thought of inferiority. They will be approached as friends and as equals. But the responsibility of Parliament remains and no procedure which suggests that that responsibility can be formally shared with the representatives of another Parliament will really advance the inquiry."

Now, Sir, two propositions are perfectly clear from this statement. One is that the British Government stands committed to the agency of Parliament, to its machinery, as the sole machinery for the expansion of the constitution of India, and those who repudiate the authority of Parliament to legislate for India, have, I submit, no place in this House and have no right to criticise the Commission because they are against the fundamental principle that the British Government has any right to legislate with regard to the constitution of India. I understand that position. It is a perfectly intelligible position. They stand for self-determination. They say that India will work out her own salvation, but how she is going to work out her own salvation I know not. I am an old man. My Honourable friend, Mr. Goswami has told us that a long and bitter struggle is in front of us. (*An Honourable Member:* "He is right.") Yes, Sir, I see that long and bitter struggle, but I will not live to see the day of

[Sir Hari Singh Gour.]

liberation dawn upon this country after that long and bitter struggle. I am a man of peace and I want to obtain the liberation of my country, if possible by treaty, if necessary by compromises and concessions, and when I see a sign in the British Parliament to respond to my wishes, surely I should be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty to my country and to myself if I were to spurn the opportunity offered to my country of advancing its cause and furthering its progress. It is in that spirit, it is with that object in view that I consider the Resolution as moved by my Honourable friend Lala Lajpat Rai (*Some Honourable Members*: "Leader!") and the amendment are more or less out of place. Let me explain the position very clearly. Lala Lajpat Rai says that the present constitution of the Statutory Commission is unacceptable. My Honourable friend, Pandit Motilal Nehru, has pointed out that the word "present" has got into its place here on account of the intervention of the Nationalists and that he is against the Statutory Commission, present, or future, this or different. That, I submit, is uncompromising hostility to all Statutory Commissions; but judging from the proposer of the Resolution, that is not his point of view. His point of view is that he is prepared to accept the Commission if he is assured of equality. That equality, I submit, has been guaranteed by the British Parliament, by the Prime Minister of England, and if we have not got that equality, if Sir John Simon's letter

1 P.M.

does not rise equal to the occasion, our complaint is not against Sir John Simon but against the Prime Minister of England, and I submit the time and occasion will arise when the Honourable the Leader of this House will ask this House to appoint a Committee to collaborate and co-operate with the Royal Commission, when we shall give expression to our feelings that unless that Committee is given equal rights with the Royal Commission, we shall refuse to co-operate. That is the time and that would be the occasion when we shall be in a position to insist upon the fulfilment of the promise given by the Prime Minister of England from the floor of the House of Commons. This is neither the time nor the occasion for it and those who want the Commission but at the same time want equality cannot possibly, I submit, vote down the Commission. The two things would be a contradiction in terms and I challenge any Honourable Member to consider and see how it is possible for them to destroy the Commission and then get equality. So far as I am concerned, my position is perfectly clear and has always been. I cannot repudiate the authority of the British Parliament to legislate for India. As a humble student of law I have learnt the history of the constitutional evolution of India. We have in the first place an autocratic King. The power of sovereignty is then transferred to Parliament and it is in that right that the British Parliament exercises its power over India. By the Act of 1919, it has parted with the attributes of some of its sovereign powers to this Parliament, and I hope that in the near future by its other Act more powers and privileges will be substantially transferred to the peoples' representatives in this House. Therefore, I submit that the power which vests in the British Parliament has to be transferred to this House. And who can transfer them? Not ourselves here but the British Parliament, and consequently the British Parliament has appointed its accredited agents to come to this country and to report to it the result of its investigation and conclusions. I submit therefore it becomes us as men who have a stake in the country, as men who

understand the constitutional position of our own country and of England, and as men above all who know our strength and weakness not to exaggerate our importance but to stand firmly and say, "You have assured us equality, equal position and power. Give us that equality and we are your men". That, I submit is the position which Members on this side of this House should take, and I venture to ask my Honourable friends on the other side to consider their position because nothing would be gained by a wholesale boycott of the Statutory Commission because they cannot be made the pivot of their attack. If they have any grievance at all, it is against the British Parliament of which the Statutory Commission are merely the accredited agents who are out here to do their duty. What would you have done if as Honourable Members of this Assembly you had gone to England as the Statutory Commission appointed by the Indian Legislature, and suppose that all the shops were closed and all the houses made unavailable to you when you landed at Dover? Would you not have said to yourself, "I am doing my duty. If these fellows have got any grievance at all it is against the Legislative Assembly that has appointed us." And I say the same thing to my Honourable friends here. If they have any grievance it is against the historic fact that the British Parliament is the master of the situation. That is the stern reality of which we have to take note.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** What do you want to do?

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** I will answer that in half a second. If we really want to do our duty by our country we should stand up and ask the British Parliament to make good their promise given by the Prime Minister of England on the floor of the House that the Committee to be constituted to co-operate with the Statutory Commission would have equal rights and status.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Does the Honourable Member say that they have got it now?

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** I say they have not. But I say you can get it, and you cannot get it if you destroy the Commission, because the Commission and the Committee are two different things and the one has nothing to do with the other. That is what I submit. The whole of this discussion is proceeding upon false issues. The Resolution says, we do not want the Commission.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** As at present constituted.

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** My friend Pandit Motilal Nehru says, "We do not want this Commission at all, as at present constituted or not constituted. We do not want any Commission." My friend Mr. Jinnah says, "No, my position is more diluted. (Laughter.) I want the Commission but not as at present constituted".

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Quite right.

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** I ask Mr. Jinnah, if you do not want the Commission as at present constituted . . .

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** That is the Resolution.

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** But that is not the purpose. As you, Sir, have pointed out, and as Pandit Motilal Nehru has pointed out, the question which is before this House is "Co-operation or non-co-operation".

[Sir Hari Singh Gour.]

(Applause.) Well, Sir, I will sum up in three sentences. If you are for non-co-operation and for the policy of self-determination, you are perfectly logical but you have a long way to go. If, on the other hand, you are for conditional co-operation, for a policy of conciliation and of give and take, then you cannot vote for the main proposition, for the very simple reason that that policy postulates that you want a Statutory Commission with an Indian Committee possessed of equal status and power to co-operate with it. And so far as those two aspects are concerned, after all the heat and dust of the two days' debate and after all the vehemence and anger which has been spent upon this question, I am perfectly certain that when the time comes good sense, common sense, will prevail. (Applause.)

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett** (Finance Member): Sir, I am very glad to have the opportunity of rising at this moment, because though there is much in Sir Hari Singh Gour's speech with which I could not entirely agree, I am fully in agreement with one statement he made, and that is, that the question before the House to-day is the old question of co-operation or non-co-operation, the choice between a barren negative and positive action for the good of India. I regard the decision that is to be taken to-day as one of very great importance to the future of the Indian constitution and, in particular, to the future of this Assembly. What is the position we find? Ten years ago this Legislature was not in existence, this Assembly was not in existence. To-day the British Parliament holds out a sisterly hand to the Indian Parliament and asks the Indian Parliament to co-operate with her in taking a guiding part in the decision as to India's future constitution, and Lala Lajpat Rai gets up and asks us to reject it. Westminster holds out a hand to Delhi, and Lala Lajpat Rai asks us to spurn it, and to spurn it in the name of the old, barren policy of non-co-operation! (*Lala Lajpat Rai*: "It is the hand of the mailed fist".) Lala Lajpat Rai began his speech on a note that has not been absent from other speeches. He said he had no faith in the British Parliament or in the British Government, or in anything that the British offer in this question of India's future constitution. May I remind Lala Lajpat Rai that faith removes mountains, and that little faith or the absence of faith makes mountains out of molehills (Hear, hear from the Official Benches). I shall deal a little later with my Honourable friend, Mr. Jayakar, but I would ask Mr. Jayakar to consider whether, if he were to take off those spectacles of mistrust, he would not find that some of the molehills that he thought he saw were merely flaws in his glasses.

**Mr. M. R. Jayakar** (Bombay City; Non-Muhammadan Urban): Will my Honourable friend preach that Sermon to Sir John Simon, that he should have more faith in his Indian colleagues. (*An Honourable Member*: "They are not glasses with a flaw but crystal glasses.")

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett**: I think it has been said by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar that the British Parliament has shamefully flouted the Declaration, the solemn Declaration, of 1917. That is the sort of statement that ought not to be made even for rhetorical purposes. It is quite simply not true. (*An Honourable Member*: "Perfectly true. Why not true"? ) Why not true? This Assembly is evidence of its falsehood (Hear, hear from the Official Benches). You, Sir, the first elected President of the Assembly

sitting in that Chair are evidence of its falsehood (Hear, hear from the Official Benches). My Honourable friend, Lieutenant Sardar Mohammad Nawaz Khan, is evidence of it,—an officer holding the King's Commission, educated at Sandhurst, and now adding a welcome new note to our deliberations here in his manly and modest speech. (Hear, hear from the Official Benches), on which I should like to congratulate him. (*An Honourable Member*: "What does his presence signify"?). His presence signifies that the voice of a large number of people that is not generally heard in this House is beginning to be heard. (*An Honourable Member*: "Whose voice"?). Sir, I ask those who are listening to me to-day to realize that it is not only on that side of the House that the question that we are discussing arouses deep emotion. I am one of those who believe that it is absolutely essential in the interests not only of India, not only of Great Britain, not only of the British Empire, but in the interests of the whole world that success should be achieved in the effort that is being made to solve at the same time a double problem,—the problem of the introduction and establishment of self-governing institutions in India and the problem of the relations between the races of the East and of the West (Hear, hear from the Official Benches). I ask those who are listening to me here to-day to listen to me as one who has during his period of service in India done his best to forward the growth of Parliamentary institutions in this country, one who has never in good or ill fortune lost the faith that is in him, has never listened to the voice of the pessimist saying that it is without possibility that the experiment should succeed (*Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar*: "We are not pessimists"). One who even to-day still clings to the skirts of the vision of a free, self-governing, single, united India, a contented partner in the British Empire. (*An Honourable Member*: "Equal partner.") And what has happened since 1917? The Declaration of 1917 was followed by the Act of 1919. That Act established the general frame-work of a constitution which was to be set up in this country and opportunities were to be given during a period of ten years for that general frame-work to be tested and for the machinery to be set working and improved in order that in ten years the question of further changes might be considered. My friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra has been working hard during those ten years, trying to improve that machinery, to make the machinery work, to adjust it and to settle it and make it productive of good for India. He has been a better Swarajist than the whole lot of the Congress Party put together. (Applause.) When you have built a new factory, how much nearer would you get to productive results if immediately the factory is built, before the machinery is properly installed, before it has been adjusted, or is really going and before experienced workmen have been trained to work it, you set to work to pull down the facade of the building in order to put up a more ambitious or pretentious one? That is what our friends of the Congress Party have been trying to do. (*Some Honourable Members*: "No".) And while doing that, they have been trying to thwart those who have been trying to work the machinery, they have been doing their very best to prevent the machinery from working. They have done more than anybody else to retard the progress of Swaraj in India. (Applause.) I claim, for all on this side—I claim for myself that I myself have been a far better Swarajist than the lot of them. (Applause.) If Honourable Members doubt it, let them compare their record with mine. (Applause.) And now the Statutory Commission has arrived here, and what do we find? We find efforts made once again to restart the old, barren non-co-operation movement with all its appalling



[Sir Basil Blackett.]

results. Sir, if the veriest die-hard had set out to try and demonstrate his favourite thesis in regard to India, he could not have staged a more suitable production than has been staged by the leaders of Indian opinion in the last month. We really are getting to a Gilbertian situation. The British Parliament is saying to India "We insist on your developing self-governing institutions; we are going to do our best to help you to establish them", and the leaders of the Party that claims to represent Indian opinion say "We will not have self-government and we will not help you to give it." (*An Honourable Member*: "We are not going to get a gift.") Sir, I agree, self-government cannot be given. (Applause.) It must be taken—either without the help of those who offer it by revolution or with their help by evolution. We stand for self-government in India by evolution, and what do the Honourable Members stand for? There is a dangerous resemblance in the situation with which we are faced to-day with the condition of India at the beginning of 1924 when the Swarajist Party arrived in this House in the full vigour of its barren creed. And what happened after March 1924? Mr. Jinnah said the other day that he was not going to be fooled. Mr. Jinnah was fooled in 1924 and he publicly confessed the fact in 1925. (Applause.) Speaking on a debate on that occasion, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas on the debate on the Indian Finance Bill said some words which I think he would have been wiser to have repeated to-day than to have taken the line which he did take. These are his words:

"I have been told—we have heard it before now and I am sure every Member of this House wants it—that what we aim at is bloodless revolution and peaceful evolution. I heard from some Honourable Member the other day that that is our goal. May I ask, Sir, if in order to attain these, namely, peaceful evolution with bloodless revolution, it is too much to ask that statesmanship of the very highest quality be exercised and also patience and self-control? May I appeal to the House in the interests of India to exercise these and consider the Finance Bill on its merits?"

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I stand by every word that has been quoted by my Honourable friend, and I maintain that my speech of to-day is quite consistent with those words.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** I would ask him to substitute for the Resolution the amendment which has been moved by Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan and consider it on its merits. I would ask him to consider on its merits the procedure suggested by Sir John Simon in his letter to the Viceroy.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** It will not apply at all.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas quoted with great applause some words of Colonel Wedgewood. I should also like to quote him.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** May I correct the Honourable Member by saying that I never quoted Colonel Wedgewood at all. I only referred to him.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** I propose to quote him, which is generally safer.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Do not put it in my mouth.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** This is a quotation from an article written by Colonel Wedgewood in a Labour paper in 1924.

**Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar:** Quote his latest.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** These are his words:

“As Mr. Satyamurti attacks me, let me tell him that I am coming to this reluctant conclusion that he and his party are afraid of democracy; that they are against the extension of the franchise, against the untouchable workers, against the starving tenants, against giving powers and responsibility to the common people of India. As their money comes from the landlords and capitalists they are afraid. They want themselves to govern India; they do not want the common people of India to govern themselves. If this is not so, let them drop their tomfool non-co-operation (Laughter), and tell us exactly what they need to make real freedom safe.”

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Ever! he has changed his views now!

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** That is due to your policy?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** Mr. Jinnah walked into Pandit Motilal Nehru's parlour in 1924. (Laughter.) By some miracle he escaped then. But if I can judge by his speech which he delivered the day before yesterday—I do not want to misunderstand it though I shall be glad if I have misunderstood it—he thinks that this is a matter of principle which means, as far as I can see, that he has now not only walked into Pandit Motilal Nehru's parlour but has been swallowed whole. (Laughter.) Perhaps I had better use a more euphemistic phrase and say that he has been assimilated by Pandit Motilal.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** All I can say is this that the Honourable Member is completely misrepresenting what I said.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** I am very glad indeed to know that I am misrepresenting Mr. Jinnah. If that is so, I cannot for the life of me see how he can reconcile his position with the intention to vote for this purely negative Resolution. If his position is that of Sir Hari Singh Gour, I can understand it; but if it is not so, then it is perfectly obvious that Mr. Jinnah has been assimilated by the spider. (Laughter.)

Now, what is the position that faces us here? I refuse to think so lowly of the intelligence of any Member of this House as to believe that he really thinks that India would have a better opportunity of taking her share in forwarding the constitutional problem at this juncture if seven spokesmen of India were nominated by the Government of India to a Royal Commission of any sort than if the Central Legislature is given the opportunity of electing seven spokesmen of India to speak for it on equal terms, for I maintain that the terms are equal (*Members of the Congress Party*: “No, no”), with the Commission appointed by the British Parliament. I cannot believe that that is the position which the Honourable Member takes. What, then, is his object?

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** That is the question.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Do not worry about it.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** Either this Commission is going to function with the help of the Legislative Assembly or it is going to function without the help of it.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Then why worry?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** If the Legislative Assembly rejects the opportunity of working with the Statutory Commission, if the Legislative Assembly refuses to accept the hand held out by the British Parliament, if the Legislative Assembly refuses to treat itself as a Parliament although the British Parliament is treating it as such (*Members of the Congress Party*: "No"), if the Legislative Assembly takes that step, then it is not the Statutory Commission that is going to suffer.

