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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

Tuesday, the 17th May 1949

The Constituent Assembly of India met in the Constitution Hall, New Delhi, at Eight of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad) in the Chair.

RESOLUTION *RE* RATIFICATION OF COMMONWEALTH DECISION

—*Contd.*

Seth Govind Das (C.P. & Berar : General) : * [Mr. President, I rise to support this motion and to oppose the amendments moved in respect to it. The first question that arises in this connection is whether the agreement accepted by our Honourable Prime Minister in any way restricts our freedom or our democracy, from the political, economic or any other point of view. I wish to say that our country will remain entirely free even after this agreement is accepted. When the question of our Prime Minister's visit to Great Britain was raised, I had asked a question in the Parliament whether any decision could be taken there which would create any obstacle in our country's future republican status. Our Prime Minister had clearly stated in reply thereto that he was not going to accept any such decision there. When Shri Damodar Swarup Seth stated yesterday that our Prime Minister had done something which he had no right to do, I was astonished to hear Shri Damodar Swarup remark that the complete independence, which we were striving for all these twenty-eight years, has ended, and that our Prime Minister had not consulted us on this issue before going to England. I wish to tell Shri Damodar Swarup that the Jaipur Session of the Congress itself, under whose banner we fought our battle for independence for the last twenty eight years, had given its decision in this respect and our Prime Minister has simply given a practical shape to that decision.

The truth is that the world has now become very small. The countries of the world have come very near to each other; such means of transport are now available to us that we can go from one place to another within a few hours, whereas in olden days we used to take a few weeks in doing so. In these circumstances, can we stand aloof, and if we cannot, what should we do? Moreover, we can revoke this agreement at will.

Yesterday, Mr. Damodar Swarup had remarked that the fact of joining a bloc implies that we will have to remain in that bloc in foul as well as in fair weather. I wish to say that if this agreement has any peculiar characteristic, it is this, that while remaining in Commonwealth we are not bound to accept every decision of the Commonwealth. The next question that arises is that if we have to associate with somebody, then with whom should we do so? We have a very old connection with Great Britain. Till the achievement of our independence, we had a different kind of connection with her, but now that we have attained our freedom, another type of relationship has been established. Till the attainment of our independence a sort of struggle had been going on between Great Britain and us for the attainment of that independence, and I admit that there was some bitterness in that struggle According to the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, which is now before the

* [] Translation of Hindustani Speech.

[Seth Govind Das]

world, we can have no enmity with anybody. Still there was necessarily some bitterness due to the struggle. Later on the circumstances changed. We became free and achieved an independence due to Mahatma Gandhi's greatness, without any bloodshed. Now there is no friction, no bitterness between Great Britain and ourselves. That bitterness has now given place to friendship. If we look at things from our old angle of vision, we find ourselves faced with difficulties. Yesterday Mr. Kamath had quoted a shloka from the Gita. I wish to remind the members of this Constituent Assembly of another shloka from the Gita itself. If we look at everything from the old angle of vision due to anger, we are reminded of this shloka of Lord Shri Krishna which says:—

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः, समोहात् स्मृति विभ्रमः।
स्मृति भ्रंशात् बुद्धिनाशो, बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति॥

*Krodhadbhavati sammohah, sammohat smriti vibhramah
Smiriti bramshat budhinasho budhinashat pranashyati.*

(Anger gives rise to wrong thinking which creates forgetfulness. Forgetfulness destroys wisdom, and by that a man perishes.)

Thus, in these matters, we should not allow anger or resentment to over power us, and we should make our decision after taking into consideration the present circumstances.

I heartily congratulate our Honourable Prime Minister for facing the actual circumstances of today. He is the same leader of ours under whose Presidentship we had adopted for the first time the complete independence resolution at Lahore. He has done what was best for the country in the circumstances.

The Commonwealth that we have joined, I agree, is not yet a real commonwealth. I know that the condition of our nationals in South Africa is undoubtedly a matter of pain to us. But to the people of south Africa is ought to be a matter of shame. I also admit that the White Policy which is being followed in Australia is unbecoming of the Commonwealth. But the question is whether we would be able to bring about any change in all these matters if we do not join the Commonwealth? You are aware of what is being done in U.N.O. about the question of Indians in South Africa. These questions, in fact, have no bearing on our joining the Commonwealth. We will have to solve these problems in a different way. It would not be proper for us to take any decision under the influence of anger. It is the feeling of some people that as a result of this agreement we may have to side with the Anglo-American bloc in the event of any war which may break out in future. But our Prime Minister has repeatedly made it clear that our remaining in the Commonwealth does not imply that we would be under any obligation to join them in any war that may break out in future.

I, however, hope and believe that at some future date we shall be in a position to assume the leadership of the other nations of the Commonwealth by virtue of the balance of power shifting in our favour on account of our philosophy, our approach to life, our man-power and the natural resources available to our country. A dream, the dream of the federation of mankind, is already present in the imagination of people all the world over. It is a dream, a pleasant dream. I know not whether this dream is one that can ever be fulfilled, but if it be possible to translate into concrete reality. I can say, in view of the position we hold today, that our country would be able to

make its contribution to the fulfillment of this dream by bringing about the establishment of the federation of mankind. I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister again, and I conclude with a personal prayer to God that the agreement entered into by our country for the stable peace, freedom and an all-round progress of the people of the world, may prove a blessing not only to us but to the world as a whole.]

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (East Punjab: General): *[Mr. President, I support this motion with all the force at my command. On this occasion I offer, without the least trace of hesitation in my mind my congratulations to the Prime Minister. It is not, as put by Sardar Patel, his personal triumph alone, it is also a triumph for that policy of straightforwardness which our country has been following. Our Prime Minister has on many occasions explained the highlights of our national policy. The most fundamental and central factor in it is that India is a sovereign independent Republic. To those who seek to confuse the issue by quoting from the old speeches of Pandit Nehru I would like to say that they should not forget that it was Pandit Nehru who for the first time taught us on the banks of the Ravi to fight for complete independence and that he did so at a time when many people used to consider dominion status as the substance of independence and when many made no distinction whatever between independence and dominion status. They must remember that at that time he had put before our eyes a standard of Independence which could be a matter of pride for any first-rate power. They must also remember that it was he who placed before us the Objectives Resolution which is considered as the very soul of our Constitution. I fail to understand why people should be surprised if he brings forward before us this Resolution which gives us status in the world. Those who give such a weight to his speeches should also have the sense to realize that the same wisdom and idealism with which he had drafted those resolutions are being used by him in seeking to secure our acceptance of this Declaration with a view to advance the interest and glory of our country. Why should they feel hesitant when he asks us to accept it? Speaking for myself I can say that I welcome and support it most heartily because I find it in accordance with the objectives which have been always before us.

The second highlight of our foreign policy is our determination to extend our aid and support to the nations which are comparatively suppressed. The third fundamental principle which we have always kept in our mind is that we should not improperly align ourselves with any political bloc and lastly that we should not be a party to the violation of the rights of any nation. It is our duty not to act contrary to these four principles.

But the agreement, the ratification of which is being sought by this resolution, is not only in complete conformity with all the four principles but is also calculated to promote them. I have not the least doubt that this Resolution is not only quite proper in itself but also reflects correctly the objective dear to our heart. I would like, Sir, to draw your attention on to some past history. It has been asked what advantage we would have by means of this agreement. We have also been asked to keep the debit side of this agreement in our view. Many people here think of weighing in a common scale the advantages and disadvantages that are likely to accrue to us by this agreement, and I agree that this is a valid criterion. I would in this connection like to submit that we should remember that the effects of history are as significant as those of geography and that we cannot escape from these effects, do what we may for the last few centuries, Great Britain had been ruling us not because we liked it but on account of the compulsions of history. So long as we needed them we retained them and they proved useful to us. We may, by the way,

*[] Translation of Hindustani Speech.

[Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava]

cast a glance at our Ordnance factories today which are producing arms and ammunition. We will find that the officers and managers of these factories are English Officers. It cannot be denied that we cannot confidently assert that we have made as much progress during these two years as other countries could make after centuries. I accept that the Government of Nehruji and Sardar Patel has raised us very high in the estimation of the world during these two years and we will achieve an equal status with other countries, which is our due. But this can be achieved only gradually. We should not foresake wisdom. We should no doubt adopt such methods as may enable us to become as free as the other nations of the world. All of us will have to admit that the consequence of their contact for centuries has been that in all aspects of our life, whether it be the composition of our Legislature or the constitution of our state, whether it is the system of our law or the organisation of our army or navy, the character of our industry or the way of our living, the outlook with which we approach life or the culture that we possess, the method of progress adopted by us or the path of advancement chosen by us, all have evolved a new pattern or way of life which is more or less like the one which the great countries of the Commonwealth have adopted. The fact is that even though we want to establish a Republic in our country we follow the Democratic way of life along with Great Britain and other democracies.

If we follow anybody today it is the Parliament of England which is the Mother of Parliaments. The Constitution that we are framing here today is in fact based on the Government of India Act of 1935. I do not suggest that we, who have an ancient civilization and are an independent nation, are seeking to copy anybody. We do not want to copy anyone at all but at the same time we should not forget that we cannot snap the connections of years all at once. At present if we need and part of an aeroplane we have to approach Britain. If at Delhi we purchase any machine, we have to approach Britain for its parts. We are at present dependent upon England for all our machinery. Why do we then ignore the fact that it is necessary for us to maintain, for some time at least, the connections we had with some countries for a very long time? It is true that we have severed our connection from the British Crown. We have done the correct thing. But would it not be wise to continue our connections with that country for some time to come when it is to our advantage to do so? We did a similar thing in 1947 in accepting in our Assembly that Lord Mountbatten would be our Governor General and General Auchinleck our Commander-in-Chief. But so long as it is not so, would it be wise to turn out all those English Officers who are running our factories? So long as it is advantageous to us, it is in our interest to stay in the Commonwealth. No association is always harmful. It is said that the British and the Americans are pleased over our decision to stay in the Commonwealth. I am also very much pleased over it because all associations are for mutual gain. It has been said that it would have been better if we had not accepted the King of England as the symbolic head, if we had solved the South-African problem and if we had put an end to the White Australian policy by entering into some agreement. I humbly submit that such things could not have been included in that agreement. If Pandit Nehru had raised this question the representatives of other countries would have told him that they were not prepared to talk to him about it, because even now there were untouchables in India who had no right even to purchase land, and that so long as such conditions prevailed in India, they were not prepared to talk to him. May I ask whether we had ended in India the evils which we want other countries to remove? It is my assertion that we have not. A number of honourable Members have tried to introduce such things here by tabling amendments. I say that this is altogether irrelevant and that we cannot adopt any new proposal in regard to such matters.

It has been said that we are entering an association which concerns the Anglo-American bloc and therefore we will become members of that bloc and as such we will cause offence to Russia. It has also been said that, if Russia so desires, her troops can reach India within hours. I humbly submit that this is altogether wrong. You will pardon me if I give a commonplace example. It is said that it was bad of such and such a person's mother to have got an husband. But if after that she left him it was all the worse. We had this association for a long time. It was possible that other countries would have cancelled this association as soon as we declared that our country was a republic and would have told us that we might go our own way as we were not associated with the King. Our Pandit Nehru had not gone to England to appeal to the countries concerned somehow to include our country in the association. He went there because these nations wanted to retain their old connections, whether we accepted allegiance to the King or not. Today every Indian can hold his head high. He is not under any other government except the Sovereign Indian Republic. This is of prime importance. Had they said that we could be included on some other condition and not on this condition, then this question could have been raised. So far we had vehemently opposed this Commonwealth democracy because we had no equal status in it. But now that every member is an equal partner in it, why should we hesitate to join it? If today other countries feel it necessary to associate with India, India also has a need to associate with other countries. I cannot accept even for a minute that our Assembly can have any hesitation in ratifying this agreement. In fact it is a great triumph for us that while we would not owe any allegiance to the Crown, the other countries owing such allegiance to the Crown are and would be eager for our association with them. Obviously the ratification of the agreement is to our advantage. Besides, there are other factors which must be kept in view in assessing the value of this agreement today. The political and economic conditions of our nationals in the British possessions will be very adversely affected if this link is broken today.