I come to Mr. Jayakar. Mr. Jayakar last November, if I may say so, showed both political sagacity and political courage. I know something of the tyranny of which he complained which has led him into rather different company at the moment.

**Mr. M. R. Jayakar:** I never made any complaint. I simply mentioned the fact.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** The Honourable Member complained of the tyranny of the pressure of public opinion. I have no objection to party discipline. But I hope that some of my Hindu friends will forgive me if I say to them that the sort of tyranny that is in question there, which prohibits liberty of thought and liberty of conscience, is absolutely incompatible with the development of democratic institutions in India. Mr. Jayakar complained that for three months he had held out the olive branch, and for three months Government had taken no action. I can assure him that if he feels that he was not supported as he should have been from the Government side I am extremely sorry, but it is not fair to say that it was merely constitutional pedantry which prevented the Government from making an announcement which could only be made by the Statutory Commission, and which was entirely outside the competence of the Government of India or the Secretary of State, an announcement which depended entirely upon the decision taken by the Statutory Commission, and which was not even adumbrated in the minds of the Statutory Committee until after they had reached Bombay. Mr. Jayakar, however, is clearly not happy in the policy of absolute negation. He said again and again that he does not want to bang or to bolt the door. Now let me draw the attention of the House to the terms of the Resolution and amendment that are before us. The Resolution is a blank negation. This House will not have anything to do in any shape or form with the Statutory Commission. (*An Honourable Member*: "As at present constituted.") There is no likelihood of its being changed. (*An Honourable Member*: "We don't want it to be changed".) But what does the amendment say? The amendment says:

"This Assembly is of opinion that the procedure put forward by the Indian Statutory Commission merits the favourable consideration of this Assembly."

That is not a statement that this Assembly should unconditionally co-operate with the Statutory Commission. It is a statement that the procedure put forward in Sir John Simon's letter merits the favourable consideration of this Assembly. In that letter there is a proposal that, if on matters of procedure any Members are in doubt, they should have a perfectly frank and open discussion with the members of the Statutory Commission in regard to that procedure.....

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Anything else?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** Supposing this is unsatisfactory, they can take, if they want to, their negative decision later; but why, I suggest, be in a hurry to take it now. The spider may be hungry, but why should the fly be in such a hurry? (Laughter.)

**Diwan Chaman Lall** (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Do you mean to say that you are sure of a majority to-day?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** I do not see why the victim should be in such a hurry to commit himself to a blank negative when by voting for the amendment.....

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Because he will suffer less by siding with this side than with your side.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** When by voting for the amendment he will simply keep the door open, which as Mr. Jayakar has said was the purpose which he has had in mind all the time and which he still has in mind. (*An Honourable Member:* "No.") As I understood Mr. Jayakar, his political sagacity still urges him to keep the door open, but his patriotism has led him to a different conclusion. (Laughter.) Sir, patriotism, unsupported by political sagacity, has done more damage in the world than probably most of the vices that exist. I suggest to Mr. Jayakar that he should join his political sagacity and that political courage which he has shown and on which I wish to compliment him, and his patriotism—all three together—and continue to keep the door open by voting for this amendment.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney** (Nominated: Anglo-Indians): Sir, my reason for joining in this debate is because it has a vital bearing on the minority communities of India (*An Honourable Member:* "Millions") one of which I have the honour to represent in this House. My friend, Pandit Motilal Nehru attempted to have a joke at the expense of the Anglo-Indian community. I may tell him that his joke has fallen flat because the quarter million people (Domiciled Community) whom I represent are educated cent. per cent. and make a very big hole in the 2 million electors, half of which represents his side of the House. But, Sir, the issue before this House, as has been frequently pointed out by previous speakers, is one of co-operation *versus* non-co-operation with the Royal Statutory Commission. I shall not touch on the number of charges brought by the Mover of this Resolution against the Government, nor will I emulate Mr. Goswami in the satire and invectives which were the cream of his elocution; nor shall I follow Mr. Jinnah in the dramatic warning he gave to the Government; nor will I touch on those points and issues already so fully dealt with by the other speakers. I shall come straight to the point and ask my friends on the other side of the House, why did they show such undue haste in rejecting Sir John Simon's offer? Let us trace the history of this Commission for the last three months and the activities of the opposition in connection with it. When its personnel was announced on the 9th November by His Excellency the Viceroy, my friends on the other side toured the length and breadth of India rousing the people to boycott this Commission as being a deliberate insult and affront to India. That was a constitutionally correct activity on their part. The Commission duly arrived. Sir John Simon issued his pronouncement which gave to them more than what they originally wanted and which they to-day deny gives

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

them equality of status. They treated this document with contempt. Why did they show such undue haste in submitting their reply? Had they the voice of India behind that refusal? Did they go to the country as was done for the boycott mandate and ask it whether it accepted Sir John Simon's offer or rejected it, i.e., obtain the voice of India or were they afraid to go to the country fearing that the offer made by Sir John Simon would be accepted as satisfying the needs of the country? In the face of this absence of appeal to the country, my friends opposite me say that they represent the voice of India and so they rejected the offer. Let me go a little further and ask—shorn of all your loud talking, your idle threats, your arrogant assumption as representatives of India, and shorn of all camouflage—I ask, with a few honourable exceptions, whom do you, sitting on the opposite benches, really represent?

**Mr. B. Das:** Whom do you represent?

**Lieut.-Col. H. A. J. Gidney:** I will ask my friend Mr. Das whether he represents the voice of India? Does he represent the voice of India? (*An Honourable Member:* "He represents the voice of Indian India".) Do the Swarajists and the opposition represent the 80 millions or the major part of the Muslim community? True you have Mr. Jinnah on your side. But does Mr. Jinnah represent the Muslims in the three important Muslim provinces of India?

**Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar:** Do you represent them?

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:** I should like to ask my friend Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, the President of the last 1927 Congress and which has been called the "Srinivasa Iyengar Congress"—when out of the 3,500 people present only 100 of these were delegates from other parts of India, whether he or that Congress, represented the voice of India?

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer:** No.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:** "Father India" represents "Father India" only. (Laughter). I shall not bandy words with him as I have no quarrel with him. Again I ask the opposite benches do they represent the depressed classes of India? Mr. Rajah has shown that they do not.

**Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar:** We have a reply yet to that.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:** Again, do you represent the six million Ind'an Christians in India?

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava** (Ambala Division: Non-Muhammadan): Yes, certainly.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:** You don't. You are not an Indian Christian.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava:** They are my constituents and I represent them.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:** Then I suppose we must include you as an Ind'an Christian. Let me further ask do you represent the minority communities in India, e.g., the Anglo-Indian, European, Jews, etc.? (*An Honourable Member:* "Yes".—I suppose the Mother India part

of it? (Laughter.) Lastly let me ask do you represent the 60 millions of Indians residing in Feudatory India? The very most you can claim to represent is a fraction of the 6 millions partly educated Indians, of whom about 2 millions have a vote. (*An Honourable Member*: "Is it our fault?")

**Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar**: You represent nobody.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney**: You know well whom I represent. At least fifty per cent. of these 2 million Indian voters do not register a vote at elections. Let me again ask:—If you do not represent the above communities then whom on earth do you represent? It appears that all are leaders—none followers—crying in a vacuum (Laughter). You know, with a few honourable exceptions, my statement is a fact—and yet you come to this House and say you represent the voice of united India, that you have the support and authority of the peoples of India behind your signatures to your hasty manifesto refusing Sir John Simon's honourable and generous offer to the peoples of India and not to any self-created oligarchy. The mere fact that you refused the offer of Sir John Simon in the way you did has discredited you as leaders of India. (*An Honourable Member*: "Thank you Colonel"). It is unfortunate that you do not possess a sufficient sense of responsibility—indeed after listening to both sides of the House on the authority, ability, and persuasiveness of Sir John Simon and his offer, I liken the speeches made to two sets of tunes played by two gramophones, one the official gramophone playing the well known tune "A'int-he-nice" the other—the Swaraj Gramophone as played by Lala Lajpat Rai in a new Fox-trot—entitled "We'll-have-nothing-more-to-do-with-little-Johnny". Ostensibly the music of non-co-operation with the Royal Statutory Commission, but, in reality a smoke screen to conceal the real purport of this boycott which is nothing more or less than a demand for immediate and complete self-government for India. This complaint about inequality and non-co-operation is all moonshine. If you will not have anything to do with this Commission, do you think you are doing your people and your country any good? You are not, you are ruining it. There is no getting away from the fact irrespective of what you say or threaten or do, that you are under the British Parliament (*An Honourable Member*: "Under British bayonets"), and so long as you are under the constitution of the 1919 Government of India Act, it is your bounden duty as members of this House, who have sworn allegiance to His Majesty the King Emperor and as representing the masses of India, if you do really represent them loyally to co-operate with the Commission and show them and the British Parliament that you are fit and not unfit for the protection of the minorities and a further measure of self-government.

**Diwan Chaman Lall**: Do not get excited, Colonel.

**Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney**: Take that advice yourself. I again ask you in all seriousness to think if you are doing India any good by adopting this policy of boycott? I submit, Sir, you are not. I therefore beg of you before it is too late—not that the voices on this side of the House will have much, if any, influence, on members who repudiate the right of the British Parliament to come to a decision as to what form the Indian constitution should take, for most of those on the opposite back benches have come here to follow their leaders and give their vote as ordered—I ask

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

you in all seriousness to consider whether in non-co-operating with the Royal Statutory Commission you are doing a service or a disservice to our country India. Sir, I support the amendment and oppose the Resolution before the House.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter to Three of the Clock.

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The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter to Three of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

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**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla** (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I entirely agree with the Honourable the Leader of the House when he says that the Resolution put forward by Lala Lajpat Rai is nothing but negation. It was for this reason that I had tabled an amendment to clearly define the position of the Party to which I belong, and the extent to which we were willing to co-operate. The amendment ran. . . .

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member is not in order in referring to an amendment which has been ruled out by the Chair.

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** I am reading the substance. . . .

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member cannot read the substance of an amendment which has been ruled out by the Chair.

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** I abide by your ruling regarding the amendment and I shall make my position clear in my speech. The question is this. When the announcement of the Commission was made I was one of those who was against the boycott and who welcomed the Commission for more than one reason. One reason was that the exclusion of Indians was a good one, because we have experience in the past that it is better to have no Indians than to have bad Indians on a Commission, and it was for this reason that I welcomed it. Another reason was that as the three groups in the House of Parliament combined together, so also Indians rose to the occasion and combined themselves and brought about the much desired Hindu-Muslim unity. To-day the Resolution that has been brought forward by Lala Lajpat Rai is a Resolution which covers four schools of thought. There is a school of thought here that we should have nothing to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form. There is another school which says that in the Commission Indians should have a predominating voice. There is a third school of thought which believes that Indians should have some voice in determining their future position. And the last school of thought says that Indians are prepared to work on equal status and equal terms. All these four parties have combined together, and for four different reasons which I have stated, they are here to support the Resolution of my Honourable friend, Lala Lajpat Rai. I do not think I should ask any Indian to accept the fifth position, and that is that of petitioners. The boycott movement, I may tell my Honourable friend, Mr. Roy, is not a movement of hatred

at all. (*Some Honourable Members*: "Hear, hear".) It is a movement to show that we are not willing to sit with the Members of Parliament unless terms of equality are offered to us. The Honourable the Leader of the House has said that in the procedure laid down equal status is granted. I shall, Sir, on the floor of this House prove to the hilt that equal status is not granted, and if the Honourable the Leader of the House is prepared to reconsider his position, then I can assure you that we on our side will not press this Resolution to a division. Our intention is to get equal status, equal position and equal power. I shall point out to the Leader of the House three or four points which are contained in the procedure, which tells us what our real position is. It says:

"The Indian side of the Conference would consist, when central subjects were being dealt with, of those first named (which means the Central Legislature). In a Province the Indian wing would primarily consist of the Provincial Members, but in order that the Central Joint Committee may not have a partial view of the material put before it we should be glad if arrangements could be arrived at which would enable its members or some of them to be present as an additional element at provincial sittings."

Subsequent to this, Sir Sankaran Nair received a letter from Sir John Simon saying that this could only be granted at his discretion. Is that equal status? Take another point:

"If a case arises when this general plan cannot be followed I should make no secret of it and should ask my colleagues in the joint free conference when, as I hope, they learn to have faith in my sense of fairness, to accept from me such account of the matter as I can give them on behalf of the Commission."

It means nothing but that the Central Legislature Committee should have faith in Sir John Simon. May I ask him why he should not have faith or trust in the Indian colleagues who will sit with him? Why should he say that we should have faith in him when he implies that he has no faith in us? He says "Leave it to my discretion". I ask: "Is that equality?". Then, Sir, I agree with my friend Mr. K. C. Roy that if a person is not able to trust his own Indian colleagues on this Committee but wants to trust the European colleagues, his evidence is not worth having. Then take another point:

"The present Commission is only authorised to report and make a recommendation."

Even in a question of making a recommendation we are not granted equality of status. I do not know where this is going to end. Then again Sir John Simon says:

"In this report we desire to include a faithful account of the opinions and aspirations prevalent in India and of the concrete proposals for constitutional reform so far as these are put before us."

So that, after discussing in a joint free conference each party makes its own recommendation. I say, Sir, is that a joint conference? Is that the same status? What is the use of saying that the same status is granted when I have proved that there is not the same status. Even in a question like procedure, if the Government is not going to give equal status, I do not see how any self-respecting person can have anything to do with the Commission. I do not wish to take up the position of petitioners. I ask my Muslim friends this. Though they do not agree with their Hindu brethren and though they think that this Commission is appointed primarily with the object of safeguarding the Moslem interests,



[Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla.]

at least they should behave in a manner that would command self-respect. If you know how to respect yourself, everybody will respect you. People can only respect you if you know how to respect yourself.

**Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan:** Can you say that in the Unity Conference the Hindus are prepared to give separate electorates?

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** Certainly. If you want separate electorates, my Hindu friends will be prepared to accept your proposals. They have said so. Sir, as I told you, I was not against boycott but I say, Sir, that I am in favour of not having anything to do with the Commission simply because it is not in the interest of any self-respecting person to go before the Commission as petitioners. If equal status is granted, I shall be the first to co-operate with this Commission.

Sir, I will now deal with the speech of my friend Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra. I can only say in two words what his speech amounted to. It is nothing but repentance and forgiveness. He told us that he has erred and is to be forgiven. (*The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra:* "Oh, no".) I can tell him that if his Government were to say that they have erred on this question and are prepared to reconsider their decision, this House would not insist on a division. But instead of that what do we find? What does Sir John Simon, for whom I have the greatest respect, say? He says:

"The Commission is of course bound to carry through its task in any event and discharge to the full the duty cast upon it."

Let us see the speech of Lord Birkenhead delivered only two days ago.

"If we are denied the assistance which we have asked for does any one really imagine that the Commission will desist from its activities or will refuse to carry out its task."

(*Several Honourable Members:* "Hear, hear".) I am glad my friend Sir Walter Willson says, "Hear, hear". Because what does it amount to? They want the assistance of the Indian people but they do not want to show them respect, they do not want to treat them as equals but as petitioners. (*An Honourable Member:* "As slaves".) I think Sir Walter Willson will desist from such remarks which do not do any credit to the community to which he belongs. (Laughter.) (*An Honourable Member:* "What were your ideas when you welcomed the Commission?") My idea was that it has brought about the much desired Hindu-Muslim unity, and to-day the four parties stand together in support of the Resolution moved by Lala Lajpat Rai. (*An Honourable Member:* "What about to-morrow".) You will have to take care of to-morrow. We do not believe in to-morrows, but only in to-days. To-morrow takes care of itself. (*An Honourable Member:* "Do we find them in this Chamber?") Both here and outside. If you were to read the papers you would not have asked that. (Laughter.) If that was not the case I would not have made the statement that the Hindus are prepared to offer separate electorates. I know something of what is going on in the country. I say that I welcome the Commission because it has brought about the unity which we all desire. We have noticed, Sir, that on the question of the Statutory Commission there has been a unity in the House of Commons,

the Liberals, the Labourites and the Conservatives, who have many differences of opinion amongst themselves, have stood shoulder to shoulder and asked us to welcome the Commission. On the other hand, we have found that where the self-respect of India is concerned we all stand together or fall together. We are not here in the least to non-co-operate with the Government. We are not here to say that we do not recognize the authority of Parliament. But what we ask, what any gentleman would ask, is, give us our self-respect, treat us as equals, not merely in words or camouflage but in reality.