There is a small council in the UNO which has been formed with a view to raise the standard of living of the countries that have a very poor standard. In the last parliamentary conference which was attended by the representatives of thirty four countries, there was a proposal that the name of the British Commonwealth should be changed into Commonwealth and in fact it was so changed. Dwelling upon the economic conditions of my country I had said in that conference that England did not do justice to India. India has a coastal line of five thousand miles but England had left no ship with us. We have railway tracks extending over forty thousand miles but we have not a single workshop where locomotives may be manufactured. There is absolutely no justification for withholding the sterling balance of seventeen hundred million pound's belonging to a poor country like India, I would like to suggest that a council, as the one in the UNO, should also be formed in the Commonwealth so that it may help to raise the standard of living of the member countries that have a very poor standard of living. May I ask you which country can help us in getting our needs supplied today? Will Russia help us? Can we expect this help from U.S.A.? I feel, Sir it is the duty of England and other member countries of the Commonwealth to do justice in the matter and help a lending hand to India in improving her economic condition. If they desire any benefit from us, we too must gain some benefits from them. The Commonwealth has been recognised in the International Trade Charter and according to this Charter the Commonwealth must give the same privileges to other countries of the world that it receives from them. Therefore it is wrong to say that our joining the Commonwealth will antagonise Russia. There is no question of Russia being antagonised. There is absolutely no occasion to cut off our age-long connections with other countries.

[Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava]

It has been an ancient tradition with India that whenever she has formed friendship with any nation she has always stood true to her friends and fulfilled her obligations honestly. We should not now cut off our old connections with them and thereby give them a chance to feel aggrieved.

There is no doubt that the organisation of the Commonwealth has neither any secretary nor any president. The British King is said to be the head of the organisation. But to be frank, I fail to understand his position. However, he will not preside over the meetings of the Commonwealth, he will not function as its president and will never give his casting vote. There is absolutely no question of veto. He will never have the occasion to use these powers. It is said that the King has no function at all in the Commonwealth. This agreement has less significance than even a treaty and you can scrap it any moment you like. Thus all the members will remain independent in the common family of Commonwealth. It is not a partnership but an association in which we all are as members and therefore it elevates our position. As members of this association we can manage our affairs, in a more effective way. With these words, Sir, I lend my full support to this motion.]

Mr. Tajamul Hussain (Bihar: Muslim): Mr. President, Sir recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru went to England and there entered into an agreement with six other independent countries; and now we, the representatives of the people of India, are asked to ratify that agreement. The question before us is whether we are to ratify that agreement or not. At this stage, I do not propose to discuss the merits or demerits of that agreement. It is immaterial for my purpose whether that agreement was good, bad or indifferent. I say, Sir, and I have no doubt the House will agree with me, that we have no option, but to ratify that agreement. My reasons are obvious and simple. Pandit Nehru did not enter into that agreement as Pandit Nehru. He entered into that agreement as our Minister for Foreign Affairs, as our Prime Minister and as our leader, and as the sole representative and spokesman of the people of India, and in the name of the people of India. Therefore we cannot afford to let him down at this stage. I have already said it is a treaty and.....

An Honourable Member: Even if it is bad?

Mr. Tajamul Hussain: He is our representative and as such he went there, and we never asked him not to go, though we knew he was going. Did you ask him to consult the House as to what he was going to do? Such things never happen. Did the Prime Minister of Canada consult his people there? But we are told, and we have listened to the statements of our leaders, and we know that the people here were consulted, and the Deputy Prime Minister told us that he was in entire agreement with what had been done. Is there any sensible man who is not in agreement? When our representative goes and enters into an agreement, it does not matter what agreement it is, we must follow it and ratify it. That is my view, Sir.

Now, let us see what that agreement is. India is an independent country. Now it is absolutely independent. It is under no country, and it is as independent as the United States of America or the United Kingdom, or any other country in the world. It has full sovereign powers. It can make and unmake anything. It can make war with any country. It can negotiate peace with any country. No country can interfere with our internal or external affairs. At present we are a member of an association commonly known as the Commonwealth of Nations. The question before us is: should we continue to be a

member of that Commonwealth of Nations? I say, Sir, if it is to our advantage—and it is to our advantage—we must remain in it. As far as I can see, the only objectionable feature is that the King is our Head at present but that objectionable feature has been very ably removed by our Prime Minister. No longer the King of England is the King of India. He will only remain as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth of Nations. India under this Agreement or Treaty will owe no allegiance to the King. If our President of the Republic were to go to England or America or Russia or to any country in the world, he will be treated as the Head of our State. If the King of England were to come here, or the President of the United States of America, he will be treated no more than as the Head of a free State. The King of England will not be treated as the King of India anywhere. We will respect him as the Head of his State as they would respect our President as the Head of another independent State.

And what is the Commonwealth of Nations? As I have already said, it is only an association of Prime Ministers of seven different independent countries, and each member can leave that association whenever he likes. To give an illustration. Supposing England were to declare war against Russia, what would India do? There are only three things that India can do. It can side with England as against Russia, which I am sure India will never do, and I am sure Pandit Nehru will never do that. The second is, that India may remain neutral. That will be done. The third alternative is that she might side with Russia as against England. If that happens, then the association of nations known as the Commonwealth of Nations will break up like the League of Nations. It will, *ipso facto*, dissolve. Therefore, I say although we remain a member of the Commonwealth, we will be absolutely free. And I am of opinion and very strongly of opinion that if India remains in it, as she is going to remain, there will be no war in the world. The possibility of war will be removed; and in this way, India would have made a great contribution to the peace of the world. This, in my humble opinion, is sufficient reason for us to remain as a member of the Commonwealth.

Mr. President : Pandit Balkrishna Sharma. But before he begins I would like to make one observation. I have received a number of slips from Members expressing their desire to speak, and slips are pouring in even today. Yesterday a Member raised the objection that I should not go by the slips, and that I should see particular Members standing in their places. I propose to follow that practice, and those Members who have sent in their names in the slips are also expected to stand up in their places, if they wish to speak.

Pandit Balkrishna Sharma (United Provinces: General): Sir, I have very carefully followed the speeches that have been delivered here in opposition to the motion of the Honourable the Prime Minister of India and I have also followed the criticisms of the so called “Left-wingers” in the press regarding this Declaration of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference. After having read all those objections I have come to the conclusion that those objections can be put into more or less six categories.

One objection which has been raised is that the Declaration of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference to which India has assented is repugnant to our traditions and, in order to prove that our traditions have been anti-British, extensive quotations from the speeches of the Honourable Prime Ministers himself as also from the resolutions of the All India Congress Committee have been given. This is the first objection which has been raised.

The second objection that has been raised is that by so doing we are perhaps entering into an unholy alliance with British Imperialism.

[Pandit Balkrishna Sharma]

The third objection boils down to this that by our so doing we are definitely joining the Anglo-American bloc in international politics and thereby we are losing our independence in international affairs, which is our right by virtue of our being a sovereign independent Republic.

The fourth point which has been made out by the oppositionists is that even though we have become independent we are still continuing to be an appendage of the British Foreign Office, that we tie ourselves to the chariot wheels of British Imperialism and British foreign policy.

The fifth point which has been made out by the oppositionists is that democracy and headship of the King are two incompatibles which go ill together. And the sixth objection is about racialism in the Commonwealth Countries.

These in the main are some of the points which have struck me to be of a fundamental nature as conceived by the oppositionists and I want to take *seriatim* these points.

Let me begin by considering the objection that this association with the Commonwealth countries on our part is repugnant to our traditions....

An Honourable Member : Certainly.

Pandit Balkrishna Sharma : My honourable Friend without understanding the implication of his interruption comes out with a very brave exclamation "Certainly". If he will bear with me for a minute he will find that after all his certainly is not so certain as he considers it to be. We were reminded of the speech which our leader delivered at the Legislators' Convention in 1937; and my Friend Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena said that it was definitely laid down as our policy that we will have no truck with British Imperialism, that in every sense the British connection has to be severed and that in the famous parting of the ways message our leader definitely said that we do not wish to be tied down to the coat tail of the British Foreign Office nor that we wish to be guided in any way in our external affairs by Whitehall.

When we take into consideration all these objections we will clearly see that what this new Declaration contemplates has absolutely nothing to do with what we objected to in the British connection. When we objected to the British connection, we naturally objected to British domination, to British guidance committing us, against our wishes, even to the extent that we could be dragged into a major war without being consulted by the Britishers through a fiat from No. 10 Downing Street or from the Mother of Parliaments. Nothing of that sort is contemplated in this Declaration. Time and again it has been said that we are free to carry on our foreign policy just as we do in our internal affairs and that we are free to do anything we like. In these circumstances I do not know how those declarations made by the Prime Minister in his capacity as the leader of the Indian Nation and how those resolutions of the All India Congress Committee or the Indian National Congress can be quoted in support of the opposition to this Declaration of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Today the situation has altogether changed. British connection today is not what it was during those days and it was to that sort of connection that we took exception and not to the one that is contemplated in this Declaration.

The second objection, namely, that we are entering into an unholy alliance with British Imperialism seems to me to be without any foundation whatsoever. When we think in terms of British Imperialism naturally our friends are under the impression that we shall be allying ourselves with all that Britain is doing in colonial countries. Let me tell you that this is not so. We have noth-

ing to do with that. We can very well oppose what the Britishers are doing in Malaya, what the Dutch are doing in Indonesia or what the French might be doing in Indo-China. Have we not done so? Even when we are a Dominion, which we are till today, when we have not declared ourselves a Sovereign Republic except in our Objectives Resolution (we are still in the midst of our constitution), time and again have we not taken up the cause of the colonial countries and fought out their battles in the United Nations as well as in the world at large? Has this our connection with the British Government come in the way of our fight for those oppressed nations? If that is not so, then to say that by entering into this alliance or this association with the Commonwealth countries, we are trying ourselves to the coat-tail of British foreign policy or that we are playing the role of the henchmen of British Imperialism is absolutely without foundation: I should say it is absolutely untrue.