I have pointed out that even in the matter of procedure equal status is not granted, and there has not been one Member of this House, either from the Government Benches or other sympathisers with Government, who has claimed that equal status has been granted by this procedure. All that they have said is that the door is open. So also do we say, look at the Resolution :

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to inform His Majesty's Government that the present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission are wholly unacceptable."

That is a door open for Government to negotiate, and I have said that we are prepared to co-operate with the Commission on terms of equality. If those terms are granted to us I shall be the first, and I am sure my Party will be with me when I say we shall be willing to co-operate with the Commission and we will have nothing to do with those who think that the Commission is not acceptable in any shape or in any form.

**Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan:** Did your leader say that?

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** That is the position of my Party, Mr. Yamin Khan.

**Mian Mohammad Shah Nawaz:** He has not said what you have said.

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** He has said so, if you only cared to listen to him, Mr. Shah Nawaz. (Laughter.)

**Mr. K. Ahmed:** Let your leader stand up again and say so.

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** He will say so a hundred times if necessary, if you have the patience to listen to him. Sir, I have made the position of myself and my Party very clear. We do not say that we are non-co-operating with the Commission as suggested by the Leader of the House. (*An Honourable Member:* "You are.") There is no such implication in the Resolution as moved by Lala Lajpat Rai, and I

3 P.M. say that if the Leader of the House agrees and if he is prepared to reconsider the decision of Government, then he will see that there will not be anything on this side of the House to fear.

As regards one other point, Sir, I shall say a word or two and I shall finish, and it is the question of the appointment of the Committee of the Central Legislature. The reason why we have moved this Resolution at this juncture is to inform the Government that if they do not give us equal status, we will have to oppose the Resolution for the appointment of the Central Committee. (*Sir Walter Willson:* "What has Government got to do with it?") I am glad to hear that, (Laughter)

[Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla.]

Sir. I say this, Sir, because there has been a certain misunderstanding in this House that this Resolution will amount to the position that we are not willing to have the Central Legislature Committee. There is time between now and the Resolution which Government intend to bring forward for the appointment of the Central Committee, and if Government are prepared to accede to the request of this side of the House for giving equal status, then this side will proceed to appoint the Committee for the Central Legislature at the proper time.

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy** (Burdwan and Presidency Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): I am grateful to you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity of speaking after my friend, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla. I have listened to his speech with much interest and, limited as I am only to fifteen minutes, I cannot devote much of my time to meeting his arguments. I have listened to the Leader of the Party to which he belongs, but I do not know whether the views put forward by him are shared by the Leader of his Party. But I put it to my friends of the Congress Party that if I understand Mr. Rahimtulla aright, his position is different from theirs, as he says in effect, "Give me equality of status and I am ready to throw overboard my colleagues of the Congress Party". What his idea of equality of status is he has not told us, excepting pointing out one or two points in the letters issued by Sir John Simon.

**Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:** I am sorry the Honourable Member does not know the meaning of the phrase "equal status".

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy:** You are mistaken. Even after the issue of that statement my friend had taken the trouble of going with the deputation of Moslem Members or by himself to Sir John Simon. Well I do not know his idea of the boycott, but I think it is quite different from the idea of boycott of my friends, the Swarajists. His idea of equality is probably equally different. Anyway I do not want to take him seriously. (*Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla:* "You cannot afford to do that".) Then I have too much respect for them for not taking note of the speeches of the Leader of the Swaraj Party and of Lala Lajpat Rai. (*An Honourable Member on the Congress Benches:* "Not necessary".) I have too much respect for Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar (*An Honourable Member:* "Too much!"), and I have too much regard and respect for my friend, Mr. Goswami (*Mr. T. C. Goswami:* "No, no"), whose father was an honoured and revered colleague of mine when I was about the same age as Mr. Goswami now is. (*Mr. T. C. Goswami:* "I hope you have grown since then"), to treat their speeches in a spirit of levity on this solemn occasion on this momentous question. But I cannot allow their speeches to go unchallenged, and their arguments to go uncontroverted on certain particulars. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar suggested that advantage was taken of communal dissensions to advance the date of the Commission, and that is one of the reasons for opposing the Commission. May I ask him what was the reason for springing upon unsuspecting Moslems the Delhi proposals three years in advance of 1929?

Was not the question raised then that a communal separate electorate is one of the causes of communal dissensions, that it was time that separate electorates should be abolished and joint electorates substituted for them? Why was Mr. Jinnah racking his brains here? And if the Government

of England were to advance the date of the Commission on that ground and send out a Commission to inquire and find out what justification there is for the allegation and the assertion that communal dissensions and communal differences are promoted by communal electorates, why should Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar find fault with the Government of India and the Government of England for accelerating the date of the Statutory Commission? Lala Lajpat Rai, if I am not mistaken, also found fault with the Government for not entrusting us with the task of framing a constitution. What prevented Lala Lajpat Rai and his colleagues of 3 or 4 parties, to which reference is repeatedly made, from framing a constitution? May I ask these gentlemen, whether they have ever sat round a round table or a square table or an oblong table or under a banyan tree and whether they attempted to frame a constitution at all? May I ask them what measure of support they gave to the Commonwealth of India Bill framed by that devoted champion of Indian freedom and liberty. (*An Honourable Member*: "Tell us the name".) The name is well known and you need not ask.

Reverting to the remarks of Pandit Motilal Nehru, I find that he has referred to section 84A of the Government of India Act and he said that by the terms of that section, Parliamentary Commission does not mean exclusion of Indians. I agree with the Pandit. I must frankly tell the House that the argument for the exclusion of Indians based on historical and constitutional grounds do not appeal to me at all. (Hear, hear.) But the argument based on the practical necessities of the case is the real argument. Because even if a Parliamentary Commission is the sole Commission contemplated by that section, even to-day we have got Lord Sinha in the House of Lords and Comrade Saklatwala in the House of Commons. May I ask our friends if Lord Sinha was appointed as a member of the Commission, would not our fiery friends have then spouted forth their fire? If Mr. Saklatwala was appointed, would not that have given cold feet to our friends, the Moderates? That is the difficulty. The practical difficulty of the case stands in the way of Indians being appointed. Our friend, the Pandit also referred to the Congress being committed to a policy of complete independence. He said, "Complete independence is the policy for which he stands and the whole country stands". That is an example of the fatuity which fond parents have for their darling child. Pandit Motilal Nehru is the father or author of that Independence Resolution. Naturally he imagines that the whole of India is committed to that Resolution. If Mahatma Gandhi is to be credited with what I read in some paper he had said, the Congress which passed the resolution was reduced to the level of a school-boy debating society.

Then our friend, Mr. Goswami, is confident of victory in the long run, and promises a bitter and a long struggle. I would have been convinced by that promise if I had not before me the failure of the boycott movement, the triple boycott, writ large on the benches opposite adorned by my friends. (*An Honourable Member*: "Why did you leave the Swarajist Party?") Why did I leave the Swarajist Party? I was just coming to that myself. I do not wish to say anything about Mr. Goswami. I do not see him in his seat. (*An Honourable Member*: "He is there".) After I have finished with what I have to say about Mr. Goswami, I will come to the question why I left the Swaraj Party. I served under the same chief as Mr. Goswami. I never belonged to the non-co-operation

[Dr. A. Suhrawardy.]

creed. I never boycotted the Councils. Ever since the Morley-Minto Reforms I have been a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. When I entered the Bengal Legislative Council, I did so because the late Mr. C. R. Das was my chief. I have now re-entered the Assembly, as my friends from Bengal know, after defeating the Congress candidate and have been returned not by one but by two constituencies. All the flotsam and jetsam which had entered the Bengal Council on the Swaraj ticket in 1923 have been swept away in 1926, and in the Bengal Council there is not a single Muslim who has been elected to it on the Swaraj ticket. The reason why I left the Swaraj Party is the death of my late chief, whose untimely death we all mourn. He is no longer amongst us and that is why this gulf yawns between me and the Swarajist friends opposite.

Mr. Goswami has referred to "the one great man and the mediocrities" as his colleagues in order to belittle the importance of the Commission. Well, Sir, we are all mediocrities, the majority of the world consists of mediocrities and the Commission has come here for the benefit of the mediocrities. I think we are safer in the hands of mediocrities than in the hands of the abnormalities and precocities like my friends. Sir, I cannot pose as a spokesman of India or as an Indian statesman whose inclusion in the Commission would be the salvation of India and the British Empire. I am here as a humble representative of the Mussalmans of Bengal, and as such I rise to intervene in the debate only to give my reasons for opposing the Resolution and supporting the amendment. I do not care who votes for the Resolution or who votes against it. Sir, when the eyes of the friends of India are fixed on the Assembly and the world outside which sympathises with Indian aspirations is anxiously awaiting the decision of the House and Indian statesmanship is on its trial, I want them to know that the Muslims of Bengal have nothing to do with this sterile policy of the boycott. I want them to appraise the true worth and value of what they do here, condemned as we are by the constitution to the position of a helpless minority. Let me remind the House that immediately on the announcement of the personnel of the Commission a boycott meeting was held in the Town Hall, presided over by that arch-communalist, Sir Abdur Rahim and Mr. Jitendralal Bannerjee, an ex-President of the Swaraj Party in Bengal, with his breast bursting with pride and swelling with elation, told the audience that the burning patriotism of Sir Abdur and his presence there that day were proofs positive of the fact that the Muslim bloc was behind the agitation. Let me now tell the House that the self-same Swarajist leader, who had given notice of moving a resolution of no-confidence in the Commission expressing deep disappointment and resentment, had to eat humble pie and withdraw his resolution crestfallen and humiliated with the following words:

"Mr. President :—I do not propose to proceed with my motion. The members of my party are not conspicuous by their presence. Presumably, therefore, they are satisfied with the constitution of the Commission."

What was the reason for this brilliant retreat? The reason was this. That astute political acrobat, on whom he had relied, finding the Muslim bloc in front of him and not behind the boycott agitation, had executed a somersault, and despite the manœuvrings of the Muslim League held

in Calcutta under the protection of petticoats and shadows of *sarees*, despite the sweet songs of sirens from the south and harangues of Pandits fresh from the pantomime in Madras, the elected Muslim members of the Bengal Council, almost to a man, are against the boycott of the Commission. That is one of my reasons for opposing the Resolution, as I am bound to be guided by the views of Muslim Bengal, not having as yet reached the high throne and eminence of All-India statesmanship.

My second reason is that boycott is foredoomed to failure. It has already failed in the Bengal Council. The diversity of motives behind the apparent unanimity is a sure factor for the ultimate disruption, defeat and discomfiture of the boycotters. The seven gramophones of the opposition sing different tunes. The unholy alliance between Swarajists, Moderates, Responsivists and Independents cannot last long. I can understand and respect the Swarajists who from the high pedestal of lofty patriotism cry for self-determination. The Moderates care two-pence for that principle. After enjoying all the plums of office, when the patriots were rotting in jail, and finding themselves fast relegated to the shelves of the political museums, reserved for fossils of bygone days, finding that they have no place in the scheme of the Secretary of State, they may well condemn the grapes beyond their reach. The Responsivists, they are out to respond. But there is no response to their offer. The door is still open. Let them in and slam the door on the Swarajists. The Independents, they forget their tall talk of self-respect, and forsake their principles when they stoop to petition and bargain with the bureaucrats and solicit the support of Sardar Muhammad Nawaz—(who represents a joint electorate—an electorate Mr. Jinnah is in love with and is dying for, though Mr. Jinnah has not as yet the honour of being returned by a joint electorate).—when it is a question of a plum for a member of their party. What reliance can you place on them? How long will the alliance last? Already the poisoned plum is having its effect. Let the hungry spider beware of the poisoned fly.

My third reason is the reason of Lala Lajpat Rai. I am lacking in that faith which moves mountains. I am grateful to him for his solicitude and anxiety for us Muslims.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. Will the Honourable Member bring this interesting remarks to a close

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy:** Will you kindly allow me three minutes more, as I have had so many interruptions.

I am grateful to him for his solicitude and anxiety for us Muslims. I wonder if he poured these friendly sentiments into the ears of that responsible statesman who enjoys his confidence, to whom he referred yesterday—Lord Olivier, who sanctioned the Bengal Ordinance. He reminds us of the Partition of Bengal and the Treaty of Sèvres. He awakens bitter memories of the humiliation of Muslims and the part played by the members of his community to bring about that humiliation. Sir, in the bitter memories of the unsettlement of the settled fact which no Bengal Muslim need be reminded of lie buried the best refutation and repudiation of the insinuation that our support of the Commission is based on any barter or bargain. Like Lalaji, we have little faith in the promises of perfidious Albion. But Lalaji will

[Dr. A. Suhrawardy.]

pardon me if I tell him frankly that we have less faith in his professions of friendship and his new rôle of champion of Pan-Islamism. He need not shed crocodile tears and tell us of the Partition of Bengal and the Treaty of Sèvres. His main argument is lack of confidence in the Commission. Our main argument is lack of confidence in him. We have to make out a case before the Commission whose competency he questions on the ground of ignorance of India. I have greater faith in the impartiality of their ignorance than in the bias of his superabundance of knowledge. While Mr. Jinnah managed to secure a couple of non-Muslim followers to prop the throne of his independence, Lalaji has miserably failed to secure even one Muslim for his Nationalist Party. It is an eloquent testimony to the faith abounding which the Muslims have in him. In his impassioned peroration the Lala allows his imagination to run riot. He finds himself in water, fire and mid-air—in a bark buffeted by the wind and waves, on the crest of a volcano and in mid-air—rather perilous and uncomfortable positions which do not conduce to clarity of mind. I wonder whether the visions conjured up in that somewhat confused metaphor led to that confusion of thought and clouding of judgment which prevented Lalaji from realising that the appeal for Muslim support would have come with better grace from the leader of that party whose efforts at Hindu-Muslim unity are being thwarted at every step by prominent members of his party who are bent on wrecking the frail bark of Indian nationalism on the shallow rocks and sands of communal passions and strife. I must now turn to the . . .

**Mr. President:** It is all very interesting, but the Honourable Member cannot go on to anything new; he must now close.

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy:** I was just turning to the remarks of the Leader of the Independent Party, but I am sorry as I have no time . . .

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Never mind; close your essay now.

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy:** But I will put one straight question to Mr. Jinnah who refused as Leader of that Party to be fooled by any one. Was he or was he not a party to the inequitable Lucknow Pact? If he was, was he then befooled or did he betray? If he was not, who befooled or betrayed the Mussalmans? I simply ask him now not to sell the birthright and interests of the Mussalmans for thirty pieces of silver. There is a mysterious virtue in the letter J. like the M. in Monmouth and Macedon. I should have liked to have developed my points but I think Mr. Jinnah understands what I mean and, as I have no time, I shall leave it at that. I do not want that his Delhi proposals should be turned into Dead Sea apples or the proverbial *luddos* of Delhi.

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer:** Sir, the Honourable the Leader of the House in his speech put it to us that this was a racial question, a question of the races of the East and the West. I think the position I take, and that many Members on this side of the House take, is exactly the same. It is a question of the races of the East and the West, and on the decision of this question depends really the future peace of the world. Sir, it was Gokhale who said that under the dispensation of an inscrutable Providence England and India had come together. And though a minor poet of the West has said that "never the twain shall meet", I am glad that the Honourable the Leader of the House has given expression to a better idea, namely, the meeting of the East and the West.