The third point in that we are joining the Anglo-American bloc. I do not think we are joining any bloc whatsoever. Times without number the Minister for External Affairs, who is also our Prime Minister, has said that so far as our foreign policy is concerned it is yet in a process of evolution and so far as possible we are trying to keep ourselves free from any blocs. We are not joining the Russian bloc; we are not joining the Anglo-American bloc. There have been people who have criticised the Prime Minister's foreign policy. Some of them on the ground that we should have right away joined the Anglo-American bloc; and there are others who have maintained that we should have joined the Russian bloc. But we have steered clear of these power blocs. As a result of that in the U.N.O., even though our voice be feeble, yet it has begun to be heard with a certain amount of respect and even in those quarters where we were looked down upon as an appendage of this or that bloc our view is receiving respectful attention. And, therefore, I say, that this sort of criticism that we are joining this or that bloc is absolutely incorrect. My Friend, Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena said: "Well, one-third of Asia is Russia; then China has gone Communist; Burma, Malaya and Indonesia are going Red. Why then should we have at this hour joined what is called this Anglo-American bloc?" Firstly, his premises are wrong. We have not joined any bloc. And secondly what after all does he mean? Because China has gone Red, because one-third of Asia is already Red, because Indonesia and Malaya and even Burma are on the road to becoming Red, should we therefore also try to become Red? Does he mean that we should try to become Red because our neighbours are going Red? Well, Sir, if I were convinced that our going Red will be in the best interest of the country and of humanity at large, I will be the first man to raise my hand in favour of our going Red. But, unfortunately, from what we have read of the foreign policy as also of the internal policy of Russia we are convinced that it is not ultimately in the interests either of the down-trodden or of the world at large. Why? Because there is some fundamental difference, a difference which arises from the very philosophy of Communism. When we talk of the so-called scientific socialism, I am constrained to say that this scientific socialism is unadulterated, undiluted, pure bunkum, for the year simple reason that the socialistic concepts which were based on the 19th century idea of science are today no more scientific, because science has changed beyond all recognition. The 19th century science did not know what the principle of indeterminacy was. But today science declares from house-top that it cannot know anything and everything even about an electron. The so-called scientific socialism tries to explain away all human activities by certain preconceived notions, the notions of materialism. What after all is this materialism? Materialism is disappearing today in the form of mathematical equations; and yet they talk of this scientific socialism. I say, Sir, that it is neither scientific nor social. I would say it is anti-social, because before the Ogre of the State the individual is being sacrificed every minute of his existence.

[Pandit Balkrishna Sharma]

Therefore, I say that if only we could fundamentally agree with the principles of socialism or communism, we shall be the first to go in for it. But, unfortunately, we find that it is unscientific, that it is unsocial. It is for this reason that we are refusing to join the Russian bloc. Similarly we are refusing to join what is called the Anglo-American Bloc. We are perfectly free to carry on our foreign policy as we like and I see no reason why people should come here and advance all sorts of arguments against the proposition that is before this House.

One thing which I would like to point out to this House is that it will not do today to think in terms of what a philosopher like Herbert Spencer has called traditional bias. There are many kinds of biases; there is the traditional bias, there is the religious bias; there is even the scientific bias. Of course, our whole history—the history of the last 28 years of our struggle against Great Britain—is replete with anti-British feelings. But has not the Father of the Nation given us the message of hating a system, but not hating the individuals behind it? And today we who hated that system are responsible for getting that system changed by the very people who upheld that system and it is for that reason that we are joining hands with them.

As the Prime Minister himself has said there are no commitments. We have not in any way committed ourselves to the foreign policy of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Any country of the Commonwealth is free to take up any line that it likes in the United Nations Organisation. We have done so; even Australia has done so. Then to trot out the argument again and again that we are tying ourselves to the chariot wheel of British Imperialism seems to me to be absolutely futile.

Sir, I was very much impressed by the speech which my Friend, Shri Kamath, made yesterday. He very cogently and very rationally tried to pose certain questions. One of the questions that he posed was whether by entering into this association with the Commonwealth of Nations we shall be deriving any advantage. Well, we gave our consent to this policy not only in this Assembly but even in our great national organisation, the Indian National Congress. With our eyes wide open we authorised the Prime Minister to carry on these negotiations. Did we not take all the *pros* and *cons* into consideration at that time? We did and we knew and we know that it is definitely to our advantage. After all the military science in our country is still in its infancy and there are very many advantages that we can derive from our association with Great Britain in regard to our defence measures. Then again there are so many things that we have to do by way of economic rehabilitation and in these matters we can get expert advice and guidance from Great Britain and from the other Commonwealth countries. Why should we deny ourselves that advantage, especially when it has been made clear that the King does not come in the picture any where, except that he is being recognised only as the Head of the Commonwealth, which again means very little,—very little for the simple reason that he can no more interfere in our internal administration. Our Ambassadors are not to be appointed in his name; they will be appointed in the name of the Head of our State, who will be the President.

With these words Sir, I commend the motion of Honourable our Prime Minister for having brought round the statesmen of the Commonwealth of Nations to agree to a proposition which is in every way to our advantage.

With these words, Sir, I commend the motion of the Honourable Prime Minister for the acceptance of this House.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani (United Provinces: Muslim): Sir, I am inclined to support my Friend, Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena, and also my Friend,

Damodar Swarup Seth, for the following reasons: I support Mr. Saksena because he has adopted the same plea in his amendment as was adopted by me in the beginning when this Assembly met first. I said then and I say it even now that this House is not competent to frame this Constitution, because this House was elected on a very narrow electorate and that of a communal nature—rank communal nature—and it has resulted in the formation of a single party in this Assembly, and therefore it is ridiculous and absurd to entrust the constitution-making power to it. That party represents only one view and that is the only party in existence. When I say that, when I am of the opinion that this House is incompetent to frame the Constitution, it is obvious that I must support Mr. Saksena who wants the same as myself. He says, postpone the declaration of your ultimate object and your ultimate policy until a new House is elected on the broad principle of joint electorates.

Well, Sir then I support my Friend, Mr. Damodar Swarup, on the ground that I want to meet the excuse brought forward by the Prime Minister in this way. He says: "All right, we will become a Republic, but we cannot remain isolated. We will have to have some sort of relation with some power." I quite see that point. But I can argue, "How is it that you are only going to placate the British Commonwealth people? Why do you not adopt the freer course which is more honest? When you claim that you have become an Independent Socialist Republic, why do you not say that you will enter into separate alliances and agreements with all free countries on the basis of the principle laid down by the political group of late Lokamanya Tilak who said that he will enter into an alliance with all other free countries by means of responsive co-operation and will co-operate with only those free countries who are willing to adopt the same cause in regard to our country?" It is no use making alliances with countries like South Africa. The attitude of that country towards our nationals is well known. Even countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not allow any of us Indians to set foot on their soil. How can we go and have alliances with such people? I cannot understand how a man of such keen intellect as the Honourable the Prime Minister can have alliances with countries like South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand? I think it is beneath our dignity to seek such alliances. We ought to refuse to have anything to do with them. As a matter of fact we once broke off our relations with them. We recalled our representative from South Africa. Now we are reversing that policy and adopting the policy of conciliation. I had to hang my head in shame when I read the other day in the papers that our Prime Minister had now become friends with Dr. Malan and Mr. Churchill. When he went to England he remained in association with such born enemies of Indian independence. I cannot understand what brought about this change of mentality in our Prime Minister. He ought not to have met and spoken to Mr. Churchill at all. He ought not to have mixed with people like Dr. Malan. My misgivings have come true as I find that after these meetings, a real change has come in his attitude. Formerly Mr. Churchill use to abuse the attitude of our Prime Minister. Now a change has come over him. That is a sure sign that we are not on the right path. When a policy of ours is appreciated by people like Mr. Churchill and Dr. Malan, we need no more proof to declare that the whole thing is absurd. Therefore I say that I support both these amendments. At the same time I know it is a futility to propose an amendment to a proposal to ratify the unfortunate Declaration of our Friend the Prime Minister. It is incapable of being amended. It must be ended. There is no possibility of amending it. This Declaration says that India will retain the full partnership of the Commonwealth of Nations and at the same time says also that the King will be the head of that Commonwealth. When you accept full partnership in the Commonwealth, how can you escape accepting the King as the Head of the Commonwealth? Therefore the King is the

[Maulana Hasrat Mohani]

head of the Indian Republic also. I cannot understand this thing. I am not given to hair-splitting and I do not find any reason to try to make a difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Either you belong to the Commonwealth or you do not belong. I do not want any monster of this kind which is at once a Republic and a Dominion. It is absurd on the face of it. Therefore I say that we need not propose any amendment to this Resolution. It is useless to do so. We would throw out this Declaration and the Resolution at once without anything being left to chance. I am rather inclined to say that I am at one with my friend and co-operator Sarat Bose in his description of this Declaration that it is no more and no less than a great betrayal. I am inclined to go a step further and say that it is not only a betrayal of the Independence of India, but it is a betrayal of all the efforts of all Asiatic countries who are struggling to gain their independence. We have before us the examples of Viet-Nam, Indonesia and Burma. The Members of our Delegation are trying to impose the same thing on Indonesia and Burma. Well, it is beyond my comprehension to account for this change of mentality in people like our Prime Minister. How is it that the President of Indonesia who did not believe in this camouflage and therefore said that he would not accept anything less than the re-establishment of the Republic at Jogjakarta and would not have any Pact unless and until it was re-established got the support of Soviet Russia for his proposal and how is it that our representatives intervened and got the motion postponed indefinitely? I suspect that they want to compel the Indonesians to adopt the same course which has been adopted by our Prime Minister here. Holland also is willing to accept Indonesia as a Republic on condition that the Republic remains a part of the Dutch Dominion. The European nations are making fools of us. Holland wants to make fools of the Indonesians. They say, "We will accept your Indonesian Republic provided that the Republic remains in our Empire". The same is said by France to the people of Viet-Nam. They say, "All right, we accept your Republic provided you remain in the French Empire." I find that these imperialists have coined new phrases and new technical terms. What are these terms? Sometimes they say a Republic Dominion. Our Prime Minister is going to accept that. Also in the case of Viet-Nam and the other, they want to have colonial republics. I do not understand these terms. They are beyond my comprehension. I do not find in this resolution and this Declaration anything more than acceptance of these terms. As I said, as regards Burma also, these are willing to intervene and help Burma. The Burmese people were wise enough to reject the whole thing because they suspected that we and the British will go there and ask them to adopt the same policy as we are going to adopt. What it amounts to is that we are willing to support you, we are willing to help you, provided you join the British Empire. Even if you do not say this, the whole thing will come to that. We are trying to postpone a decision in Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. We are not only following a very bad policy. We are betraying the cause of Indian independence. We are betraying the cause of all Asiatic countries who are struggling to gain their freedom. You are indirectly in a way compelling them to adopt the same course as you have adopted.

I have only two questions to put to the Prime Minister and I have done. My first question is this. If you do not want to remain in isolation and if you want to have some connection with the powers in the Commonwealth how is it that you do not impose any condition? If you want to enter into an alliance with any of these Dominions, England or America, you are free to do that but only as a completely free Republic, nothing less than that. If you want to have separate agreements or alliances with other countries, you are free to do that with the condition that the whole thing should be based on the good principle of responsive co-operation.

The other question is this. Our Prime Minister says that we will remain strictly neutral. We will not join the Anglo American bloc or the Russian bloc. If it is possible to remain neutral to the last, I would have nothing to say, but it may become impossible to remain neutral. It may come to your joining one bloc or the other. In that eventuality, what is your position? I am not going to make only negative criticisms. I am going to make a positive suggestion. If things come to that pass. We should refuse to join one group or the other. We should adopt an attitude of benevolent neutrality, but the benevolent neutrality should be in favour of Soviet Russia, because America and England are imperialist and capitalist. I cannot understand how a man of such foresight as our Prime Minister is even willing to hear any proposal of our joining this Anglo-American bloc which is at once imperialist and capitalist. As far as Soviet Russia is concerned, I say that we should favour it because Soviet Russia is neither capitalist nor imperialist. Therefore I say this Resolution should be rejected without any amendment.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru (United Provinces: General): Mr. President, in assessing the value of the agreement entered into by our Prime Minister at the last Prime Ministers' Conference in London, we have to consider whether it is consistent with our self-respect, and beneficial to our national interests. I felt when I read the agreement that it satisfied both these conditions, and I never felt more convinced of this than after listening to the opposition speeches yesterday. Sir, the agreement has been criticised on the ground that it may limit the freedom of action of India in some hidden way or that it may make her an accomplice of the Anglo American bloc in its efforts to accomplish its nefarious ends. The Dominions owe allegiance to the same King. Yet it has been recognised formally since 1926 and legally since 1931 that their status is equal to that of England in all matters, internal and external. That this equality is real is proved conclusively by the neutrality of Eire during the last war. That a small country could exercise the power to arrive at a free decision in respect of matters involving the very existence of England and her daughter countries, shows that the Dominions have really as much of freedom as England herself to arrive, even in a time of crisis, at a decision in conformity with their national interests. Need we have any fear in these circumstances that India which will owe no allegiance to the British King in future will be in a worse position, will have even less freedom to order her internal affairs or to follow her own foreign policy than the Dominions, if she remained associated with the Commonwealth of Nations? I do not think, Sir, that it can be maintained even in theory that India has, because of this agreement, lost an iota of her freedom to decide the most crucial matters in accordance with her best interests.