The opportunity has come to the British people—it has been given to them for the last forty years of our agitation and for the last 150 years of their rule. The question is purely a racial question. Are the British people prepared to treat the eastern races, a fifth of the world's population, the people of India, in the same manner in which they have treated their own children abroad, their white progeny in the Dominions and the Colonies?

My leader, the leader of my party and the leader of the Indian National Congress told you that the Congress had declared independence as the goal of the nation. The Honourable Member from Bengal said something which he alone could have understood (Laughter). He quoted Mahatma Gandhi and said that Mahatmaji described the Congress resolution as the result of a school-boy debate. I wish he had quoted all the things that Mahatma Gandhi said. He wanted a resolution of that kind to be followed up by action. "Do not libel Mahatmaji after going over to the other side." That, Sir, is what I would say to a Member who was once a worshipper on this side . . . .

**Dr. A. Suhrawardy:** Not on that side; never on that side. I admired Deshabandhu Das.

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer:** What did Deshabandhu Das, whom the Honourable Member said he admired, say? He said "Nations by themselves are made." He said "every nation like every man is the architect of its own destiny." Talk not of loyalty to Deshabandhu Das. (*Mian Mohammad Shah Nawaz:* "What about the Bengal Pact which you repudiate?") What about the Bengal Pact which the Honourable gentleman there repudiates? (Laughter.) That Honourable gentleman who came forward with a very entertaining piece of rhetoric to this House, said "Can you drive the British people away with ink, pen and blotting paper?" I say that if the Indian people can only rise in revolt with their pencils, they could destroy the British Empire in India. (Laughter.)

Perhaps Honourable Members on the other side are aware that a great Irish leader once said,—and the Irish people later on carried it out in a bloodier form into practice,—a great Irish leader once said,—"If only Irishmen rose in revolt with their forks and knives, they could destroy the British". And Ireland is such a small country. But I say, Sir, if only Indians make up their minds to see that each man arms himself with an inkpot, they could drown the British in an ocean of ink. (Laughter.) Let him not talk of such absurd things as driving the British out of this country by means of pen, ink and blotting paper. Whoever said that we were going to drive them out with blotting paper? (Laughter.) If the Honourable gentleman seriously wants to lead the way as to how to drive out the British, let him leave pen and ink to us milder men, but let him join the ranks of the revolutionaries. That is one way of driving the British out of India, and that way is going to be tried if other ways fail. For let not England imagine for a moment that she is going to impose her foreign rule for all time on India. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, the spirit behind this Resolution has not been understood by Honourable gentlemen on the other side. We have been asked by the Honourable the Leader of the non-official European group, (Sir Darcy Lindsay) how is it that we rejected Sir John Simon's offer in such "indecent haste"? That was the language he used, and in his very eloquent



[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

but extremely unconvincing speech, the Honourable the Home Member said, ill-considered, ill-conceived and precipitate haste characterised our action. I would ask him if England were under German rule and if Germany sent a Commission presided over by Hindenberg, and if the German President had asked the British House of Commons and the British House of Lords to form a Joint Committee and if he had excluded the Joint Committee from perusing certain documents relating to certain affairs fundamentally affecting England, would the Honourable gentlemen of the Houses of Parliament have read and re-read, inwardly digested and endorsed the document of Hindenberg.

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** Yes. (*Cries of "Shame, shame" from the Congress Party Benches.*)

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer:** The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett sitting over there says "Yes". What then? He would then have been on the side of men in our own country who have been supporting British rule. (*Laughter.*) He would have been disowned by his own countrymen, he would have been despised by his own race. But I know he would not have said "Yes" if the fates had so ordained. (*Laughter from the Congress Party Benches.*) Sir, I have come across a picture drawn by an Englishman of German rule in England, and if only they understood what foreign rule meant, they would not have asked us why we devoted so little time to deal with a document which contained nothing new, as I could prove if I had the time. Read the speech of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in the House of Commons. Read the letter he wrote in the *New York Nation*, read the speeches of the Labour Members of the House of Commons, read also the speech of Mr. Baldwin, and you will find that there is nothing new, not one single new idea, in Sir John Simon's letter. On the other hand, there is something less in that letter than what the Prime Minister of England was prepared to grant. The Prime Minister said:

"The Hon. Member for West Leicester (Mr. Pethwick-Lawrence) wished to know "Is it possible under the Government scheme for persons *not members of the Indian Legislature* to be included in the Committee to meet the Commission, by co-operation or otherwise?". The answer to that is that we have no intention of dictating to the Indian Assembly how they should do their own business. Whatever is within their power, whatever they can do, or if they think fit,"

and so on.

The Prime Minister openly acknowledged the possibility of including on the Joint Committee persons from outside the Legislature. But Sir John Simon has not condescended to grant even that,—not that the granting of it will satisfy us. Our position is quite clear. If you are not prepared to treat India as you treated Ireland, if you are not prepared to treat India as you treated South Africa, if you are not prepared to treat India as you treated Canada, India will adopt the methods that Ireland adopted; (*An Honourable Member: "Pencils."*) India will adopt the methods that Canada

and South Africa adopted. It may be that that day we constitutionalists may be destroyed, but I from my place must warn the Government that India will go the way that other nations struggling for freedom have gone. Do not for a moment imagine that you are going to be the sole monarch of the situation. India, if she cannot break the foreign manacles, will seek foreign aid. She may seek the aid of Russia; she may seek the aid of China. (*An Honourable Member* : "Like Prithivi Raj".) Yes, without repeating history but becoming wiser by it. But even supposing that the British Raj is going to be changed for some foreign Raj, why should it not be done? (*An Honourable Member* : "Change of fashion.") Supposing I am serving under a master for a particular length of time. Supposing I find that the master is not playing the game. Am I not entitled to take service under somebody else?

**Mr. K. Ahmed**: But that is not Swaraj. (Laughter.)

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer**: I agree. Not much intelligence is required to say that it is not Swaraj. (Laughter.) I know it is not Swaraj. It is foreign Raj. But it is not British Raj either. What we want is certainly Swaraj, but if Great Britain is not going to give us Swaraj we constitutionalists will have to stand out. We will stand away if we cannot enter that movement. But take it, human nature being what it is, that such a movement will come into existence resulting, to begin with, in the suspension of the Legislature. Was not the Legislative Assembly of Russia, the Duma, suspended? Do you think the boycott movement is to come to an end here after voting? Sir, to-day, ranged on our side are men who, incurring much political and public opprobrium, co-operated with you,—men like Tej Bahadur Sapru, who was my leader in the Home Rule days, you are for whom I had the highest reverence and still have. Did he not co-operate with you against the non-co-operation movement? Sir Chimanlal have tried and Sir Sivaswami Aiyar have grown grey in co-operation. Did friend Mr. stand by you? You have kicked them now; you have treachery which is untouchable. Sir Basil Blackett comes to this House and tells me of "the barren policy of non-co-operation." Yes. Non-co-operation became a barren policy because some of our own best and brilliant attitude opposed to it. But you treated their co-operation with non-co-operation for this. You excluded them from a Commission that came to judge the reforms, to recognise the Reforms in the working of which they had as great a share as I. I want I should say a greater share because you have had to face the obloquy I am the country. You treated men who have been the powerful friends of Britain with non-co-operation. The responsibility for starting non-co-operation lies wholly with the Government. And now you talk of the trouble of non-co-operation. This is only the beginning. What I want the Englishmen to realise is what the position of England would have been if England were under German rule. I want the Englishmen to understand the position in India, the position that oppresses us, the oppression that we feel. This is what Mr. Nevinson wrote :

"England would be divided into four sections under German governor-generals and there would be German governor-generals in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Germans would be appointed as district commissioners to collect revenue, try cases and control the police. A Council of Germans, with a proportion of nominated British lords and squires, would legislate for each province.

A German viceroy, surrounded by a council in which the majority was always German and the chief office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Commander-in-Chief of

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

the army, and so forth, were always filled by Germans, would hold a Court at Windsor and Buckingham Palace. The English would have to undertake the support of Lutheran churches for the spiritual consolation of their rulers. German would be the official language of the country, though interpreters might be allowed in the law courts. Public examinations would be conducted in German, and all candidates for the highest civilian posts would have to go to Germany to be educated.

The leading newspapers would be published in German and a strict censorship established over the 'Times' and other rebellious organs. Criticisms of the German Government would be prosecuted as sedition, English papers would be confiscated, English editors heavily fined or imprisoned, English speakers deported to the Orkneys without trial or cause shown. Writers on liberty, such as Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Burke, Mill and Lord Morley, would be forbidden.

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member might put it on the table.

**Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer:** A German Commission comes. It appeals to the British House of Lords and House of Commons to form a Joint Committee and the Honourable the German Leader of the House complains that the document has not been adequately considered! British honesty, British honour, British character, British patriotism would have spurned that Commission, would have treated that Commission as Britishers alone could treat it, and as Indians educated in British ways are going to treat this Commission. For liberty will come whether Britishers like it or not, not as a Christmas gift, but liberty will come from the people. Sir, liberty is no flower which blooms from within said (pause.)

**Party.**  
**man of J. D. Crawford (Bengal: European):** Sir, many speakers before rule men emphasised the fact of the momentous nature of the debate to deal with to-day, momentous not only to the peoples of India for if I had that advancement and their future happiness and contentment, House of Commons also to the constitutional advance of this House. What read the speaker? According to the Resolution, it is that this House is dis-also the spirit the present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission, not and therefore will have nothing to do with it. But you your-hand, the Chairman ruled that a vote in favour of the Resolution of England a definite vote in favour of non-co-operation by this House with Statutory Commission. My Leader, Sir Darcy Lindsay, in all earnestness asked the various parties what it was that they wanted, and propose to examine, in so far as I have been able to understand, the position of the various leaders who have made their pronouncement in this House. I will turn, first of all, to the Congress Party. The Congress Party say: "No. We want no Commission. We are out for self-determination." Now I could follow that policy of self-determination if I could understand exactly what self-determination means. Who is to have self-determination? Is it the Congress Party? Is it to be the minority or is it to be any other individual? It is a grand ideal but it is not to my mind practical politics. Suppose the Congress Party were to follow out their policy to its logical conclusion. There is but one logical conclusion to that and that is the application of force. Mr. Ranga Iyer has said it very definitely and also other members of the Congress Party. Possibly as a soldier I might prefer the method of the fisticuffs to the method of wordy warfare which we sometimes have in this House

but I am not, as some people suggest, one of those who believe in martial law, and be damned. I have been through the Great War. I have known what human unhappiness it gave throughout the world and I for one as a soldier would tremble at the thought of any responsibility that would lead India to that end so long as any other possible channel was open. My friend Mr. Goswami who spoke for the Congress Party emphasised the complexity of the problem with which we are faced. So did Lala Lajpat Rai and Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan. There is no denying the complexity of the problem. My friends in the Congress Party know it well because they have been examining this problem trying to get unity with all earnestness. I will give them credit for that. They know that the complexity of the problem has defeated them. (*Honourable Members on the Congress Party Benches*: "Not at all".) The Round Table Conference has failed to come to an agreement. (*Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar*: "We are succeeding".) You are entitled to your opinion and I am entitled to mine. Therefore I feel that the policy which the Congress Party would ask this House to adopt is a wrong policy, a barren policy and one that they cannot carry into force and one which as responsible statesmen they dare not carry into force so long as any other channel is open to them.

I would next analyse the reason given to this House by my friends Lala Lajpat Rai and Mr. Jayakar. Lala Lajpat Rai challenges the *bona fides* of the British Government. I cannot help him out of that difficulty. My own personal experience throughout the world has been that if you are an honest man, your general attitude towards others would be to treat them as honest men. (*Mr. T. C. Goswami*: "Until you are disillusioned.") If they were honest, they will find that the British public is equally honest and anxious. (*Lala Lajpat Rai*: "I have tried it for the last forty years and have entirely failed.") My friend Mr. Jayakar has on the other hand throughout taken up an attitude which has appeared to me to show a reasonable idea of what the problem was. Mr. Jayakar said, "I will wait and see what is the method of procedure which is to be adopted." Now, that was a perfectly reasonable attitude. We Europeans do not believe that you can make a constitution for this country which excludes the Indian point of view. We quite recognise that and on that point we are in entire agreement when he says, "I want to know how that Indian point of view is to be represented." But I am a little shaken by him when he says "My difficulty is that you did not make this announcement three months ago", as if three months in the history of India was a matter of very great concern. He says, "Otherwise I am concerned with the question of equality of status." I will come to that point later. He objects to taking evidence *in camera*. I do not think that I am strongly in favour of taking evidence *in camera* or give very much attention to it myself. There is a point of view that may desire to place its case in front of the British portion of the Commission. Let me remind the House of what happened in the Southborough Committee. The leader of the depressed classes sent in a letter to that Committee which reads as follows:

"I take exception to the constitution of the Committee, especially to the non-official Indian section thereof, and I am not anxious to be sat in judgment on by my political opponents."

[Colonel J. D. Crawford.]

That is in a letter to the Madras Government. And then the Madras Adi Dravida Jana Sabha said:

"We have already stated that Mr. Sreenivasa Sastriar, as a champion and apologist of Brahmin oligarchy in preference to British bureaucracy, and Mr. Banerjee as one who advised our Sabha and the community which it represents 'to enlist themselves in the German Army fighting against freedom and civilization,' because we said in our address to Lord Chelmsford and the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu that 'we would fight to the last drop of our blood any attempt to transfer the seat of authority in this country from British hands to the so-called high caste Hindus who had been oppressing us in the past and would do so again but for the British Government', are unfit to sit in judgment over any representation we may make."

So there is a class, a minority community, who may desire to state their case in front of the British portion of the Commission. If you, gentlemen, are honest, why should you not say to any minority community which wishes to adopt that procedure, "by all means go and state your case." Sir John Simon said that the gist of such a case would be laid before both sections of the inquiry.

And now, Sir, I come to the question of equality of status. We find it on these Benches very difficult to understand what it is that the Indian Members of the opposite parties are seeking. I know Mr. Jinnah tells me I am silly, that I cannot understand it. Possibly the explanations offered by a legal mind are not sufficiently lucid to make a commonplace man understand what it is he wants. I am really befogged because I cannot understand what status an Indian would require more than to be elected by his own people. (*An Honourable Member*: "Has he a vote in this Committee?") I do not mind whether he has a vote in the Committee. He has the opportunity to state his case. (*An Honourable Member*: "What is the meaning of opportunity?") What is a vote? You can state your views as elected representatives of the people on any matter placed in front of the Commission before Parliament, either *via* the channel of our own Legislature or direct as Sir John Simon has suggested.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Would the Honourable Member and the Members of his Party remain in this House to criticise and make speeches if they were not allowed to take any part in the divisions and vote? Would they agree to that position?

**Colonel J. D. Crawford:** I do not see where a division comes in at all in connection with the report stage. The object surely of this inquiry is not to state that India want self-government. It is to examine the facts and find out how far the constitution of the country as it has been settled has got any life in it and any real democratic feeling in it. That must be a question of fact and not of opinion. (*An Honourable Member*: "No, Sir, opinions and conclusions. That is what the report says.") Well, as I have said, the question of equality of status is one which appears to me one of difficulty. Brought up as I have been in a democratic country I myself would prefer to be elected by the elected representatives of this Chamber than to receive nomination to such a Commission through any outside body, and in the view of the democratic world the status of men so elected will be far higher for being so elected. We differ in our point of view. (*An Honourable Member*: "Fundamentally.") Well then there must be some misunderstanding. Have any of these gentlemen who refuse the procedure laid down by Sir John Simon taken the opportunity which

he offered in his letter, namely, "to make himself available for any conferences about any matters of procedure which his statement does not adequately cover?" Now, Sir, if you honestly believe that the procedure is wrong, that it is fundamentally wrong from India's point of view, surely then people who think so should see Sir John Simon and discuss the matter with him. (*An Honourable Member*: "What about Sir Sankaran Nair?") (*Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas*: "What change did he get?") I feel, Sir, that there is a large portion of this House which thinks that there has been some misunderstanding over this question of procedure. There are many here who do not want to vote either for the amendment or for the Resolution: and if I suggest, Sir, that that is the position, it might be that a little more expiation between ourselves might lead us to find out what this misunderstanding is, and with your permission, Sir, and with the permission of many Members of this House, I would move that this motion stands adjourned *sine die*. (*Honourable Members*: "No. no.")