Now, Sir, let us take the other argument. Will our continued membership of the Commonwealth of Nations in any way, directly or indirectly, make us partners in the crimes of the Anglo-American bloc, should they follow policies contrary to the freedom of small nations and to the maintenance of peace in the world? My Friend, Mr. Kamath, is reported to have said yesterday that he preferred isolation to association with the British Commonwealth of Nations, because this association involved a possible risk of India becoming so entangled in the policies followed by the Anglo-American bloc as to be compelled to fall in line with them even against her own wishes. Does the history of the last thirty years show that isolation is a complete guarantee of our non-entanglement in world affairs? America followed the policy of isolation for a century and a quarter. It was the corner-stone of her foreign policy. It was associated with the great idea of Washington and yet soon after the First World War broke out, America notwithstanding her having remained aloof from European affairs for a century and a quarter, notwithstanding the great distance that separated her from the Western Hemisphere was compelled by events to join the war on the side of the Allies.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru]

Take again the Second World War. There were a good many Americans who wanted that America should maintain a position of perfect neutrality so that whatever happened in Europe, she might not be regarded as a partner of any bloc and yet, world events, her interests, her cultural and political affinities with the Allies compelled her to throw her weight on the side of the Allies. It is obvious, therefore, that people who think that isolation is a guarantee of our non-entanglement in the policy of the Anglo-American bloc are labouring under a delusion. They are following a chimera and if their advice were followed, India, notwithstanding her keeping aloof from the Commonwealth of Nations would not be able to escape the compulsion of events and in the meanwhile would suffer from all the disadvantages from which those nations do that are unable out of hesitation or pusillanimity to make up their minds and declare their policies courageously.

Again, Sir, Members of the Assembly who think that India till this agreement was arrived at was following a policy of neutrality are completely mistaken. Whatever excuse they might have had for this opinion last year, they have none for it this year. The Prime Minister, in winding up the debate on India's foreign policy during the last Budget discussion, made it clear that his policy was not that of neutrality. He only wanted that India should be free to decide in a crisis what course she should follow. If there are any Members of this House who are so simple as to believe that whatever might happen in the rest of the world, India can shut her eyes to it and that we can live as if we belonged to another planet, they should have questioned the statement of the Prime Minister in March last. Not having questioned it then, indeed, so far as I see, having listened to it with approval, I do not understand how they can maintain now that India should follow a policy of isolation which leads to no advantage, but which is as disadvantageous to us as any policy can be. Sir, if I may just add a word on this subject, I should like to say that the policy followed by the Prime Minister and the Government of India in regard to Indonesia, which has received more moral help from India than from any other member of the United Nations Organisation, has shown that India is not now a tool in the hands of the British or Commonwealth statesmen. India knows what her interests are and has the courage to pursue a policy even in opposition to that of stronger nations.

Sir, it seems to me that the objections that have been urged against the agreement are based on the belief that, by joining the Commonwealth of Nations, we have conferred a favour on England or the Dominions. I think there can be no greater mistake than imagining that because our status is equal to that of any other nation, our stature, our political position in the world is also equal to that of the bigger and more advanced nations. It is obviously to the benefit of the Commonwealth that India should continue to be a member of it; but it is no less obvious that India's economic, defence and scientific interests require that she should remain in the Commonwealth at least for some time. No international agreement, in fact, Sir, no agreement between individuals can have any value unless it is of advantage to all the parties concerned. How can it then be urged against this agreement which is helpful to us that it enables England and the Commonwealth to feel that their position is stronger now than it would have been with India outside the Commonwealth? If we want industrial aid, we go to Britain; if we want to know what are the latest scientific developments in the economic or in the military sphere, we as a rule go to England. If we want weapons, if we want to give higher military training to our officers, we again think of England. What is the good in these circumstances of disregarding the reality and imagining that while other coun-

tries need our help, we can stand aloof from all of them and maintain our national existence in full vigour?

Sir, some speakers who were not for the outright rejection of the agreement urged yesterday that as this Assembly was elected for a particular purpose only, it is not morally entitled to ratify the agreement. They want that the ratification of the agreement should be postponed till a new Assembly elected under the Republican Constitution comes into existence. Frankly speaking, I cannot understand this line of argument. If we feel that the agreement lowers our international position or is opposed to our national interest, let us reject it now. But, if it is to our good in all respects, if we feel that in the present world situation, it will not merely promote our interest but also promote world harmony, establish concord between the East and the West, build a bridge between two civilisations, why should we postpone its ratification till another Assembly is elected? If our ratification now were to deprive the new Assembly of its power to denounce the agreement, such a proposition would have considerable force in it. But, the next Assembly will be as free to arrive at a decision on this matter as the present Assembly is. So far as I can see, India now having entered into a treaty with England, will be free to leave the Commonwealth of Nations even without giving any previous notice. I entirely agree with the Prime Minister that had India left the Commonwealth of Nations and aligned herself with any other nation, her course of action might have led to criticism in international circles. But what India has done now is natural. She is seeking no new alliance; she is only trying to retain old friends because democratic ideals inspire all of them and because, though there may be linguistic differences between us, our outlook in social, cultural and political matters is broadly speaking the same.

Sir, I congratulate the Prime Minister on his decision and unhesitatingly ask the House to ratify this decision because it is in the best interests of India and the Maintenance of peace in the world.

Shri K. M. Munshi (Bombay: General): Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the resolution which was moved by the Honourable the Prime Minister yesterday. I also join in the felicitations given to him by the last speaker in achieving not only a great personal triumph, but a triumph for India. By his broad statesmanship, India today is a partner with England in the common venture of the Commonwealth, not a tail of the Commonwealth as was said by one speaker yesterday. We are also, in companionship with other nations with democratic ideals, contributing towards world peace. Therefore, Panditji has not only achieved personal distinction, but invested India with high leadership in the affairs of the world and I think he deserves the congratulations not only of this House but of the whole country.

Sir, the opposition to the agreement which is entered into by Panditji in this matter is based on various grounds not only in this House, but outside. But if we analyse all the arguments put forward, in substance it is the expression of a distrust of Great Britain. For several years—for three-fourths of a century—the attitude of India towards Britain was one of hostility. It has left its legacy behind. Now most of the opposition which comes against this particular agreement arises from nothing else but a relic of the past mental attitude in considering every association with Britain to be prejudicial to India. The mental frontiers of public opinion in India were no doubt built in the past for fighting Britain but now, in the light of the new changes, they require to be readjusted. There is no reason to believe that a time can ever arise when Britain can acquire the same position with regard to India which it had before 15th August. Today it is recognised all the world over that we are

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completely independent of Great Britain and no more from a part of its Empire. It is recognised all the world over that India is the only stabilising factor in Asia and potentially the guardians of world peace in our part of the world. Any fear, therefore, any distrust of Britain, I submit, is entirely misplaced and most of the arguments which are advanced against the proposition moved by the Honourable the Prime Minister are based upon this distrust.

There is one argument which I would like to deal with. It is that this Commonwealth is nothing but the old British Commonwealth of Nations in another form. This argument is entirely based on a fallacy. The British Commonwealth of Nations was entirely different both in the scope and content to the new Commonwealth which is now envisaged by this Declaration. As the House knows very well the old British Commonwealth or rather the British Commonwealth, which exist and which will disappear on the 15th August next when our Constitution will be passed, was defined by the Balfour Declaration in these terms:—

“Autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.”

Now part of this is also embodied in the well known Statute of Westminster Nothing of it has been left so far as this declaration is concerned. In the first instance, the Nations which are going to be members of this Commonwealth are to be independent nations. That is the wording of the Declaration here. Secondly they are not united by a common allegiance to the Crown. This is the most important element in the new Commonwealth. The British Commonwealth, as is well-known, depended for its existence on what is called the “Unity of the Crown”. I remember to have read in one of the books of Berriedale Keith, one of the great constitutional lawyers, that the unity of the Crown and the allegiance to the King—I am speaking from memory—are the basis on which the British Commonwealth of Nations is founded and when that goes, the British Commonwealth of Nations will be disintegrated. The fact remains that there is no allegiance to the Crown in the new Commonwealth and there is no unity of the Crown as contemplated by the old constitutional laws of the British Empire. Take for instance the word ‘British Empire’ in the old Balfour Declaration. In composition at that time the free countries—the self-governing Dominions—were mostly British by birth. Today we—the citizens of India—are in a majority in the new Commonwealth. The predominant composition is not British. In the British Empire and the British Commonwealth of Nations, the unity was preserved by the army, predominantly British, which functioned in the name of His Majesty. After the 15th August 1947, the Indian army was the army of an independent dominion but after the 15th August next it will no longer be His Majesty’s forces. There is not British army left in India which would control the country. Therefore, to the extent it is a complete departure from the old British Commonwealth of Nations.

Secondly, there is no unity of the Crown at all in the new Commonwealth. The theoretical basis on which the British Commonwealth was founded was that there was one King and all the different legislatures, different Governments and different courts throughout the British Commonwealth spoke and acted in the name of the King. Hereafter in this Commonwealth so far as India is concerned, its Government, its legislature and its courts will act in the name of the President of the Republic who will be the representative of the sovereign people of India. Take again the other basic theory which underlay the British Commonwealth. That theory was that the King was the sole

depository of power and that no legislation could be enacted unless assent was given by the King or in his name. That will go so far as India is concerned. The fundamental unity of the Crown on which the old Commonwealth was based will disappear under the new Commonwealth. Therefore to say that the old Commonwealth will continue under a new name is not correct.

Another doctrine on which the British Commonwealth was founded was the allegiance of every citizen to the King. In the Statute of Westminster, it is put in the forefront as the basic doctrine on which the British Commonwealth was founded. In the new Commonwealth there is no allegiance to the King. Allegiance would imply personal relation between every citizen of the Commonwealth wherever he may be and the King. So far as citizens of India are concerned, they will owe no allegiance to the King of England. Their allegiance will be to the Republic of India. No basis of the old British Commonwealth is projected into the new Commonwealth. Therefore I submit the argument that this is the same commonwealth in a different form is really not valid at all.

There is no doubt that, as in the old British Commonwealth, the King is the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth. But the Honourable Prime Minister made it clear that in the old Commonwealth the King has the status and function of the Head of the Commonwealth while in the new one he has the status but not the function. To the extent the King continues as a symbol of the free association but without any function whatever and no citizen of India would owe allegiance to him. This new Commonwealth, as I could gather from the Declaration, is a free association of independent nations; each nation member will be free to enter its own regional and international obligations. It will be only united with others by common ideals and interest. Its main advantage will be, as described by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Attlee, in the House of Common recently as 'close consultation and mutual support' and the King will only be the symbol of this free association.

I submit, therefore that this Commonwealth is an entirely new conception and no one need be under the impression that the old British Commonwealth is only being projected in another form.

Sir, many of the speakers before me have described this Commonwealth more or less like the old pandits who describe Brahman—"Neti", "Neti", "it is not this," "it is not this," "it is not this." I would humbly submit that the Commonwealth has a positive advantage, and that it is a positive factor. In my opinion, Sir, it is an indispensable alliance which is needed not only in the interest of India, but in the interest of world peace. Sir, India wants nothing more today than world peace. We can only consolidate and enlarge our new-found freedom if for a generation or more, the world is at peace. It is of the highest interest, therefore, for us that we should do our utmost, do everything in our power, by which world peace, could be maintained at any rate, in our region. India cannot, Sir, possibly be helpful in this direction unless she enters into an alliance with other members of the Commonwealth, as it is done in this case. It is very easy to talk about world peace. We have been talking for years about collective security. But collective security is not a *mantra* to charm serpents with, nor is it a kind of opiate to lull people into inactivity. It really implies preparation, defensive preparations, standardisation of weapons, co-ordinated research and planning and industrial co-operation between nations on a very large scale. As I conceive it, one of the greatest merits of the Commonwealth is that it provides these benefits. Strategically India commands the Indian Ocean. But inversely, it is to my mind, the one source of danger, the one direction from which we may get the best support in days of difficulty and again the one direction from which our danger may come. And of this Indian Ocean we must not forget, Australia on the one side and South Africa on the

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other, are the pillars, the two extreme out-posts. And any alliance which enables us to maintain defence preparations in the Indian Ocean will be of the greatest advantage to India. From that point of view I consider this new Commonwealth as of the greatest importance to India and its future.

Sir, the Prime Minister has said on more than one occasion that it is high time we forgot our old distrust of England. Great Britain and India have for a hundred and fifty years been associated closely in culture, in thought many of our political and legal institutions and our democratic ideals, we have shared with England in common. And looking a few years ahead into the future also, I submit that an alliance between Great Britain and India in the interest of world peace will be the most effective instrument of collective security. From this point of view this House ought to congratulate itself on achieving this new alliance, the membership of this Commonwealth of Nations as one of its most important members. From this point of view, I think, this House as well as the country ought to welcome this new Commonwealth, and I have no doubt both the House and the country will fully support it. Sir, this is all I have to say.

Prof. K. T. Shah (Bihar : General). Mr. President, Sir, sponsored as this resolution is by the Leader of the House, and supported as it is by the powerful advocacy of Pandit Kunzru, one feels a natural hesitation in opposing its substance. Nevertheless, I will try to place before this House a few arguments, under three main heads, according to which, in my opinion, this House would do well to reject the motion.

Sir, the form of the motion itself is, to me, objectionable. I mean the word "ratify" is open to objection. This word suggest something previously authorised and now requiring in the final form to be ratified. I am afraid I cannot recall any such authorisation for this step-previous discussion and determination of this House according to which a momentous agreement like this could have been entered into, and the House should now be called upon to ratify that decision. I entirely agree with the Honourable the Prime Minister that the matter is for ratification or rejection; and that there is very little room for amendment. A suggestion was made by some friends for deferring or postponing the matter and eliciting public opinion on it. These suggestions may have their own claims. But I feel that the word "ratification" of a proposition, not previously determined upon by this House considered, discussed, and agreed to in substance, is calling up the House to register a decree entered into by the Head of the Government.

Now, to that, as a mere matter of principle, I feel most reluctant to agree. The tendency to confront the House with a *fait accompli*, and thereby to require the House to accept or reject a proposition like this, is in my opinion not likely to lead to that freedom of discussion, that fulness of ventilation of all shades of opinion, which I think are indispensable for the healthy growth of democratic sentiment in this country.

This, however, is not the only ground on which I would like this House to reject this proposition. There are other, and in my opinion, much more weighty reasons, of a constitutional importance, which incline me to say that the proposition is ill-timed, ill-conceived, and unlikely to result in any substantial benefit to this country.

In the first place, Sir, we are told that there is no change, virtually speaking, in the existing association of the independent nations called hitherto the British Commonwealth of nations, and now re-christened into Commonwealth of Nations. If there is no change, where is the necessity now for us to make this

agreement? If the situation now is as it was, if we are as we were before the Declaration of the Prime Ministers, if we are in the same position of sovereign independence, and absolutely uninfluenced by any outside authority in our domestic or foreign relations, then I fail to understand what could be the necessity for entering into or committing ourselves to this Agreement. If this Agreement does not take us any further, if it does not involve us into new commitments, then I think it is superfluous. If it does involve us into commitments, then it would be dangerous; and we should think before we enter into an agreement like this. That, I think, is a consideration well worth pondering over, before we give our consent to a proposition like this. If there is no substantial change, then I feel it unnecessary to accept this agreement.

Secondly, we are told that the King will be the symbolic head of this loose association or loose union between the various independent nations, previously called the British Commonwealth, or the British Empire, and now called the Commonwealth of Nations. This is also suggestive. I thought when we passed the Objectives Resolution, when we declared our intention to constitute ourselves into a Sovereign, Independent Republic, we had said the last on our connection with the British Empire. Now, in this form and at this stage to bring in the headship of the English King, or even the symbolic headship of the English King, seems to me, to say the least, highly anomalous. We are passing through an age in which we are demolishing, disestablishing, if I may say so, Kings and kingships in our own country, which can claim longer generation and much better record of resistance to the powers of darkness in this very country than the Kingship or Royalty of England can.

I have, Sir, no desire to involve the British Royalty in any kind of party sentiment. But I must point out that in this country there were and have been Kings who claim their descent from Rama, and who could show a record of a thousand years' resistance to the powers of darkness, to aggression and suppression, which was regarded and rightly regarded as some of the most heroic achievement in this country. I have shed no tear on the disappearance of these anachronisms because I do not believe in kingship in this democratic age, I do not regret that those vestiges those descendants of the ancient dynasties of this country have begun or been made to disappear, one after another. I am in fact of the opinion that it is one of the greatest achievements that the present Government has to its credit in bringing about the unification and democratisation of this country. But I cannot help asking:—With this record to our Government's credit, why should we at this stage accept even the symbolic headship of the British King?

We have been told, Sir, that this sentiment is the result of our recent past in which our mentality has been formed and coloured by a constant attitude of hostility, of distrust and suspicion of Britain and the British. I plead guilty to that, but offer no apology for holding such apprehensions. This is a mentality which is still in most of us; and when we are asked to forget and forgive the past I cannot but feel that the forgetting is to be all on their side, and the forgiving is to be all on our side. We must forgive all the record of a century of exploitation, of suppression and oppression, of denial of our rights and liberties, of the sacrifice of our interests and sabotage of our ambitions because we have been made into an independent Republic. We must forgive all that, wipe it clean from our memory, and join hands with those who only the other day were our exploiters, who only the other day involved us in wars which were none of our seeking, and which cost us thousands of lives and crores upon crores of money, and who even today in my opinion, are not free from the suspicion that they are having their own mental reservations in inviting, in almost tempting us to accept this agreement.

[Prof. K. T. Shah]

It is not merely of the past that I am thinking of when I ask this House to remember the record that Britain has had in this country. Even at the present time, many of the so called Dominions of Britain, independent nations as they now are, not only flaunt a policy of racial discrimination and distinction against us: but they are proclaiming to the world that they would maintain a "White Australia" or a "White" Africa policy. And, what is more, today they refuse even to agree to any ordinary and peaceful method of seeking settlement of such disputes.

We have, in contradistinction to the amorphous British Commonwealth of Nations, the United Nations Organisation. This is after all a Union of those who pledge themselves to the democratic way of living. There is a definite constitution a regular character. There are institutions: there are legislative and executive organisations. In contrast with that, on the showing of the sponsors of the agreement themselves, in the case of the Commonwealth of Nations (the word "British" is now omitted to manage or humour our sentiments) there is no common constitution, there is no charter, there is no common organisation, there is no machinery for securing justice as between the various members of that organisation or Commonwealth. There is no machinery for registering complaints or making an investigation or adjudication of a dispute.

In preference to the United Nations Organisation, what is there, for us at least in India, in the British Commonwealth of Nations, that we should now, within a year and a half of our independence, become members of that organisation? I repeat I cannot see any necessity, I cannot see any wisdom, I cannot see any advantage in asking this House or this country to accept membership of this Commonwealth: the more so as, on their own showing, there is going to be no change. After all if in the British Commonwealth of Nations we are also an independent sovereign Republic of India, so are we in the United Nations Organisation. By its very framework, by its very narrowness in that it is limited only to the members of the erstwhile British Commonwealth or the British Empire, it is suggestive of a grouping within a larger world group, a grouping within the United Nations which is highly objectionable. The United Nations is a much more world-wide organisation, claiming allegiance of many more nations of the world and actually showing itself more active in redressing wrongs than the British Commonwealth of Nations.....

Mr. Tajamul Husain : On a point of information, may I ask the honourable Members as to what are the disadvantages?

Prof. K.T. Shah : If my honourable Friend will have some patience I will deal with the disadvantages also.

Let me now proceed with my argument and I am trying to examine what advantages you are expecting from such agreement just now to ask me to agree to this proposition. I for one see no advantage so far.

I have so far placed this matter on a purely constitutional ground. Let me now take up the economic side of the matter. The economic side seems to me to be still more formidable against the acceptance of this proposition, because I see no advantage likely to result to us from joining a Commonwealth of this kind. If Britain herself in her present position is dependent for her own national recovery upon outside support, upon American help, it stands to reason that she will not be in a position to assist us on the much more widespread and much more intensive plan of development that we are thinking of. If we have to receive support, if we need in our ambitions of development assistance of any kind, I am afraid Britain is unlikely to give us that assistance.

The Honourable the Prime Minister declared in his speech that he is not a good bargainer. I am afraid perhaps that is true. But I must also remind the House that Britain is a good bargainer, and that British statesmen are such good bargainers who by their appearance, by their suavity and by their diplomacy may seem to suggest that bargaining is the last thing in their mind; and yet all the time make the most effective bargain which the victim may perhaps discover ten years hence. At the time it may not appear as a bargain; and so it may not seem well for us to press for a *quid pro quo*. Britain by its tradition of two hundred years is a nation of shopkeepers, and as such she is best fitted for securing the best bargain. Though other people may forget, the memories that we have of Britain's bargaining ability are only of the other day; and so I cannot overlook that.

From this agreement, therefore, I personally see no economic advantage or benefit likely to result to this country by a closer association with the Commonwealth. If anything, we likely to lose by our association with that country. Here I would invite the attention of my honourable Friend who interrupted me a few minutes ago to see what the disadvantages are. I do not know whether he realise that in man-power we are more than five times the British man-power, perhaps almost seven times the manpower, of Britain and the Dominions combined. I am talking of the white population just now. In resources, and still more in potential resources, we are probably much more important by ourselves than they are. In actual economic situation, notwithstanding our handicaps of the day, which are passing handicaps, the real natural position is far more balanced with us than it is with them. With Britain particularly the national economy is highly unbalanced and with other Dominions also for the time being. In our association with these countries, who are under the necessity of receiving more than they can give us, their whole economy is so organised that they must sell more than they consume of their own material and conversely consume more than they produce of their own requirements. For such people an organisation of this kind can only mean a hope or possibility of securing same advantage for themselves. But for us there can be no hope of advantage by a closer association.

I will be forgiven, I hope, by the House if I remind the Members of the tale of imperial preference during the last fifteen or twenty years to which this country had been subject. If imperial preference is to wear a new appearance now, as the British Commonwealth of Nations is going to wear a new designation, I cannot but warn this House against any snare of that kind. Though it may not today be spread before us, it will in time be laid before us, for inveigling us into accepting an advantageous position to the British trader compared perhaps with our own or at the sacrifice of our own.