**Mr. President:** Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

**Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan:** On a point of order, Sir, Colonel Crawford raised the point that this motion be . . .

**Mr. President:** Order, order. The Chair has heard it. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the motion before the House is that this Assembly should have nothing to do with the Statutory Commission as it is constituted at present. The fact that on this side we are all agreed to support that Resolution is sufficient to tell every unbiassed man that there is no desire in this Resolution to question the authority of Parliament, as things stand, in having the final voice in passing the Statute which is to be enacted to change the Government of India Act. The situation ought to be correctly appreciated by those who come forward to criticize us. The proposal now before the House is the result of the attitude taken up by the British Government. Before Lord Birkenhead had delivered his final speech on the subject in the House of Lords and the Resolution for the appointment of the Commission was moved in the House of Commons, I published an appeal to my British fellow-subjects who hold power over us at present not to exclude us, Indians, from the Commission which was to deal with the most vital interests of India, but to give us equality of status and power with them on the Commission. In concluding that appeal I said:

"This decision to keep out Indians from the Statutory Commission relating to India marks a distinct set-back in the relations of Indians with Britishers, for I cannot recall a single Royal Commission relating to India during the last several decades past on which Indians did not find a seat. It will be a lasting shame for England that Englishmen should so soon forget all the debt of gratitude they owe us for all the help rendered to them in the war, and their own repeated acknowledgment of it, and should treat us now in a momentous matter which so vitally affects us, not as equal fellow-subjects but as dependents. This is unworthy of a great nation. It is unsportsmanlike",

and I concluded with this appeal to my British fellow-subjects:

"I call upon my fellow-subjects of Great Britain to play the game by agreeing to an equal number of Indians and Britishers being appointed as Members of the Commission which is to consider and report on what Lord Birkenhead has aptly described as 'the greatest constitutional problem for many generations' with which Parliament

[Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.]

will have to deal on its Report and which most deeply concern us Indians. If this will be done and if the Government will be fair,—as I have every hope they will be once the principle is settled, in recommending for appointment on the Commission only those Indians who command the confidence of their countrymen or of large sections of them,—Indians will fully co-operate with their British fellow-subjects under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, who I fully expect will be perfectly fair and will uphold the high tradition of the Englishman's love of liberty and justice, if the true facts of the Indian situation will be brought home to him by the help of Indians as his trusted colleagues—not as suitors. But if forgetting that England went to war with Germany to uphold the principle that right is might, and acting upon the very vicious principle to demolish which Indians shed their blood together with Englishmen, namely, that might is right, they will refuse to listen to our reasonable demand, they alone will be responsible for driving the best minds of India to non-co-operate with the Government, for a sense of national honour and a regard for national interests will compel every self-respecting Indian regretfully but firmly to decline every invitation to co-operate with the Commission as it is constituted and in any of the ways that have been suggested."

Many most prominent Indians had given a similar warning before me. Then came the news that disregarding the unanimous protests of us all the British Parliament had made its decision, not to include Indians in the Commission, I then published an appeal to my own countrymen in which I said:

"The honour of the Motherland demands that we should organise and carry out a complete boycott of the Commission throughout India. I trust that all sons of India will unite in doing so."

Now, Sir, it is clear from what I have said that this decision has been forced upon us. I belong to that school which holds that it is the right of a people to determine the constitution of the government of that people. The government of the people, for the people, by the people is the correct rule of government. I am therefore at one with my fellow Congressmen in desiring that the framing of the constitution of India should be entrusted to Indians and that the British Parliament should only lend us their help in putting it through Parliament, because they at present enjoy power over us. But we recognise, that under the Government of India Act as it stands, a Statutory Commission had to be appointed. Recognising that fact, many of us were willing that that Statutory Commission should come to make the inquiry which the Act demanded, but we urged that we should be treated as equal fellow-subjects and not as dependents. That has been refused to us. Lord Birkenhead, speaking like a big bully, (Hear, hear), as he has done in his last speech, Lord Birkenhead has hurled his thunders over our heads. Any little Dogberry clothed with brief authority could speak in the impertinent manner in which he has done. If he were placed in the position of Indians, he would understand the situation better. I submit that that is not the way, the way in which Lord Birkenhead, and, I regret to add, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald also, have spoken and lectured to us, that is not the way of dealing with equal fellow-subjects, that is not the way of securing co-operation; that is the way of those who wish to drive Indians more and more apart from their English fellow-subjects. Lord Birkenhead has hurled cheap ridicule on us, educated Indians. He has said:

"If the organised political opinion—a very small fringe of the whole of India—chooses to maintain itself in silent boycotting aloofness, nevertheless the work of that Commission will be performed under this Government or under any Government of whatever political complexion that may succeed it."

Now, Sir, there was a much greater man than Lord Birkenhead, who was once Secretary of State for India, and that was Lord Morley, and I wish to make a present of a short extract from his speech to Lord Birkenhead. Speaking on the debate on the Indian Budget of 1907, Mr. Morley said :

"You often hear men talk of the educated section of India as a mere handful and infinitesimal fraction, so they are in numbers. But it is idle—totally idle—to say that this infinitesimal section does not count. This educated section makes all the difference."

And I want to tell the Government that it is not the votes of a few Members sitting on that side of the House that will help them through. So long as the most important political parties in this country stand aloof from the Commission, we do not care how many men go to present petitions to the Commission. The boycott of the Commission will be a reality and it will be so felt by the Commission.

Sir, I wish to deal now with the most important statement which Lord Birkenhead made in his last speech. He said :

"They (he and his colleagues) were satisfied that the only form of Commission that corresponded with the historical and constitutional facts of the situation and the practical modern necessities of the case was the one sent out. He made it plain that this was and would remain a parliamentary responsibility of this country. He was of opinion that no more impartial or more efficiently manned Commission than the present had ever left Britain."

Now, I impugn the correctness of the assertion that the Commission  
 4 P.M. corresponds with historical and constitutional facts. I will prove that it is in violent conflict with historical facts and a violent departure from a practice which has long been followed. So far back as 1833 an Act of Parliament practically laid it down that every Indian shall be treated as an equal fellow-subject of Englishmen. In 1858, the Queen of England in her great Proclamation published with the approval of Parliament declared that Indians and Europeans would be regarded as equal fellow-subjects. Later on in 1861, in a debate in the House of Commons the grandfather of the present Viceroy, Sir Charles Wood, who was then Secretary of State for India said that he did not recognise there was any other position except that of perfect equality of Britishers and Indians as fellow subjects. Coming to more recent times, during the war the fact was recognised that we were equal fellow-subjects. Appeals were made to us to join the war, and to support cause of liberty which the King had taken up because we were equal fellow-subjects. When the war was declared, the Ruling Princes and the people of India made what His Majesty described as "prodigal offers of their lives and treasure in the cause of the realm." We were then welcomed as joint and equal custodians of the common interests and fortunes of the Empire. Mr. Asquith, the then Prime Minister of England, said :

"We welcome with appreciation and affection India's proffered aid in the Empire which knows no distinction of race or class, where all alike are subjects of the King Emperor and are joint and equal custodians of her common interests and fortunes. We hail with profound and heartfelt gratitude their association side by side and shoulder to shoulder with the Home and Dominion troops under a flag which is a symbol to all of the unity that the world in arms cannot dis sever or dissolve."

Mr. Bonar Law said :

"I do not think that we fully realise how much these Indians who have fought and died by the side of our soldiers have helped us during these long months."



[Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.]

Lord Haldane said:

"Indian soldiers are fighting for the liberty of humanity as much as ourselves. India has freely given her lives and treasure in humanity's great cause; hence things cannot be left as they are."

Mr. Lloyd George said:

"The contribution of the Dominions and of India has been splendid. The assistance that they have given us in the most trying hours of this campaign has been incalculable in its value."

Lord Curzon said that the Indian Expeditionary Force reached France "in the nick of time and that it helped to save the cause both of the Allies and of civilisation" and added that "the nature and value of that service can never be forgotten." Mr. Lloyd George said on another occasion:

"And then there is India. How bravely, how loyally, she has supported the British armies. The memory of the powerful aid which she willingly accorded in the hour of our trouble will not be forgotten after the war is over, and when the affairs of India come up for examination and for action."

Speaking at the termination of the war, Mr. Lloyd George said:

"You are entitled to rejoice, people of Britain, that the Allies, Dominions and India have won a glorious victory. It is the most wonderful victory for liberty in the history of the world."

And, lastly, the same accredited spokesman of England said:

"These young nations (the Dominions) fought bravely and contributed greatly and won their place at the Council Table. What is true of them is equally true of the Great Empire of India, which helped us materially to win those brilliant victories which were the beginning of the disintegration of our foes. India's necessities must not be forgotten when the Peace Conference is reached. We have had four years of great brotherhood. Let it not end there."

This is what was said at the end of the war. And what happened next? In the Royal Proclamation which was published on the passing of the Statute of 1919 His Majesty the King Emperor was pleased to make the following appeal to his officers and the people:

"Let a new era begin with a common determination among my people and my officers to work together for a common purpose and let me trust that both the authorities and the people will co-operate so to work the Reforms as to secure the early establishment of full responsible government."

A little later you know there was the League of Nations constituted. At the instance of England India was invited to be an original member of the League of Nations. She was one of the signatories to the Treaty of Sèvres, and in the words of the covenant of the League "the High Contracting Parties (including India) entered into the covenant in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised people with one another."

India is an equal member with England of the League of Nations. Membership of the League was open only to a fully self-governing State, Dominions or Colony, but notwithstanding the fact that India did not enjoy self-government, she was admitted, invited to become and did

become an original member of the League of Nations. Since that time Indian representatives, some Ruling Princes and some prominent Indians, have been invited to represent India, as an equal member of the League, at every meeting of the League of Nations and at the Imperial Conferences which have been held. To all these indisputable historical facts, add the fact that during the last sixty years, not a single Royal Commission was appointed on which one or more Indians had not been appointed members. The present Commission from which Indians have been deliberately excluded does not therefore correspond with historical and constitutional facts of the situation, nor does it fit in with the practical modern necessities of the case, and the assertion of Lord Birkenhead to the contrary is entirely baseless.

Our critics tell us, Sir, that they are not able to understand the reason of our objection to co-operate with the Commission. It is a pity if they are not able to. It is not the procedure of the Commission that matters, procedure by which evidence will be recorded or the inquiry conducted. Our objection is to the principle, to the exclusion of us Indians from a position of equality of status and powers as fellow-subjects, as members of every Royal Commission relating to India which we had established during more than half a century. We have been told that ours is a negative Resolution, that it is barren of any constructive suggestion. Those who say so show that they do not appreciate what the meaning of a negative proposition is. It is a negative proposition when you cut out a cancer, when you cut out a carbuncle, when you refuse to have anything to do with what you consider to be poison, and the poison that is contained in the constitution of the Commission is the considered denial of the position of equality of Indians, as equal fellow-subjects, and their being reduced to a definitely lower status as petitioners who will be given opportunities to present their case to the Commission, but who will have no vote or voice in directing the inquiry or in shaping the conclusions and recommendations that will be based upon it. We refuse to accept that position. The whole of the objection of Indians to the Commission lies in that cardinal fact, not in the procedure which it may follow, because we have sense enough to understand that if the procedure was faulty we could hope to amend the process by representations. Our objection lies in the fact that while you treated us as equal fellow-subjects during the war, you have acted ungratefully, unjustly and not played the man in excluding us from the Commission. You have no right to determine whether India is entitled to full self-government or not, certainly you alone have not the right to determine it as you claim. India can challenge any impartial man to say why Englishmen should persist in saying that the British Parliament alone has the right to determine the manner and extent of the most constitutional reform in India when England has as a member of the League of Nations consented to the proposition that every nation should have the right of self-determination. Remembering that it was at the instance of England that India was invited to become a member of the League of Nations and take part in deciding the affairs of other nations of Europe, can anything be more selfish and unjust on the part of England than to refuse to India the right of self-determination? Are we not entitled to ask for the same right of self-determination for which other nations fought, and which has been given to them as the result of the bloodiest war known to mankind? Is there any justification for England withholding that right from us? But what is the self-determination we asked for in the present position? We asked for a round table conference at which both our

[Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.]

British fellow-subjects and we would sit together and discuss the future constitution of our country. We know that you have the upper hand over us at present. We want to do things constitutionally. I agree with one of the speakers who preceded me that it would be a crime to go to war, and incite the people to a war or hostile activities, so long as there is any possibility of an honourable solution by negotiation. But the solution must be honourable; it must be both just and honourable. Can any reasonable man contend that the attitude which the British Parliament has shown in appointing the Commission evinces a desire for a just solution of the problem in the situation in which we are placed? What is the situation? You came to this country to trade, you have acquired power in it by chance and by a combination of circumstances. You came into a country the civilisation of which is older than your civilisation. In introducing the Government of India Bill in Parliament, Lord Palmerston truly said:

"It is perhaps one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of mankind that these British Isles should have acquired such an extensive dominion in a remote part of the globe, as that which we exercise over the continent of India. It is indeed remarkable that those regions, in which science and art may be said to have first dawned upon mankind, should now be subject to the rule of a people inhabiting islands, which, at a time when those eastern regions enjoyed as high a civilisation and as great prosperity as that age could offer, were in a state of utter barbarism."

When you came to this country Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs were managing the government of this country not in a very bad way, not in half so bad a way as some English historians have described, but in many parts well and in some not well. Some of the Governments were weak. You took advantage of the situation and established your power in this country by negotiations and your greater discipline and greater diplomacy. For a long time your best representatives said your object was to keep Indians to prepare to govern themselves again. You are now trying to remain in power over us against the wishes of the people for your selfish national ends, against all sense of fairness and justice. When it suited your purpose you acknowledged us as equal fellow-subjects and agreed to treat us as such. You have acted in a thoroughly opposite spirit now. Let us examine the position. What is it that you have done? You have told us that a Parliamentary Commission was needed under the constitution. I am sorry to say that I find it very difficult to persuade myself that that is an honest belief. I do not think it is so, because when you read the words of the section, the meaning of it is quite clear. There is no word in it to show that the Commission must be a Parliamentary Commission. All that the Section says is that when a Commission is to be appointed at the expiration of ten years after the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919:

"The Secretary of State with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament shall submit for the approval of His Majesty the names of persons to act as a Commission."

I challenge any fair-minded man to say what word there is in it to exclude an Indian or a non-parliamentary person being appointed to such a Commission. The plea will not hold water. It is an argument adopted merely to support the decision when it had been arrived at to exclude Indians from the Commission. To prove that this was so, I will ask the Honourable the Home Member to answer a few questions. Where did the proposal that the Statutory Commission should be a Parliamentary Commission first

emanate from? Is it a fact that this proposition went in the first instance from India to England, from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government? I ask my Honourable friend to deny that that is a fact. I ask another question. Is it a fact that the Government of India themselves did not think that the Statute shut out the appointment of non-parliamentary persons as Members of the Commission or that it demanded that only Members of Parliament should be appointed to the Commission? I say, they did not, and I challenge the Home Member to deny this fact. I ask a third question: is it a fact that the Government of India themselves recommended five or six names of Indians—Hindus and Muslims—to be appointed as Members of this Commission? I again challenge the Home Member to deny that fact.

Now, Sir, if these are facts, then I say that this plea that the Statute demanded a Parliamentary Commission is not fair, is not honest. Let us further examine the matter, whether the proposal emanated from the Government of India or of England. How is it that in December 1926 the *Times* of London discussed this proposal? How is it that the European Association of Calcutta discussed this proposal in 1927 long before it was published? How is it that the *Pioneer* and the *Englishman* discussed this proposal nearly five months before it was announced—that is in May and June? All that, I submit, shows that Europeans had been taken into confidence and Indians were not. It deeply pains me, Sir, to say that the sorriest affair in this connection is that there were Indian Members on the Executive Council of the Viceroy who lent their support to the proposal for a purely Parliamentary Commission which would exclude Indians from it. (*Cries of "Shame".*) The common belief is that the Law Member lent his full support to this proposal. At the same time I am glad to say that the common belief also is that Sir Muhammad Habibullah opposed the proposal and predicted that it would lead to a boycott of the Commission. I should like anybody to deny these facts if he can. I submit, Sir, that it is nothing but a grave misfortune that there should be any Indian who should so far forget the self-respect which he owes to himself and to his country as to support a proposal that from a Commission which is to inquire into the future constitution of this country Indians should be excluded.

Let us proceed further. Let us note that shortly before the question of the appointment of the Commission was taken up there was published that wretched book, of which we have all heard, which disgracefully libelled the people of this country, and that there was a clique in England working to damage the reputation of India as much as it could, which helped in the preparation and circulation of that wretched book. Let us also note, Sir, that it was at this psychological time that the *Times* of London put forward the proposal that the Commission should be a purely Parliamentary Commission. I submit, Sir, I am driven to the conclusion that there was a conspiracy against us Indians, and that that conspiracy succeeded in persuading the British public and the British press that Indians are such a contemptible lot that they should not be allowed to sit on a footing of equality with Members of the British Parliament.

Sir, it is sad to think that people do not see the beam in their own eyes when they are ready to point out the mote in other peoples' eyes. If our British critics say that Indians are condemnable, then that means the greatest condemnation of the present system of British administration which

[Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.]

has gone on in India for 150 years and more. (Hear, hear from the Congress Party Benches.) If Indians are so unfit as they have been described to be by some official Members and by those who have libelled us, I say it is the severest condemnation of British rule in India, that a people possessing so much intelligence, not lacking in intelligence or industry, not lacking in enterprise or courage or in any other qualities of respectable manhood, should after 150 years of British rule, have been reduced to the position of degradation which these critics would assign to us. But we are not reduced to that position. I challenge any man to prove that man to man we are inferior to any of our fellow men on the face of the earth. I claim that we are as fit to govern ourselves to-day as any other people. It is only our fellow-subjects who have got the upper hand over us who prevent us from doing so, and wish to keep us under their feet. Now there are only two ways in which we can get back our power,—either by war or by negotiation. We are trying our best to get power by the latter method, but if it fails, I regret to say, that I agree with my friend Mr. Ranga Iyer, that the people of this country will be driven to think of adopting other means, of adopting every possible and legitimate method to get rid of the present system of Government.

Before I conclude, Sir, I should like to say a few words more about the constitution of the Commission. Lord Birkenhead said that it was constitutionally the best Commission. I think, Sir, I have shown that from the constitutional point of view the Commission that should have been appointed should have been a Commission in which Indians were appointed Members. Mr. Jayakar has already drawn attention to the clause in the Preamble which expected co-operation from Indians and Europeans in making the inquiry that the Statute contemplated. He has shown, as so many others as well have shown, that this co-operation was necessary to make the inquiry fair and satisfactory. But as we have said the spirit in which the Commission has been appointed is one opposed to admitting the co-operation of Indians who could co-operate only if they were placed on a footing of equality. It does not matter if you offer me all the opportunity you can of examining witnesses, of reading documents, even of examining witnesses *in camera*, but so long as Indians are not put in a position to co-operate, which could only be by placing them on a footing of equality with their English fellow subjects as members on the Commission, they cannot co-operate. They can only serve the Commission, and I hope no Indian with any self-respect will agree to do so. It is therefore that by the Resolution before us we seek to declare that this Assembly will have nothing to do with the Commission as it is constituted. That is a vital, positive proposition. It is not a negative proposition. The proposition is that we must be put on a footing of equality, before we can think of co-operating with the Commission, and it is idle to expect Sir John Simon to give us that equality. Sir, I wish to say nothing against him. But I say it is idle to expect him to put us on a footing of equality. If Sir John Simon thought that he could give us that equality, he would be sadly mistaken. But I do not think his letter shows that he is under any delusion. He knows that he cannot create for us that equality of status nor give us that equal power which we want. He cannot. There is only one authority in the world which can create the equality and give the power which we demand, and that is the King Emperor of England. Is it impossible for the Government of this country to recommend to the

Government in England that in view of the very great and practically unanimous opposition which has been shown by Indians to the constitution of this Commission, they should appoint 6 or 7 Indians recommended by the elected Members of this Legislature and the other Legislature as Members of the Royal Commission? Suppose a member had some business necessity and he resigned his seat on the Commission, or suppose—far from me to wish it, I hope I will not be misunderstood—suppose death removed a member from the Commission, will another member or members be appointed or not? If so, what is the difficulty in the way of the British Government recommending to His Majesty the King Emperor that seven Members recommended by this Legislature and the other Legislature should be appointed as Members of the Commission? You want our co-operation. We are willing to give it. Why won't you give us your co-operation on equal terms? By the Resolution before us we say that we refuse to co-operate with the Commission as it stands, as it is constituted. That phraseology itself indicates that we are willing to co-operate if you put us on a footing of equality of status and power. But if you persist in refusing to do that, do not think that we are such children that we shall be taken in by all the chaff that has been indulged in in the speeches made against us. We are patient. We can bear a good deal. We have borne a good deal and we shall bear further any other unjust castigation which Members in this Assembly may think it fit to inflict upon us. But I say, we have sense enough to understand that in the matter of this Commission equality of Indians and Britishers can spring only from Indians being nominated by His Majesty the King Emperor as members of the Commission.

It has been said, Sir, that there were other difficulties in the way of Lord Birkenhead. He himself said that if he decided to appoint any Indian, he would have had to appoint 16 more members on the Commission. Who ever said that we want 16 members? If you had appointed 7 Indian members, and if Indians had then quarrelled or clamoured, there would have been reason in your complaint. There is none in the plea put forward. Lord Birkenhead said further that if he appointed men of some parties, other parties would not have been satisfied. Let him appoint any seven respectable educated Indians who have independent views, and, I venture to say, the whole country will be satisfied. You say that Hindu and Mussalman members will quarrel. Surely you do not mean it. Look at this Assembly. What are we doing? Can you dispute the fact that on all national questions Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and others are all voting as one man? There may be some who do not do so. I am sorry for them. But do not the great bulk of us work together?

Another point urged by Lord Birkenhead was . . .

**Mr. President:** I do not desire to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I must ask him to close his observations within five minutes.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** Thank you, Sir. Lord Birkenhead has said that as there are various parties in the country, Indian members might write separate reports. When Sir Abdur Rahim, Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Chaubal were Members of the Public Services Commission did they not agree on most points? When other Indian members have sat on Commissions, have they taken a Hindu view or a Moslem view or have

[Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.]

they discussed questions on national lines? And taking things at the worst, suppose some Hindu and some Mussalman member thought it his duty to put forward separate notes on the question of joint electorates or separate electorates or any other question which has a communal aspect, would the heavens have come to pieces? Would that not also be a means of settlement by itself?

Lord Birkenhead also said that if he appointed Indians, he would have had to appoint a member of the depressed classes. Who ever said that he should not appoint a member of the depressed classes? We should have welcomed a member of the depressed classes. The Government have shown more disregard for the welfare of the depressed classes than we have done. My Honourable friend Mr. Rajah read one sentence from a speech of mine—a long speech—in which I had said that:

"so far as the elevation or depression of the status of the depressed classes rests upon social or socio-religious considerations, the Government would rightly abstain from making any attempt in that direction."

But this is what was said also by Mr. Dadabhoy, now Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy when he moved that Resolution. But I went on to say, which unfortunately was not read by my friend . . .

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** I have read the whole speech and that very carefully, Sir.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** You did not refer to it in your speech:

"that there are other facts to be recognised and I submit that it (their status) depends largely, almost wholly—nay, I say it depends wholly—upon education. That is the one solvent which will solve this problem, and most certainly do I wish and pray that the Government will do as much more as it can towards the spread of education among these classes."

I further said:

"All that we can reasonably ask—and I do join my friend in asking for it—is that there should be absolutely no impediment placed in the way of the education of any boy belonging to any class of the community. Be he a *Chamar*, be he a *Chandal*, be he or she of whatever class or condition, if there is a child living and breathing in India, the schools of the Government and the schools of the community ought to be open to that child as much as to any other child. And if there are any difficulties thrown in their way, if any difficulties are shown to exist anywhere in the case of these children of the depressed classes, the matter should certainly be brought to the notice of the Government for remedy at the earliest possible opportunity. I will go further. I will say, let there be special facilities, special encouragement given, in order to induce them to come forward to avail themselves of education."

Now, Sir, time will not permit of my reading a deal more which I should have liked to read from that speech. But I must read what the Honourable the then Home Member said in response to the Resolution of Mr. Dadabhoy. Speaking on behalf of the Government, the Honourable Sir Reginald Craddock said:

"What I say is that, while extending our sympathy to the objects aimed at by the Honourable Mr. Dadabhoy, we can go no further than promise to refer the question to Local Governments, and ask them whether they can do more than they are doing."

That is all that the Government promised. During the time that elected Members have been in charge of education even under the present faulty constitution, the public schools of the Bombay Presidency have been

thrown open to the children of the depressed classes as a result of a measure introduced by an Indian, the Honourable Dr. Paranjpye. In the United Provinces under the direction of the Honourable Rai Rajeswar Bali, schools have been thrown open to the depressed classes and their education is being encouraged. We non-officials also are working in numerous different ways to give the depressed classes more facilities for education. Before I leave this subject I wish to read a telegram which has been placed in my hands. It is from the President of the Madras Dravida Mahajana Sabha to which my Honourable friend Colonel Crawford referred. The President says:

"The Madras Dravida Mahajana Sabha repudiates Rajah's claim to speak for depressed classes . . ."

(At this stage Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah rose in his place. There were cries of "Order, order.")

**Mr. President:** Order, order.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:**

"The Madras Dravida Mahajana Sabha repudiates Rajah's claim to speak for depressed classes in South India. Supports boycott of Simon Commission."

**Members on the Congress Party and Nationalist Party Benches:**  
"Hear, hear."

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** It is very misleading, a bogus one and I must expose it. (At this stage there were cries of "Order, order" and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah resumed his seat.)

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** There are just two other points.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. I cannot allow the Honourable Member to refer to any new points.

**Diwan Chaman Lal:** I move that the question be now put.

(At this stage Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah again rose in his place.)

**Mr. President:** Order, order.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** I wish only to refer to two other points. The first one is this. Those Englishmen who dwell too much on religious differences among us as being obstacles to self-government should remember what the treatment of the Roman Catholics was until the year 1829 in England. They ought also to remember what was the state of feeling between Roman Catholics and Protestants, between the British and the French in Canada when responsible government was established in that country. I am thankful that compared to all that our communal differences are very small.

The last thing I wish to say to my countrymen, Sir, is this. Look at the picture of the present. The present has been well indicated in the extract which my Honourable friend, Mr. Ranga Iyer, read in the hypothetical case of the Germans ruling over England. That is the picture that you find at present in India . . .

**Mr. W. A. Cosgrave** (Assam: Nominated Official): May I ask, Sir, whether Mr. Rajah should not be allowed to make a personal explanation . . . (At this stage there were cries of "Order, order.")



**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member ought to know the rules of the House. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** I will conclude. Though I deplore their attitude I have nothing but respect for those of my countrymen who honestly feel that they ought to support the Simon Commission. I only wish them to remember that there has not been a single advance in constitutional reform during the last 45 years in India except as a result of the efforts of the Indian National Congress and other popular associations. Secondly, I ask them to remember, that if they vote for co-operation with the Commission, as it stands, they will be lowering the national honour. *(Cries of "Yes" and "No.")*

**Mr. President:** I must ask the Honourable Member to conclude immediately.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:** May I conclude, Sir? It is not for my Honourable friends, Mr. Cocke and Sir Walter Willson, to say whether our national self-respect has been hurt or not. I ask every Indian Member to remember that by voting for co-operation with this Commission they are exposing us to degradation in the eyes of all right-thinking men. *(Cries of "No, no" from the Government Benches)*, and also postponing the day of our deliverance. We want freedom. We want a free Government in this country under which all the important offices both in the civil services and the army, will be filled by Indians, under which like other self-governing nations, we Indians shall rise to the full height of our stature. The Resolution is a step in that direction, and I hope that every Indian will bear this fact in mind in voting on it. *(Cheers.)*

*(Several Honourable Members moved that the question be put.)*

**Mr. President:** It was left to Mr. Cosgrave to take up the cudgels on behalf of Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah. He ought to know that no Member is entitled to interrupt a speaker for the purpose of making a personal explanation unless the speaker himself gives way. The Member desiring to make a personal explanation must wait till the speaker resumes his seat.

**Mr. W. A. Cosgrave:** I apologise if I have violated the rules of the House. I was under the impression that no speaker was to be allowed more than 15 minutes and the Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has spoken for 55 minutes . . . .

**Mr. President:** Order, order. The Honourable Member ought to know that leaders of parties in the House are entitled to special consideration on occasions at the discretion of the Chair.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** Before I explain I should like to know whether the Adi Dravida Sabha was referred to or the Dravida Sabha. *(An Honourable Member: "The Adi Dravida Sabha.")* Then the telegram is a false one. It is a manufactured telegram, Sir. I am the Secretary of the Adi Dravida Sabha, and the President of the All-India depressed classes Association.

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member can make an explanation, but he cannot make a speech.

**Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah:** Sir, I am the Secretary of the Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha and the telegram has not emanated from them. (*An Honourable Member:* "It is the Dravida Sabha.") That is another thing. Mr. Vasudeva Pillai is the President of that and he has clearly stated in last week's papers that he and his Sabha welcome the Commission and want to co-operate with it. Their so-called patron is in the hands, and a creature, of Sriraman S. Srinivasa Iyengar and this is one of the common tactics of the South Indian Brahman politicians.

**Mr. President:** Order, order.

(Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah then resumed his seat.)

**The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee** (Nominated: Indian Christians): Sir, I have been long enough in this House to realise that in the eyes of the majority of non-official Members the position of a nominated Member is something like that of the members of the depressed classes in general society. But I do claim that though I am a nominated Member I feel that I have a free vote, as free as that of any one else. When I was asked to accept nomination, neither at that time nor at any other time has there been any suggestion that I should not wield my vote in the way in which my conscience dictated me to vote. Secondly I submit that I claim to speak in the name of more than five millions of citizens of this country.

**Diwan Chaman Lal:** When did they depute you to speak in their name?

**The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee:** If they have not their elected Member, it is not their fault. At the conference of the all-India organisation of Indian Christians it was suggested that my name should be sent up to His Excellency the Viceroy asking him to nominate me as their representative. It was on that recommendation that I was nominated.

**Mr. Amar Nath Dutt** (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Did they not send up the name of Dr. Datta?

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** May I suggest that the Honourable Member who is making his maiden speech should be allowed to do so uninterrupted?