Sir, we had the other day an invitation graciously extended to foreign capital for investment in India, in which British capitalists were particularly singled out for so to say, special butterification. I fear I was unable to accept that attitude then nor can I accept this attitude today as regards the advantage at all likely to flow from closer association with the British Commonwealth in an economic sense.

Sir, Britain may not have been played out; I do not think that Britain is at her last gasp. But I certainly think that Britain is no more the workshop, the carrier and the banker of the world that she used to pride herself on being in the last century. And those countries which have means of their own, those countries which have resources of their own, have manpower of their own to rise and achieve that very position, for themselves,—those countries are not likely to benefit from the association of a country which may not be bankrupt. Formally speaking, but which is yet unable to pay off its debt and is compounding with her creditors.

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Further, the gradual association and the closer dependence of Britain's economy on the United States makes you more than ever doubtful as to the propriety, the wisdom, and the necessity of countries like us, just emerging into independence and intent on our own economic development, so associating, so tying themselves up with such other countries, that in matters economic their whole machinery may be also made dependent upon their class system, their vested interests, their methods, their policies of exploitation such as they have been in the past, such as they may quite possibly be hereafter, if you are not strong enough to resist.

Sir, here is a danger which may not be easily perceived by those who only see the surface and no more. We have been advised, Sir, not to look too much into the past. We have been advised also not to think too much of the present, but to have our eye on the future. Sir, I am not a prophet, and cannot, therefore say what the future has in store for us. But judging from current events, judging from the tendencies now quite clear on the surface, judging from developments that have taken place in the four years since the war ended, it seems to me that, economically speaking, this association that we are now called upon to ratify with the other nations of the British Commonwealth has no economic advantages for us, either in the shape of financial help or industrial development, except of course that we will have to pay through our nose. Of course anything can be of advantage if you do not count the cost. If you are prepared to pay anything for it, then I have nothing more to say. But the fact remains that if you balance the advantages and disadvantages properly, if you put the debits and credits together correctly, I do not think any Chartered Accountant would be able to show you a balanced balance-sheet in regard to our relations, present or future with the British Commonwealth of Nations.

One word more and I have done. The political aspect of the situation is no less important than is sought to be made out here. We are told, Sir, that we cannot live in an isolated cell of our own. We certainly cannot. Nor does anybody suggest that we should try and live in an isolated compartment of our own. It would be a folly; it would be impossible in the present setup of things for any country, however large, to follow a policy of isolation. But to say that does not mean that the only association possible for us is with the British Commonwealth of Nations. We have willingly and whole heartedly joined the United Nations Organisation, which, as I said, is a world-wide organisation. We have pledged our co-operation and support to them. We are trying to take advantage of the machinery provided by the UNO for the various kinds of political groupings. But that is not the same thing as becoming closely associated with the British Commonwealth of Nations, which, by the very fact of that association is likely to give rise to suspicion to others; and, as such, likely to convert them into potential enemies which we need not have.

We have been told, Sir, that our education has been moulded on the British precedent; we have been told, Sir, that our whole administration and financial structure is fashioned on the British model. But is that also a reason why we should continue that which might quite conceivably be harmful even? It will be more a signal, in my opinion, of danger and warning rather than an invitation to a greater hospitality and closer association. I have much more to say on this aspect of the matter, but I do not wish to trespass on your patience, and, therefore with these words I invite the House to reject this proposition.

Shri Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar (Madras: General): Mr. President, Sir, I have to congratulate, if I may, the Honourable the Prime Minister for having

solved a most knotty problem, a problem which was regarded as somewhat insoluble in certain quarters some months ago. The resolution which we are asked to affirm does not in any way detract from the position which the Constituent Assembly has taken up from the outset. India is to be a Sovereign Independent Republic, both in her internal affairs and external relations. The Crown will have no place whatever either in the internal relations or in the external relations. The President of the Union will represent India both in the internal spheres and in external relations. We do not require any credentials either by or in the name of the British Crown for transacting our business with foreign countries. In matters of war in peace, in trade relations, we will be masters of our household. There will be no economic entanglements of any kind. So far as the Dominions are concerned, both India and the Dominions are at arms length. India will be entitled to pursue a foreign policy which is suited to the best interests of India. The only point that is urged against the acceptance of the Agreement is that there is no reason why the first Part of the Statute of Westminster should be embodied in the Declaration, namely, that the Crown is to be the symbol of the free association of the Members of the British Commonwealth. The second part of the Declaration, found in the preamble of Statute of Westminster *viz.*, the part dealing with allegiance to the Crown has been advisedly omitted. Therefore the only link is that of the King being the symbol of the free association of the members of the Commonwealth of Nations. If there is to be a symbol, it will be very difficult to fit in the President of the Union into the framework. It is not a feasible idea to have alternatively, say, the Prime Ministers of England and the Dominions and the President of India as the heads of the association. As the Crown still continues to be the head of other Dominions, and as we are entering into a kind of voluntary association, the King as the symbol, is perpetuated. But it is necessary to note that it is nothing more than a symbol. The Crown will have no functions, no duties and no rights *vis-a-vis* the various Units of the Commonwealth. That is the position of the Crown.

Now therefore, are there any radical objections to this scheme that has been adopted is the one question before us. In regard to this point, what I would like to invite the attention of the House to is that this association has not even any resemblance to the Atlantic Pact or the UNO. At least in regard to the UNO, though the sovereignty of the different Units is in terms declared in the UNO, taking the various parts of the UNO you may come to the conclusion that to some extent there are provisions which detract from the sovereignty of the individual members of the UNO.

Similarly, there is no question of our involving ourselves in any alliances like the Atlantic Pact, because there are no commitments either in regard to defence or in regard to war or other matters. Therefore it is the least onerous task that has been undertaken by our Prime Minister. The republican status of India is in no way affected at all in the external sphere or in the internal sphere and the position of the President will in no way be affected. In fact the Declaration is silent on this point. Supposing the King of England visits India, he will not get any kind of priority or precedence over our President. Our President would be the representative of India and the King of England will have no sort of precedence over him in spite of the fact that he may be the link of the Commonwealth of Nations within the limits of India or in any other place. In other places, including the Dominions and England, the President will have the rank of an independent sovereign.

Then the only question that has been sometimes debated is, 'Why not we stand aloof altogether? Why not we take up the position which Ireland has

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taken?' The one point which we have to remember in this connection is that Ireland may be in a position to get all the advantages of citizenship everywhere having regard to the fact that her kith and kin are scattered over Canada, Australia and America and they will be in a position to cement the relationship between the Dominions and America. You can easily understand why they are willing to give the go-by to all ideas of citizenship so far as an Irish citizen is concerned even in England. Therefore it is necessary to exactly appreciate the position of Ireland. First, Ireland is a very small country very near Great Britain; and secondly, Irishmen are scattered all over the Dominions. Therefore they will be in a position to get all the advantages of the contact and can have the best of both the worlds without being members of the Commonwealth of Nations. That explains the real position of Ireland and it also to some extent satisfies the sentiments of the Irish people. We will have to consider our own position, not in the setting of what Ireland has done or may do, but in the setting of what is in the best interests of our own country. Though it may not be germane for the purpose of understanding this Resolution, you will have to take into account various factors such as the Army organisation under the existing relations, the various conditions which have to be established in the matter of capital importation and so on. For these purposes a certain degree of contact or perpetuation of contact in an effective form will be an advantage to this country.

These are matters which I have no doubt must have weighed with the Honourable the Prime Minister in coming to this Agreement without in any way sacrificing the independence, the dignity, and the constitutional position of India as per the terms of the Constitution.

One other point which you may take note of is that without the alteration of a comma or putting in any kind of prefix this Constitution can go through without the mention of the Crown in any parts of it. The Preamble will be there. Necessary changes may be made to fit in the different parts of the Constitution with the Preamble. But the Crown will come nowhere in any part of this Constitutional structure. It is a very loose association which has some advantages. Nobody, no country in the present day can live in what may be called splendid isolation. It is one thing to become the slave of another nation and become a victim of its economic policy and it is quite another thing to maintain one's individuality. It is said that if you sever your constitutional relations altogether, there will be independence. That is wrong. It all depends upon the strength which you develop. Look at China. She was for a very long time theoretically independent and had to depend upon other countries. Similarly, our country may be theoretically independent with no connection with Britain or the British Crown. But until you develop your own strength you will be subject to control by other nations. Therefore, the only way in which to approach the problem is to see that there is nothing in the way of developing our strength and if we so desire to break off at any time we choose. If, for example, Britain does not conduct herself properly it will be quite open to the next Government or the next Parliament which will be elected on universal suffrage to snap the tie. Therefore it is a question of expediency. I cannot understand the argument on the one side that it means nothing and on the other side it means everything. You have no right to read between the lines when the Prime Minister makes an open declaration. You will have to take him at his word. There is no reason why, having regard to our knowledge of our Prime Minister, you should think that he has entered into any kind of understanding with somebody else. The understanding is there in the declaration. Are you or are you not willing to abide by the Declaration?

Another point was put forward, *viz*, that this question should have first been ratified. I have never heard it said that before you enter into a pact with other nations you must discuss with others the minute details of that pact. In the past the whole scheme was adumbrated before this House on several occasions. The Congress had agreed to support in principle this alliance or union, it does not matter what you call it. Having done that, to say that every comma, every semi-colon and every sentence of this agreement should be placed before this House before it is entered into is meaningless. The Prime Minister goes there and he carries out in letter and in spirit the mandate of this House and the Congress, and he now comes back and asks you to ratify it. What is wrong in this procedure? Does it conflict with the international procedure adopted by any civilised country in the world? This is a point which I cannot understand. I have never heard it said that all the details of an agreement must be discussed before a Parliament or a Constituent Assembly, that every clause of it should be discussed and approved, and then the other parties to the agreement should either accept it or reject it. The one point that you have to consider is whether the Prime Minister has in any way deviated from the instruction given to him by the Congress or the Constituent Assembly.