**Mr. President:** I understand the Honourable Member is making his maiden speech.

**The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee:** Sir, I stand here simply to put forward what the expressed views of the community which I have to represent are. That community at their all-India Congress held at Allahabad on the 30th and 31st December considered the question of the Simon Commission most carefully, and they passed a Resolution unanimously which clearly stated in the first place that we were entirely at one with our countrymen in deploring the non-inclusion of Indians on that Commission. We did not for a moment say that the Commission was perfect. We also stated, and we agreed with our countrymen, that we believed that self-determination is the right of every nation. But, Sir, we are not blind to facts. We realize that the Commission is here and is going to function, above all that it has come out with good intentions. The people who have come out on that Commission have made it amply clear to us that they have come out with the very best intentions to do good to this country according

[Rev. J. C. Chatterjee.]

to their lights. And knowing that, Sir, we most respectfully appeal to the national leaders of our country to co-operate with the Commission and by co-operating throw on the Commission the onus of proving their *bona fides* and all their good intentions. We also appeal to the powers that be that as large powers as possible should be given to the Members of the Legislatures elected by these Houses. Now, Sir, those were the views clearly expressed by the one organization that our community possesses, and those are the views that I stand here to put before the House. Sir, there are only three papers that are run by our community, one the *Mahisi* of Lahore, the *Guardian* of Calcutta and the *Indian Christian Messenger* of Allahabad. In all those papers these views are also clearly stated, if anybody cares to read them, though I know that very few of our countrymen ever pay any attention to our existence simply because we happen to be small in numbers. I submit further that we are not petitioners. We are not asking for anything, reserved seats, etc. We have not sent any telegrams, about which so much play has been made by the other side. We have not sent a single telegram. We have not sent up any deputation; we are not putting forward any charter of our rights. But we do say, that according to our lights, according to the best of our abilities, we have most carefully considered, as citizens loving our nation and our country as much as anybody else, the position, and have come to the conclusion that, facing the facts as practical beings, in this imperfect world, we do feel that unless we co-operate at this time with the Commission we shall be doing harm to the cause of this country. And speaking personally, I may say, that I came to this House with an absolutely open mind on the question. (A *Honourable Member*: "No.") Yes, Sir, I did. Till two days ago I did not know with what side I was going to vote. I did my utmost and was prepared to learn, and I did learn from the address that His Excellency the Viceroy gave here and also from what I heard from the Chairman of the Commission. I learnt one thing, and I take my stand upon that. They have said quite clearly that they believe in the good intentions of those who criticise them. They have asked, that those who criticise them should also believe in the good intentions of the Commission. I take my stand on that. I say that giving credit to people for good motives never has done any one any harm. And then, Sir, I appealed to the great leaders on the other side. I begged them to teach me. I said, "Tell me what do we lose by co-operating." And I was told that it would do me no good to co-operate. Granted. Suppose that it does us no good. But I asked what harm would it do. And nobody would give me a real answer to that except that our dignity would be hurt. We are living in a world of many imperfections, but when it comes to a matter of facing practical things, I ask, is that a reason why we should put ourselves in the wrong before the judgment seat of history and of other nations and allow our case to go by default simply because we believe that our dignity is likely to be hurt? I have the utmost admiration for Lala Lajpat Rai to whose province I have the honour to belong, but as I listened to his speech with rapt attention, I felt that all great men must be inconsistent. He began by telling the House that he believed in the good intentions of the members of the Commission, but his most eloquent speech showed that he did not believe in their good intentions. I appeal to my friends opposite to just think of this, will it do us really any harm in believing in the good intentions and motives of those who have come out on this Commission? We have been told that

they have come to do their best according to their lights, Sir. They have been described as being like gramophone records and it has been said that they will repeat what the Government fill their minds with. I ask, Sir, should we not also shout as loudly and fill the records, so that they may take in everything, and might not Lala Lajpat Rai and other Honourable Members speak louder than Government, so that their voices should drown the voices of the Government Members? I feel, Sir, and I have it from the Chairman of the Commission, that they are here not as judges but as interpreters. How are they going to interpret us if we do not want them to interpret the country rightly? I submit, Sir, after all, is this going to be the only and last Commission? Suppose they betray us, suppose they do not give us everything we want, is this going to be the only Commission? If we ourselves do not take our chance now, if we do not do what we have been invited to do, what will the next Commission do? And finally, Sir, I say, are these things only settled here? Is there no such thing as a Providence, that guides the destinies and affairs of men? Is not there a Providence that judges between man and man and nation and nation? If we at this time show our faith and show our co-operation, is there not a Providence that will take note of these things? And then, again, I say, is there no such thing as the judgment seat of nations? If we to-day keep away, if we say we are not going to have anything to do with the Commission, simply because we do not believe in their good intentions . . .

**Lala Lajpat Rai:** I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I did not say that I did not believe in their good intentions.

**The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee:** What I meant was that his speech implied that.

**Lala Lajpat Rai:** No, never. I expressly said I gave them the best credit and the best intentions.

**The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee:** Well, Sir, what I say is this. Is there no power in public opinion? Sir, if we have done our bit and if we are again let down, what will the verdict of the civilized nations be? Then and then again, Sir, we shall be justified in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of our people.

Finally, Sir, I will only close with these words. I am not a politician. I am not a lawyer, but I have spent 20 years in dealing with humanity. It is my profession as a teacher and as a minister of religion to deal with human beings, and not with files, not even with debates but with human beings—people who open their hearts to me,—and I say, Sir, that if there is any need in the world to-day, there is need of one thing, and that is good-will; and I feel, Sir, that because we have not got good-will, because there is suspicion, because there is failure to give credit for good intentions to people from whom we differ most, that the rancour, the poison of hatred is looming large in our country. It is poisoning our entire affairs between us and the Government, between one man and another, between one community and another. If therefore this House is going to persist in the attitude of non-co-operation, because we still think that the Commission is not perfect, then we are further spreading that poison of ill will and mistrust. Sir, no one has ever suffered for trusting men but many have suffered for mistrusting people and I feel, Sir, that we should show the spirit of trust which is being asked of us. After all, ten years is not

[Rev. J. C. Chatterjee.]

an interminable period in the history of any nation. What is ten years? And therefore that is what I desire.

Finally, Sir, I just want to say one word. It is open to us now to withdraw and therefore let our case go, as it were, by default. It is open to us to withdraw now and not send a delegation. It is open to us not to sit with them. Then, shall we be able to say that our case went by default and an *ex parte* decree was passed? If we co-operate now, what is there to prevent our withdrawing at any stage? We may withdraw at any stage. There are these people, who come and say that they have come with good intentions and that they want to do their best. They ask us to co-operate with them. They might write a report which would surprise some of the most doubting among you. I know what I have said will put me to a great deal of odium, but I do believe that I would be without the courage of my convictions if I did not say what I felt. I think what the majority of my community have said in their resolution, what they then felt and also what I feel now is in the best interests of the country. I say this, that those who refuse to co-operate this time, for whatever reasons, are putting the hands of the clock of this country back a great many years if they do not co-operate. If they do co-operate, they will be putting forward the cause of this country.

(Several Honourable Members moved that the question be put.)

**Mr. President:** The question is that the question be now put.

The motion was adopted.

**Lala Lajpat Rai** (Jullundur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I want to make it clear at the outset of my reply that my Resolution does not involve any general scheme of non-co-operation. All the discussion directed against it on that ground is absolutely beside the point. I quite understand the view which the Chair took that it simply confines itself to non-co-operating with the Commission as it is constituted to-day, and nothing else and nothing further. I do believe in the principles of non-co-operation; I have always believed in them. But unfortunately I also believe that we cannot carry it to its logical consequences; and therefore at the present moment I am not asking for any general scheme of non-co-operation. We on this side of the House are all agreed that the Commission as at present constituted is unacceptable to us and we shall have nothing to do with it. There we stand, nothing more and nothing less for the present. Secondly, Sir, I want to make clear what I said about the coming in of the United States into the war. I never said that the United States entered into the war after the announcement was made. I gave the genesis of the entry of the United States into the war and I am very glad that I am supported in the statement by a very high authority which I will just quote before you. My point was this, which I remind the Honourable the Home Member to remember, that in 1916 the war was going against the Allies; the Allies were very anxious to bring in the United States of America and the United States of America would not come into the war unless they were assured of the aims and objects of the war and unless they were sure of the attitude of the British Government towards India. Sir, on this, the

scheme of announcement about India was settled in 1916, though announced in August 1917. What I maintain is this, and I quote one of the highest authorities in support of my proposition. Lord Chelmsford, Sir, in speaking from his place in the House of Lords on the 24th November, 1927 made the following statement:

"I came home from India in January, 1916, for six weeks before I went out again as Viceroy, and when I got home I found that there was a Committee in existence at the India Office, which was considering on what lines future constitutional development might take place. That Committee, before my return in the middle of March, gave me a pamphlet containing in broad outline the views which were held with regard to future constitutional development. When I reached India I showed this pamphlet to my Council and also to my noble friend Lord Meston, who was then Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. It contained what is now known as the diarchic principle."

The scheme was practically settled in March 1916 though the announcement was made in August 1917. The United States entered into the war, as my Honourable friend said in April, 1917. So, the position that I held was not at all incorrect. Again, in the same speech Lord Chelmsford said:

"It is true that Mr. Montagu was a mouthpiece of that announcement but it is common knowledge that the announcement in its substance had been framed before Mr. Montagu assumed office."

I suppose that that should be a complete answer to the Honourable the Home Member's reply to my statement.

Then, Sir, some statements have been quoted by the Honourable the Leader of the House and one of these statements which he quoted was the statement made by Colonel Wedgwood at the time when the non-co-operation campaign was going on in India. I think it will be better to read his latest statement in which he makes his position clear not only about the boycott of this Commission but also about the non-co-operation movement. This is what he said in the House of Commons on the 25th November 1927:

"There is one final word I should say. I have always opposed the non-co-operation of Indian politicians. Nothing could be more futile. Non-co-operation in the working of the machine for the control of government in India injures nobody but the people who refuse to help in the working of it. But a refusal to petition foreigners for favours is a very different thing. What are the Indians losing if they do not give evidence before the Commission? Are they losing anything at all? The actual information required by the Commission can be got voluminously from the numerous reports supplied by and to the Muddiman Commission. They can have reports from every Province in India. Consequently, information will not be lacking."

Whatever may be the value of Colonel Wedgwood's opinion as to non-co-operation, it is not fair to quote his former statement without bringing his latest statement to the notice of the House in which he contrasted his present opinion about the boycott with his past opinion about non-co-operation. The two things stand on quite a different footing.

Now, I want to make another point clear. Much has been said by Members on the other side that the British Parliament wants to insist on giving self-government to India. I never had any knowledge of any such insistence. After all what do we want? We want only self-government and if the British Parliament wants to give it we shall be only too willing to take it with great pleasure. In spite of all the diatribe that has been hurled on me by my friend Dr. Suhrawardy, what does he say?

[Lala Lajpat Rai.]

He says: "We have had enough of these promises, we have had enough of these pledges, we have had enough of these declarations and we have had enough of this co-operation and they have all brought us to this conclusion that nothing that the British have promised has actually been carried out. Sir, that is a charge that we bring against the British and that is the main reason why we do not want to co-operate with this Commission. As I said, we do not believe in the *bona fides* of those who have appointed this Commission. I want to make it perfectly clear that I have absolutely nothing to say against the present Commission but what I do say is that they can do us no good in their present constitution because they have no such power. I repeat it once more that it is not in their power to grant us equality of status. They are restricted in their power and in their functions by the document which has appointed them and according to that document they have absolutely no power to give us an equality of status. All this talk about their giving us equality of status is, to my judgment, absolutely rubbish. There is no substance in it; there is no logic in it; they cannot go beyond the terms of the document by which they have been appointed. They can only act up to the instructions which have been given to them in this matter. Therefore, all that talk is perfectly irrelevant.

Sir, I put to the Government one question: Do they not attach any significance to the fact that all those people who had been hitherto co-operating with the Government for all their lives are now united in boycotting this Commission? Does the Government really understand the significance of this unity? It is not the Congress people alone but all the Moderates and all those who have held high offices under Government and who were patriots and trusted members of the Government of India at one time or the other and who were then credited with the higher political sagacity—they are all at the present moment against co-operation with this Commission.

They say the only honourable course is to boycott. Has that no significance for the Government of India or the Government of England? We are under no delusion that this Commission will not go on with its work. We do not expect any change, nor do we want any change. But we are under no delusion that the Commission will not go on with its work, with the co-operation of "millions of Muhammadans", "the millions of the depressed classes", and with "millions of Anglo-Indians". All we say is that we shall not willingly be a party to any document which does not give us equal status and equal rights. We do not say that they cannot carry on the work without us. That is not our point of view. We know our position. We are not holding out any threats, or indulging in any bluff. We think that our sense of self-respect does not allow us to co-operate with the Commission on the terms on which they want us to co-operate.

Mr. Chatterjee has been very eloquent. He says he approached a leader, probably alluding to me, and that I could not satisfy him. I cannot give out the substance of the talk he had with me, because it is against the etiquette of the House to refer to private conversation—I think it was very unfair of him to quote part of that conversation. Otherwise I could have shown to you the absolute rot that he has been talking.

Then I come to my friend, Sir Hari Singh Gour. I cannot understand Sir Hari Singh Gour's point. He has explained it generally, and he has been telling you that he objects to my Resolution as it involves non-co-operation. The wording of his wire to me was, "I am in favour of boycott, if unanimously accepted by all parties". The ground which he now takes is different. He has changed his position. He is entitled to do that, but let him remember that that was the original position which he took up.

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** I rise to a point of order. My Honourable friend has perhaps forgotten that I never said anything of the kind.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. There is no point of order.

**Sir Hari Singh Gour:** It is a personal explanation.

**Lala Lajpat Rai:** I shall be very happy to send him a copy of that telegram, because I still possess it.

Now I do not want to prolong the debate. I want to say one or two words to my Muslim friends. Mr. Shah Nawaz has been talking to me about the Hindu-Moslem question, and the same thing has been said by Dr. Suhrawardy. They have been harping on the question of separate electorates. Let them take it from me that we on this side of the House have absolutely no intention of thrusting joint electorates on them unless we can carry with us the bulk of Muhammadan Nationalists. We have no intention of going down on our knees to them. One of them, Dr. Suhrawardy, says he does not believe in the good faith of England, perfidious Albion was how he referred to her, but he has less faith in the Hindus. I appeal to him as a true Muhammadan, to have faith in nobody. Let him stand by himself on his own legs without having any faith either in Hindus or Englishmen. Why should he have any faith in anybody? His Prophet says, "Have faith in nobody but Allah". If he has no faith in Hindus and he thinks he will be better treated by Englishmen, he is entirely mistaken. The English will not live in this country for ever. It is we and they who are going to live for ever here. He has no faith in Hindus to-day, but he will have to cultivate that faith some time or other. We have ample faith in them and, God willing, we will one day prove our faith in them.

A taunt was made about our failure to make a constitution. It is very easy to say that. No constitution made by any party can be unanimously agreed to. There are different interests, and there are interests put up, which will never allow unanimous agreement. So long as there is a third party it is almost impossible to draft a unanimous constitution; and that is the reason why we have not attempted it so far; but God willing we shall show them a united constitution; let them not harp on this that we have not been able to show them a constitution. The time has not yet come; we have just started on it; constitutions were not made in a day or in a few days' time; no country in the world was able to do so. Look at the time the constitution-making in the United States took; look at the time the constitution-making has taken in England itself; look at the time constitution-making has taken in South Africa. It is no use taunting us that we have not been able to put up a constitution so far. I can quite understand why Lord Birkenhead repeats this parrot cry; they have enough influence in the country and can put



[Lala Lajpat Rai.]

agencies in motion which will not allow us to make a constitution and that is the reason why he makes that offer so often. We understand the value of it. There is not the least significance in it and we do not believe that it is a *bona fide* offer at all. With all that, we are trying our very best; Nationalists, Hindu and Muslim alike, will soon, God willing, come to an agreement upon the main points of this constitution and we shall draft a constitution.

Sir, I do not want to detain this House further; I just want to say one or two things more. Some Honourable Member spoke of the tyranny of public opinion, in reference to the position of my Honourable friend Mr. Jayakar. But, Sir, tyranny of public opinion is much inferior to the tyranny of Governments. Governments have got plenty of money in the treasury and they have plenty of offices in their gift; their tyranny is much more potent and much more influential and much more effective than the tyranny of public opinion, which is at best impotent. You talk of tyranny of public opinion. Why do you not stand aside and give us a fair chance? The easiest way to find out what is the opinion of the Indian community with regard to this Commission is to let the officials stand aside, and allow us to settle the question among ourselves. Let us see what is the vote of all non-officials—nominated and elected alike. Let us see what they stand for. But with these twenty-six machines drawing heavy salaries from that great battery of Indian finances in their hands, using all our money for their purposes, for them to ask us to bring about a united India, I submit, is not fair. That is not how Englishmen, before coming east of Suez, behave in their country. It is absolutely hitting below the belt. I again make this offer that on any proposition on which the Opposition and the Government differ let the officials stand aside and see what the non-official community declares and let them take that as the opinion of the country. (*An Honourable Member*: "Let us take a plebiscite in the country.") (*Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta*: "We are prepared.") It has been said, "Oh, we never intended any insult." Yes, perhaps; no mere insult or affront was intended; we say your action in question is not an insult—it is an outrage; it is an outrage on all sense of justice. There is no question of insult; insult is a very weak term; it does not cover all that we feel; we feel that your action in entirely ignoring us, in setting us aside although the matter affects us most, is not a mere insult, but something much more than an insult.