Now, I am also quite clear on this point that so far as India is concerned, there is no commitment of any kind. It is entitled to pursue its own foreign policy, domestic policy or industrial policy. Even as a Dominion India is having an independent line of her own without reference to the other Dominions at times even at cross-purposes with England, the latter having remained neutral on difficult occasions when she found that she could not side with one or the other. Even her neutrality is an advantage to us. For example, whenever there is a conflict between one member of the Commonwealth and ourselves, her neutrality will be an advantage to us. The point to note is that we have no commitment to enter into any power bloc. India is the one country which has no kind of commitments. Under those circumstances, I think to have friends with whom you can discuss things without any commitments is a great advantage, unless you want to live in isolation in the complicated world of the present day. When really there are no commitments, any criticism of the decision is merely legalistic, unless the critics want that there should be commitments. Does Professor Shah want that there should be commitments? Do the other people who indulged in a caveat against the agreement want commitments? If you want, then those commitments will have to be bilateral. You cannot have unilateral commitments. Therefore that argument is rather contradictory. On the one side you do not want to enter into any bloc and you do not want to have any commitments. If you want to derive tangible concrete advantages from any particular group of people, then you must be willing to yield to the other side. Even in the economic sphere it is wrong to think that you can be independent only if you stand aloof from other nations. Take America. America is able to dominate the other nations at the world. Is it because she has entered into compacts with those nations? It is because she has got money, she has got wealth, she has got immense resources, she is able to dominate the whole world. Look at the independent nations of Europe. Is it because they are not independent they are being dominated? They are independent republics in every sense of the term, but yet they are being dominated. For a growing country like India to remain in the Commonwealth without any commitments of any kind will be an advantage in the interests of peace and the future good relations of the world, and I do not think there can be any better exponent of world peace than our Prime Minister. I have no doubt whatsoever that if he finds that there are any entanglements under the cover of this free association, with the King as the symbol of that association he will be the first one to advise you to scrap

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that association. Under these circumstances, let us not be afraid of meeting another person because he is going to swallow you. That means you are timid; you have no confidence in yourself. If you have confidence in yourself, in this compact you will be able to assert your individuality. Under these circumstances, having regard to the considerations I have set out, we should accord an enthusiastic and unanimous support to the agreement reached by our Prime Minister. He has shown himself to be taller even though he may be short physically than all the other Ministers from the different parts of the Commonwealth as a result of this Conference. He has achieved what we have fought for and at the same time he has preserved our continued relationship with the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mohamed Ismail Sahib (Madras: Muslim): Mr. President, Sir, I have come forward to support wholeheartedly the Resolution that has been placed before this House by the Honourable Prime Minister. At the outset, I want to congratulate him on his having raised his own status in the international sphere along with that of this country. Sir, I need not say such in support of the Resolution after what Pandit Kunzru, Mr. K. M. Munshi and Shri Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyer and similar other Members have spoken about it. If I want to speak, I want to do so only to demonstrate the fact that it is not one or two groups that are in support of the policy which has been adumbrated by the Prime Minister, but many groups the vast majority of the people of the country are supporting him in the stand that he has taken. It is only for that purpose that I have come forward to speak in support of this Resolution. Firstly, when we are speaking at present about such important matters, we must not always be thinking of the past. We have to leave the past behind and we should not be harping on what happened in the past. We should not be thinking in terms of the past. In the past we were a dependent country struggling for our independence and so any proposal as is now put before us would have then been viewed with suspicion and we would have fought against such proposals. Now the position is altogether different. We are now a free nation. We are free to choose our own course of action. Therefore, when the position is altogether different now, I do not know why we must be spending so much of our time in criticising in this manner the action that has been taken by the Honourable Prime Minister as the spokesman of a free nation. Now Sir, what is our position today? We are a Dominion of the Commonwealth; we have not yet become a sovereign independent Republic according to the Constitution, which has not yet been passed. Even under this position, Sir, what are our rights? We can make our own choice; we are free to do anything we please. It is under that assumption that certain of our friends are advising us to reject the Resolution that is placed before the House. Even when we are under the Crown and even when we are accepting the Crown as the Head of the Commonwealth, of which we are a Member, even now those Members assume and rightly assume that we are free to do as we please and, therefore, what is their objection in continuing in the same position, even when we declare that we are a Republic under the new Constitution? Then, Sir, take the Resolution itself or the Declaration, which was issued in London after the conclusion of the Commonwealth Conference. That Declaration is simple. The Prime Minister has assured us that there is nothing behind it, that there is no secret pact or any private understanding with the other Prime Minister or powers that be in the other dominions of the Commonwealth ; and, therefore, as it is, it is a simple declaration and what it is that we are fighting against in that Declaration, passes my understanding; it only reiterates the present position that though in the near future India may declare itself to be a Republic, the rights we have got and the position which we are enjoying now will not in any way be whittled down is what is assured by that Declaration. Then also, when we accept the King as the symbol of association

instead of the Head of the Commonwealth, we will be free to do whatever we may want to do at that time. Our position in the matter of our internal affairs and also external affairs is not in any way sought to be affected by that Declaration.

Now the amendments that are placed before the House are to this effect: One is that the consideration of this Resolution must be postponed until after the Constitution is passed. For what purpose? Now, if that amendment is accepted, what will be the position? Then, the position will be that we shall still continue to be a member of the Commonwealth. Then that amendment means that our position of being free to make our own choice is not being affected in any way. If so, how it will be affected if we pass the Resolution, I do not understand. Then, the second amendment is that until Africa and Australia agreed to treat Indians on a par with the other citizens of the Commonwealth, we should not ratify this Resolution. But, would we not be in a better position, if we pass this Resolution and continue to be a member of the Commonwealth, to treat with them in that whatever action we please on those questions though we may continue to be a member of the Commonwealth under the arrangement that has been come to by our Prime Minister with the other Ministers.

Sir, I do not want to say much more on this subject and I only want to remind the House that today or tomorrow we cannot as a country or as a nation stand alone. If we have to create or maintain any relationship with any other country of the world, this is the best arrangement, the arrangement that is placed before us now. Under this arrangement there is no commitment whatever for us. If it is a treaty that our friends want us to enter into with other countries, it will put so many conditions and restrictions upon us as it will, of course put upon also the other countries entering into the treaty. But now, as it is, according to this arrangement, there is no commitment whatever. We are as free as the bird of the air can be. Take a treaty; there will at least be time-limit for the continuance of that treaty, but here there is not even that time-limit. Under this London Declaration or under this Resolution, which is placed before this House, we are free to change our position at any time. We please, and therefore, this is the best of arrangements possible under the circumstances and it will serve us both ways: It will give us a favourable position in the comity of nations and at the same time it will maintain our perfect freedom of action, and it is for this purpose, Mr. President, I wholeheartedly support the Resolution.

Shri Khandubhai K. Desai (Bombay : General): Mr. President, Sir, I have not the least hesitation in supporting the motion moved by the Honourable the Prime Minister. I support this motion not as a politician nor as a lawyer nor as a student of international questions. My support to this motion is from the point of view of how that agreement has reacted on the common people of this country. There is no doubt that the handling of the this question by our Prime Minister has raised the prestige and the status of India in the comity of the nations in the world. The opposition to this motion was mainly based on, in my opinion, fear and inferiority complex. I must say to those friends that the people of this country are more buoyant, more cheerful, more courageous and they are not afraid of dealing with any nation in the common interest. The way in which some of the friends who have opposed this motion spoke betrays really no confidence in themselves. It has rightly been pointed out by some speakers here that we must cease to live in the past; we must live in the present with certainly an eye on the future. The present agreement really is a great contribution to changing the hitherto character of the Commonwealth. Our Prime Minister has been instrumental in changing the

[Shri Khandubhai K. Desai]

whole picture of what was upto now called “the British Commonwealth of Nations”. Incidentally he has substantially also helped the other nations who were members of the defunct British Commonwealth of Nations.

The masses of this country look at the status which we have attained as an independent sovereign nation from one point only and that is, how far our present status will contribute to the promotion of world peace. It has been stated that there are commitments implied in this association. The Prime Minister had very clearly pointed out that there are no commitments whatsoever. There is one commitment and that commitment is to promote world peace. I think he has given us a very great lead, a welcome lead in the very first act of the new nation in international politics. The question before us is whether we as an independent nation should take up the attitude of an ostrich. If there are fears, if there are dangers, if there are difficulties, they have to be faced. You cannot simply in an ostrich-like attitude sit aside and say, there is no fear. There is fear to world peace and we as a nation must contribute towards the promotion of that world peace. To these friends who want this motion to be rejected, I say that they are running away from efforts towards the promotion of the world peace. The present agreement does create a forum where our representative can go and discuss and place our points of view with regard to the promotion of world peace. There is absolutely no commitment. Of course, the old hatred against the Britishers, and our fear of them still persists, but we must overcome them. It has also been stated that the Britishers are past masters in bargaining and therefore they will cheat us. That is all old complex. Can world peace be maintained, be promoted by fear complex, by suspicion, by distrust? No. If efforts for world peace are to be made by our nation and I think that our nation has got a definite mission and that definite mission has to be fulfilled—you should have some friends in the world where you can percolate your ideas. Prof. Shah has stated that he has suspicion, distrust, that he has this that and the other. How long are you going to harbour this distrust, suspicion, this year? You have to live in the world. You are affected whether you like it or not by world politics, by world affairs. Let it not be said that when there was occasion, when there was the opportunity to talk with the world statesmen, you have failed. Instead of expressing our gratification at what our Prime Minister has said. Some of the speakers have incoherently attacked this agreement. Some of these friends talk the old language and feel that they are leftists or radicals. In my view they are neither leftists nor radicals. They are conservatives; they are reactionaries; they want to live in a state which is static. Our Prime Minister’s efforts at the Commonwealth were more or less dictated by his progressive outlook on world affairs.

Sir, only the other day, a week back, the representatives of the working classes of this country met at Indore in annual session and the question of this agreement came up for discussion. I was surprised to find that there was unanimous support for this agreement, and on one ground alone and that was this. They state in their resolution: “Without impairing in the least degree India’s status as a completely independent sovereign Republic, it enables it to play an increasingly positive role towards the promotion of world peace. As far as the masses of the country, as well as the masses of other countries are concerned, they are only interested in world peace so that they can progress and live in peace and harmony.

It has been stated that this House is incompetent to deal with this question. One amendment says, let us wait to ratify this convention till the new legislature is elected under our new Constitution. I cannot see any force in this argument. This Assembly can and will pass the Constitution, will decide the future of this country; it has got all that status. But, it cannot, according to

them ratify this small agreement. I think it is wrong thinking and it does not stand on logic. We are well advised to pass the motion placed before us by our Prime Minister without any hesitation whatsoever.

Sir, while entering into this agreement our Prime Minister must have had in his mind the mission which he has been called upon as the heir of Mahatma Gandhi to carry out in this world, and he has given his consent to this agreement with a view to see that a forum is created where he can place his mission of world peace, so that the Commonwealth of Nations may be the beginning of an organisation of nations with Potentiality of further expansion towards world peace:

With these few words, I support the motion.

Shri Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga (Bihar: General): Mr. President, allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to offer my humble felicitations to the Honourable the Prime Minister on the success of his mission. He has steered clear of the conflicting dogmas and, taking a realistic view of the situation, has placed India in a position from which she can usefully promote the peace of the world.

The status of India as a free and independent country has been recognised. As a sovereign democratic Republic, the people inhabiting this country will not owe allegiance to the Crown as they had hitherto done. She has to vindicate her honour and dignity in the world and she will do so by throwing off all her fetters whether external or internal. Complete sovereignty will vest in the people of India and she will stand with her head erect with the other free nations of the world.

But, as things are, no country can remain in isolation in the present-day world. Specially, for a country like ours, which has thrown off the foreign yoke only recently and is struggling hard to stand on her own feet, it is impossible to think that she will have nothing to do with others. She will be stultifying her growth and even imperilling her freedom if she takes up that attitude. She has therefore, through her able Prime Minister, shown great statesmanship by agreeing to remain a member of the Commonwealth. This Commonwealth has changed its character and assumed a new form. The members of the Commonwealth have according to convention and through agreement changed its structure and pattern. It has been emphasised that allegiance to the Crown is not the essential feature of the Commonwealth organisation. India, on the other hand, has agreed to regard the King of England and dominions as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth. All this has been done by agreement in pursuance of a very high objective, namely the establishment of peace and prosperity in the world. India like any other country can walk out of the Commonwealth at any moment she feels that her national ideals and aspirations will not be fulfilled by remaining within that organisation. The agreement is for a specific purpose and it can be broken if the parties to that agreement do not act in a manner which may achieve that end. Our Prime minister has categorically said that this does not mean alignment of India with any of the power blocs. As a staunch believer in the tenets of democracy she could not have taken any other step. It would have been the negation of all her cherished ideals if she had lent her support to the forces that are insidiously spreading the totalitarian influence in the world. She cannot see human freedom and human dignity destroyed by the adoption of a cult according to which a human being is treated as a machine.

India has to look to her own national interest and situated as she is today her close association with the Commonwealth is the result of the compulsion of necessity.