Then, Sir, there was a talk of democracy. I really cannot contain myself when those gentlemen on the opposite benches should talk of democracy. Is not this Government the very negation of democracy? Are we not seeing every day and from day to day how they over-rule the elected Members of this House, the elected representatives of the people? An autocracy, in the words of the author of the "Lost Dominion", talking of democracy is a farce which is worthy of the stage rather than the Assembly. Well, Sir, I would not say anything further.

A reference was made to Miss Mayo's book. I do not want to refer to it; I leave that dirty book—that dirty thing—aside. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has been quoted so often to the effect that all the English

parties have combined together. Yes. We know all the robbers have combined. In our eyes they are all robbers. What do they expect us to do? Suppose a dacoit comes and wants to take my things at the bayonet. Am I to say to him, "Yes; I will co-operate with you in taking away my property"? We are not going to do it; we have done it long enough for the past 150 years and that is my reply to Mr. Chatterjee. He says, "Why not give a trial?", as if we have not given them a trial for all these years—for the past 150 years. There is no question of trial at all. There is a limit to all patience and trial, and I say we have reached that limit. It now behoves us like men to take a united stand, all parties combining together. And I declare, Sir, on the floor of this House, to all the Indian Members of this House, that every vote against my proposition is a vote against Swaraj, every vote against my proposition is a vote for the continuance of bondage, and every vote in favour of my proposition is a vote for freedom. The choice lies between Swaraj and bondage, and therefore I ask every Indian Member to vote for my proposition.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Orerar** (Home Member): Sir, the hour is late and this debate has been prolonged. It is not, therefore, my intention to detain the House which has already listened to me with much courtesy and indulgence, at any great length. I do think, however, that the course of the debate has indicated that in the speeches made and the arguments used, Honourable Members opposite are under one or two serious misapprehensions. Mr. Rahimtulla intimated that he and his friends would take a different view if Government changed what he called their erroneous decision. Pandit Motilal Nehru referred to an indication on the part of Lord Birkenhead of a desire to enforce his autocratic will. He was referring to the appointment of a Statutory Commission.

Now, Sir, the fact that censures of that kind—I am not now concerned with the question whether those censures are just or not,—I think myself they are unjust—but the fact that they should have been directed against the Government of India indicates a total misapprehension of the true constitutional position. I would beg, therefore, the indulgence of the House for a few moments while I recall what are indeed a very few elementary facts in the matter. The Statutory Commission was appointed with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament by submission of the Secretary of State to the Crown. The Crown issued to the Commission a Warrant under the Royal Sign Manual which gave them a commission to conduct a certain inquiry. That act of State having been completed, the Royal Statutory Commission, within the terms of their Warrant, are complete masters of their procedure. Therefore, I say that criticisms of the character which I have adverted to are not only misdirected—and I must repel them not merely as being directed against the Government of India—but they do themselves indicate a complete misapprehension of the true facts. Now, what are the true facts? Armed with this authority, the Commission are an independent and impartial tribunal for the purposes of their inquiry. They are, as I have said, masters of their procedure. Their procedure preliminary at any rate has been indicated in a document with which we are all familiar.

[Mr. J. Crerar.]

I will deal in passing with the point which has been raised in regard to that document. It has been alleged that that document was drawn up and determined before the Commission arrived in India. I do not myself see that that particular point compared to the substance of the document is of any great significance except that significance was attached to it by my friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and in courtesy to him I should venture to make a reply on the point. Sir John Simon has, I understand, stated that that document was not determined, that it was not written, till after the Commission had arrived in Bombay. A question was asked why Sir John Simon should be believed on that point. Apart from other reasons which I think will appeal to the vast majority of the Members of this House, there is one very definite reason, and it is this, that Sir John Simon was alone competent to speak on this point responsibly and authoritatively, and that any one else who spoke on that point and differed from him spoke irresponsibly and without authority. Well, Sir, . . . .

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** Will the Honourable Member agree that the contents of Sir John Simon's letter were settled in London wherever the letter might have been written? That was the point.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** That was not the statement that was made and I have dealt with the point.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I repeat that is the point, Sir.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** No, I do not believe that that is the case. That is a matter on which Sir John Simon and his colleagues are the competent authority and I do not for an instant believe that he made a statement which is in any way misleading on that point.

**Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas:** I am quite prepared to believe, Sir, that Sir John Simon drafted the letter himself, but the question is of the contents.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. Mr. Crerar.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** The Commission have very great independence and authority. I do not believe that in the whole history of a Royal or Statutory Commission there has ever been one appointed which had committed to them so great and so important an inquiry. The powers of a Statutory Commission are very great indeed. Their powers for good are enormous and exercising those powers with the authority and the prerogative of Parliament, they can, if this Assembly and other bodies choose to co-operate with them, effect one of the greatest and most beneficial tasks that has ever been performed. But as the Commission have themselves already intimated, the task is so great that they cannot indefinitely postpone their direct contacts with it. They have indeed gone beyond a position of independence and impartiality and, as has been intimated in this document, they have so far deferred the receipt of material bearing upon their inquiry in the hope that they may be able to enter

upon its examination in collaboration with the Committee of this House. But obviously that position cannot continue indefinitely, and I think that this House will be very well advised to reflect for their part on the enormous ground to be covered and the great dangers, the great inconvenience that must necessarily be incurred by delay.

Well, Sir, I pass on to take another point which was made by the Honourable Lala Lajpat Rai in his opening speech and which was adverted to by Pandit Motilal. I regret that in the brief space at my disposal I cannot follow in detail the clouds of surmises and assumptions which underlay the questions which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya addressed to me. I shall deal with one particular point which arose. Lala Lajpat Rai made an appeal to the Moslems and to the depressed classes to abstain from any contact with the Commission. Well, the Moslems have made an effective reply on their own.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** Some Moslems, not Moslems.

**Sir Walter Willson:** Plenty of them.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** I repeat, Sir, that the Moslems have made a very effective reply.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah:** No; some Moslems.

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** And regarding the depressed classes—I am not particularly enamoured of the phrase, but as it is used in common parlance, it is therefore convenient—it has been employed by Lala Lajpat Rai—there is one point which I think it is necessary to put with more precision. Lala Lajpat Rai claimed, and it is in no way my concern to dispute the claim—indeed I am prepared to admit it and honour it—that he had himself made great exertions in the cause of the depressed classes. I am willing to acknowledge also that many of his associates agree with him in that point of view. But I must point out that while Lala Lajpat Rai indicated that the depressed classes have great grievances against Government, that is precisely the point of view that the depressed classes have themselves not put forward. Their most insistent and their most vehement complaints and grievances deal with Brahminical taboos and caste prohibitions.

**Lala Lajpat Rai:** Were they brown Brahmins or white Brahmins?

**The Honourable Mr. J. Crerar:** I am perfectly prepared to admit further that many members of those castes take an enlightened view in the matter; only it is not so frequently our experience that very active measures in pursuance of that enlightenment have been taken. I would venture from that point of view to recommend to Lala Lajpat Rai that he should discuss these matters or discuss them further with quite a considerable number of his political friends and associates, I hope with ultimate benefit to the depressed classes. In the meantime, if the depressed

[Mr. J. Crerar.]

classes prefer another and a more expeditious means of airing and obtaining remedy for their grievances by placing them before the Simon Commission, I do not think that we should justly accuse them of undue impatience or of any unwisdom.

Now, Sir, I have only two submissions more to make. I come to two Honourable and learned gentlemen who come from my own Presidency. Mr. Jayakar spoke in his speech of a broad point of view—'a broad point of view', as I subsequently discovered, appears to be a polite phrase for what Mr. Jayakar in another situation would have called irrelevancy. But as regards what he did effectively say I must compliment him on his very able and dexterous discharge of what I recognise was a very difficult and delicate task. It is notorious that in military operations one of the most hazardous and difficult is a rapid retirement under pressure. Mr. Jayakar performed that evolution with extreme skill. The only point which I wish to put to him is this, was there any real necessity for performing that evolution at all? I will not ask him whether it would not be better for him, because he is disinterested, but would it not have been better for his Party and for his country if he had maintained his original position, and better still, if he had continued his advance? The other Honourable and learned gentleman from Bombay, Mr. Jinnah, approached the problem, as one might expect from his ingenious and original mind, from a somewhat different point of view. Speaking as a constitutional lawyer, he had the prudence and the candour, which I acknowledge, to refrain from disputing as a constitutional and legal fact the legal and constitutional sovereignty of Parliament. If I may say so without presumption, I sometimes think that when Mr. Jinnah applies his legal mind rather than his political mind to a problem he comes to his soundest and his best conclusions. On this occasion I merely ask him to continue his logical faculty and to carry his realism a little further. I might be charged with being presumptuous and perhaps even slightly impertinent if I surmised that Mr. Jinnah attained that eminent position at the Bar which he occupies and adorns, not by standing on points of legal punctilio, but by obtaining the best possible results for his clients. I see no particular reason why a course of conduct to which Mr. Jinnah has devoted his eminent talents with such success should not be similarly applied on the present occasion. I would only like to bring more prominently to his notice that it would be a mistake to regard the present controversy or the present inquiry as a matter which concerns only three considerable parties—the Commission, the Government and the leaders of the principal political parties in the country. I venture to recall to him a ground on which I trust he will act, namely, that by far the most important party to that discussion is the country, the whole country and the whole population of India. I trust that this debate will be concluded in the interests of that party in the case.

**Mr. President:** The House has discussed and debated at very great length the two alternative proposals. It is now time for the House to come to a decision. The procedure I propose to adopt for the purpose of ascertaining the decision of the House is this. I propose to put the proposal of Lala Lajpat Rai to the vote first. If it is carried, the other proposal drops. If it is not carried, then I will put the other proposal to the vote.

The question is :

"That the following Resolution be adopted :

'This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to inform His Majesty's Government that the present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission are wholly unacceptable to this House and that this House will therefore have nothing to do with the Commission at any stage and in any form'."

The Assembly divided :

**Mr. President** (While the division was in progress): It is a very bad precedent that the Honourable Haji Abdoola Haroon is setting up in this House. He is not in order in lighting a cigarette in the Chamber.

Order, order. Mr. K. Ahmed will have all the protection from the Chair. Will he come and sit down here and tell me to which Lobby he wants to go? Will he come in? The Honourable gentleman will have all the protection from the Chair.

**Mr. K. Ahmed:** I have not yet made up my mind to vote in any lobby, Sir.

AYES—68.

Abdoola Haroon, Haji.  
 Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.  
 Acharya, Mr. M. K.  
 Aney, Mr. M. S.  
 Ayyangar, Mr. K. V. Rangaswami.  
 Ayyangar, Mr. M. S. Sessa.  
 Badi-uz-Zaman, Maulvi.  
 Belvi, Mr. D. V.  
 Bhargava, Pandit Thakur Das.  
 Birla, Mr. Ghanshyam Das.  
 Chaman Lall, Diwan.  
 Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.  
 Chunder, Mr. Nirmal Chunder.  
 Das, Mr. B.  
 Das, Pandit N'lakantha.  
 Dutt, Mr. Amar Nath.  
 Dutta, Mr. Srish Chandra.  
 Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Raja.  
 Goswami, Mr. T. C.  
 Gulab Singh, Sardar.  
 Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.  
 Ismail Khan, Mr.  
 Iswar Saran, Munshi.  
 Iyengar, Mr. A. Rangaswami.  
 Iyengar, Mr. S. Srinivasa.  
 Jamnadass, Seth.  
 Jayakar, Mr. M. R.  
 Jinnah, Mr. M. A.  
 Jogiah, Mr. Varahagiri Venkata.  
 Joshi, Mr. N. M.  
 Kartar Singh, Sardar.  
 Kelkar, Mr. N. C.  
 Kidwai, Mr. Rafi Ahmad.  
 Kunzru, Pandit Hirdav Nath.  
 Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. Dharendra  
 Kanta.  
 Lajpat Rai, Lala.

Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan.  
 Mehta, Mr. Jamnadas M.  
 Misra, Mr. Dwarka Prasad.  
 Mitra, Mr. Satyendra Chandra.  
 Moonje, Dr. B. S.  
 Mukhtar Singh, Mr.  
 Murtuza Sabeb Bahadur, Maulvi  
 Sayyid.  
 Nehru, Pandit Motilal.  
 Neogy, Mr. K. O.  
 Pandya, Mr. Vidya Sagar.  
 Phookun, Srijut Tarun Ram.  
 Prakasam, Mr. T.  
 Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.  
 Rahimtulla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim.  
 Rang Behari Lal, Lala.  
 Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.  
 Rao, Mr. G. Sarvotham.  
 Roy, Mr. Bhabendra Chandra.  
 Sarda, Rai Sahib Harbilas.  
 Sarfaraz Hussain Khan, Khan  
 Bahadur.  
 Shafee, Maulvi Mohammad.  
 Shervani, Mr. T. A. K.  
 Siddiqi, Mr. Abdul Qadir.  
 Singh, Kumar Rananjaya.  
 Singh, Mr. Gaya Prasad.  
 Singh, Mr. Narayan Prasad.  
 Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.  
 Sinha, Kumar Ganganand.  
 Sinha, Mr. R. P.  
 Sinha, Mr. Siddheswar.  
 Tok Kyi, U.  
 Yusuf Imam, Mr.

## NOES—62.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.	Kabul Singh Bahadur, Captain.
Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.	Keane, Mr. M.
Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Nasir-ud-din.	Kikabhai Premchand, Mr.
Alexander, Mr. William.	Lamb, Mr. W. S.
Allison, Mr. F. W.	Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.	Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath.
Ashrafuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Nawabzada Sayid.	Mohammad Ismail Khan, Haji Chaudhury.
Ayengar, Mr. V. K. Aravamudha.	Moore, Mr. Arthur.
Bajpai, Mr. G. S.	Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Lieut.-Sardar.
Bhuto, Mr. W. W. Illahibakhsh.	Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
Blackett, The Honourable Sir Basil.	Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Bray, Sir Denys.	Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
Chalmers, Mr. T. A.	Rajah, Rao Bahadur M. C.
Chatterjee, The Revd. J. C.	Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur Makhdum Syed.
Chatterji, Rai Bahadur B. M.	Rao, Mr. V. Pandurang.
Coatman, Mr. J.	Roy, Mr. K. C.
Cocke, Mr. H. G.	Roy, Mr. S. N.
Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.	Sams, Mr. H. A.
Couper, Mr. T.	Shah Nawaz, Mian Mohammad.
Courtenay, Mr. R. H.	Shamaldhari Lall, Mr.
Crawford, Colonel J. D.	Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
Crerar, The Honourable Mr. J.	Singh, Raja Raghunandan Prasad.
Dakhan, Mr. W. M. P. Ghulam Kadir Khan.	Suhrawardy, Dr. A.
Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.	Sykes, Mr. E. F.
Gavin-Jones, Mr. T.	Taylor, Mr. E. Gawan.
Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.	Willson, Sir Walter.
Gidney, Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J.	Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
Gour, Sir Hari Singh.	Young, Mr. G. M.
Graham, Mr. L.	Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Nawab Sir.
Hussain Shah, Sayyed.	
Hyder, Dr. L. K.	
Irwin, Mr. C. J.	
Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar.	

The motion was adopted. (*Cries of "Bandê Mataram."*)

(At this stage the Honourable Sir Basil Blackett was seen to fall down in his seat. Mr. President and several Honourable Members made enquiries.)

**The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:** I am quite all right, Sir.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 20th February, 1928.