[Shri Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga]

Past events have shown that in this new set up of Commonwealth India can play a decisive role in the affairs of the world. She is by common consent the leading country in South-East Asia. Both history and geography entitle her to ensure the peace of the world. But she can discharge that function only if she is strong both militarily and economically. She can be made so by the co-operation of the Commonwealth countries and America. Therefore, no better alliance could be possible to stem the tide of unrest which is surging in all parts of the world and threatening the fundamental principles of human liberty with extinction.

Some people have charged our Prime Minister with the crime of allying this country with British Imperialism. A greater falsehood could not have been uttered. With the freedom to leave the Commonwealth at will such charges are baseless. Knowing as we do his antecedents we feel sure that by having him in the discussion of Commonwealth countries the whole tenor will be changed and the peace of the world assured.

Begum Aizaz Rasul (United Provinces: Muslim): Sir, I come to give my wholehearted support to the motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister yesterday and I join in the felicitations that have been extended to him on the floor of this House. I am rather surprised at the amount of criticism that has been levelled against the action of the Prime Minister in agreeing that India should remain in the Commonwealth. Since this news was published in the paper the general opinion not only in this country but all over the world has been in favour of the action that has been taken by the Prime Minister and I therefore should have thought that in this House there would have been more unanimous support of what the Prime Minister had done in elevating the position of India in the eyes of the world and raising its prestige. The hearts of Indians have been filled with pride at the very high position that the Prime Minister of India occupied in the deliberations of the Commonwealth Conference and in the Prime Minister Conference, and there is no doubt that today the position that our Prime Minister enjoys amongst the statesmen of the world is far above that enjoyed by any other Prime Minister. They look up to India for leadership of Asia and I make bold to say that the Prime Minister enjoys that leadership not only by the circumstances in which he placed on account of the position of India in Asia, but by the statesmanship he has shown in the Political arena, not only for the last two years since India achieved independence but during the vast number of years that he has been in the political field under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Sir, the main question that is being asked by critics is : What are the advantages the accrue to India by remaining in the Commonwealth? But I ask a counter question what are the disadvantages that accrue to India by remaining in the Commonwealth? Sir, points regarding the political and economic aspects of this country *vis-a-vis* Great Britain have been ably dealt with by Pandit Kunzru, Mr. Munshi and others. We cannot forget that inspite or perhaps on account of British rule in India we have come to think on those lines which are very akin to the lines of thought that are followed by people, in Britain and in the countries of the Commonwealth and it stands to the credit of Great Britain and to the statesmen of Great Britain that in spite of the fact that they ruled India for 150 years, they have been able to achieve the goodwill and friendship of this country after their departure from here. But I think it stands to the Greater credit of India and to its Prime Minister that he has been able to shake away the old ties of suspicion and mistrust that were prevalent in India against Great Britain and has been able to accept the hand of friendship extended to India in order that India may progress on the lines of peace and prosperity. Sir, I believe that criticism and opposition to this is mainly based upon mistrust-not only mistrust but a fear complex.

But I feel that fear complex must be shed and we must realise that conditions now are vastly different to what they were before. India is now a free country, and master of its own destiny, and we who have trust in India's greatness must realise that we cannot go forward unless we do away with small things like suspicion and distrust and accept friendship when it is offered. Sir, I have just said that there are many things akin with British thought in India today. I do not think that we should hesitate in saying that the democratic system as prevalent in India today is exactly on British lines. We are aware that India is the youngest members in the comity of democratic nations. We like the way in which Britain has built up its democratic Institutions and has worked them during the last few centuries—and therefore if we follow the lines of British democracy, we feel that we are going on right lines. Today in India our institutions, our parliamentary life, our local self-Government, our administrative machinery, etc., are more or less based on British lines. Our army and defence organisations have been Built up on British Lines. Therefore remaining in the Commonwealth will certainly be to our advantage.

It has been said that Britain is a poor country and will not be able to help us financially. We do not want Britain's financial help. We certainly can go forward with our own industrial development, and the development of our own resources, and make India rich and prosperous. We do not want any country's financial help. But we want their help and their guidance, their advice and the advice of their technicians, so that India may develop on the lines she desires to develop.

There is also no doubt that Britain and the countries of the Commonwealth are today the greatest factor working for world peace. India has always aligned itself on the side of peace, and it would certainly co-operate with those countries which wish to build up world peace, with countries which have no desire to fight, but which desire only to prosper and let other countries of the world also prosper. Therefore, I think it is in the fitness of things that India should remain in the Commonwealth of Nations. I do not see any disadvantage in it. I feel that it will be to the benefit of India to be associated with countries that are working towards world peace.

We cannot also forget that Indian ideology is opposed to communism. There is no doubt that we do not want communism in our country, and we know that Britain and the countries of the Commonwealth are also opposed to communism. Therefore, that is also a common factor between the two. As has been repeatedly pointed out if at any time there comes a stage when India feels that its association with the nations of the Commonwealth is to its disadvantage, there is nothing to debar it from coming out of it. Therefore, I feel that it is entirely to the advantage of India and consistent with its prestige and dignity to remain in the Commonwealth.

With these few words, Sir, I wholeheartedly support the motion of the Honourable Prime Minister.

Shri Prabhu Dayal Himatsingka (West Bengal: General): Mr. President, Sir, I wholeheartedly support the Resolution moved by the Honourable the Prime Minister. I find the opposition that has been voiced here is based mostly on suspicion; the argument seems to be that the Declaration contains more than meets the eye. But it has been expressly stated by the honourable Prime Minister that he has not agreed to anything which is not recorded in the Declaration. As a matter of fact, we can easily imagine that there cannot possibly be anything beyond what is there.

[Shri Prabhu Dayal Himatsingka]

It has also been pointed out that India stands to lose by entering into this sort of agreement. But I say there is no disadvantage in continuing to remain a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. On the contrary, there are number of positive advantages, and that is why the agreement that has been arrived at has been welcomed by the people of the country.

Sir, as has been mentioned by previous speakers, India's economy, India's defence, everything that we have in India is more or less based on the model of English economy and business. Our connection with England having been for so many years, our thoughts, our actions, our lines of approach, are all mostly common with those of the nations of the Commonwealth. In our industries, most of the factories, have been supplied by England. Our business connections are with the different Commonwealth countries. We have to realise a very large amount of money from England. These are various factors which go in favour of continuing our alliance, our association with the Commonwealth of Nations which previously were known as the British Commonwealth of Nations. Prof. Shah has said that the Honourable Prime Minister has placed before the House an accomplished fact and this House is now called upon to ratify a thing which he was not authorised to do. I cannot see how that argument can be put forward. This House expressly authorised the Prime Minister to proceed to England and to join in the Conference of Prime Ministers that had been called. I may say that public opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of this agreement and that the Prime Minister has done something which very few people could have imagined was possible to be done in the position that has been accepted by this country. The position of independent sovereign Republic has been made to fit in with the ideas of the other members of the Commonwealth with regard to the Crown who regard the Crown as the Head of their State. The Honourable the Prime Minister has accomplished almost an impossible task and I wholeheartedly support the Declaration and the Resolution moved by him.

Mr. Frank Anthony (C.P. & Berar: General): Mr. President Sir, I am aware that it will be thought, if not said, by certain Members of the House that my views on this particular Resolution are a foregone conclusion, and that I must necessarily have a bias in favour of the Resolution. I feel Sir, that being an Anglo-Indian, with regard to this particular Resolution, I am placed in a fortunate position. I believe I can say that I can appreciate the point of view of my fellow Indians and I can also understand the point of view of many British people.

Sir, before I develop my other arguments, I would like to answer a point raised by Prof. Shah, which was, partially answered by Sir Alladi. In spite of Prof. Shah's professions to the contrary, I could not help feeling that what he said dripped not only with a little vitriol, but certainly with a good deal of past venom. Prof. Shah took exception to the use of the word "ratification". He felt that this word represented something reprehensible, that the Prime Minister had sought to present the House with a fait accompli and force it down its throat. Sir, as a lawyer, I find that thesis not only slender, but utterly untenable. The Prime Minister went to England on behalf of the peoples of India-his chief principals. He went as their agent, as their super-agent, and it is axiomatic in law that when a person goes as the agent with trust and responsibility, and if his principals feel that he has acted not *mala fides*, that he has acted in their best interests, then they are bound to ratify and undertake that he may have entered into on their behalf. Is there any one in this House who will dare say that the Prime Minister was prompted by *mala fides*? Will anyone say that he was not

prompted only by the desire to secure the best interests of India against the present background?

Sir, I can only feel that much of the opposition to this kind of resolution is inspired by a jumble of complexes, inhibitions, and may I say, motives. I feel perhaps one of the reasons which has inspired opposition to it is an ill-concealed-I say it without offence-an ill-concealed slave mentality. It is understandable that a country which has been under political subjection for generations, perhaps for hundreds of years, that people in such a country who belong to the common rut cannot escape the consequences of two hundred years of political subjection overnight. This opposition is inspired. I feel, to some extent by an evident, though not admitted, inferiority complex. There are many public men who cannot envisage any association with European nations without this inferiority complex vitiating their psychology. They feel that an association with a European nation must necessarily imply European hegemony on one side and Asian subordination on the other. Once again I say without offence, it is a concomitant of political subjection of people who have fought political slavery and fought it essentially with the weapon of shibboleths, slogans and propaganda. They have had to use these shibboleths and slogans in place of facts. They induce in themselves a kind of self-hypnosis. We talk glibly and vocally of India being the leader of Asia. We say glibly that it is inconsistent with India's position as the leader of Asia to be political appendage of the Commonwealth of Nations. I am one of those who believe, and believe passionately, that it is India's heritage that she should become the leader of Asia, the India should be looked up to by the nations of Asia as their natural leader. It is a heritage which is yet to be striven for and achieved. We cannot achieve it by living in a world of illusion, by believing that we can substitute realities by shibboleths and slogans.

Prof. Shah asked a rhetorical question: What are the advantages of adopting this resolution, and in a cavalier and airy manner he answered that question to his own satisfaction. He asked, if there are no advantages and no disadvantages, what is the point of adopting and endorsing this resolution. This is political blindness par excellence. It is typical of the kind of attitude that some of our public men wallow in.

But what are the realities—nobody has referred to it—as to what secession from the Commonwealth would have meant? It would have meant one thing. I do not know how many of our people realise it. A person like the Prime Minister can and does realise it. There has always been—let us understand it—a section of British public opinion supported by a reactionary and conservative press fed by British administrators who have spent their administrative lives in this country fighting the Congress, who have identified the Congress with the Hindus and because of that have developed a blind spot of prejudice against the Hindus and the Congress. There has always been that section of British public opinion which is anti-Hindu and anti-Congress. And if India had seceded from the Commonwealth, this section would have seized avidly on this secession to stir up a state of anti-Indian sentiment in the country. We are fortunate in that we have a person of the stature of the Prime Minister. While dealing a blow to this reactionary anti-Indian section he has mobilised and given strength to the new forces which are emerging in England—forces of friendliness towards this country. I am quite confident that secession would have meant in the first place coolness between Britain and India and subsequently an irrevocable estrangement. And it is for my friends who glibly mouth slogans and shibboleths to answer honestly whether India today, is in a position to estrange some of the most powerful countries in the world. And I go further and say

[Mr. Frank Anthony]

secession would have not only led to coolness and subsequent estrangement between this country and Britain, it would have led inevitably to estrangement between India and America. Let us have no illusions about it. I am not advocating chauvinism or Machiavellianism I think it was Macaulay who has said that British diplomacy has been struck midway between moral principle on one side and expediency on the other. I believe that those who are building India cannot ignore expediency. I am not talking of opportunism : I am talking of realism. It is an accepted fact that the building up of all our schemes, our hopes, the building of India economically, industrially and aye, militarily also, all these depend in no small measures on our continuing cordial relations both with Britain and with America.

I am one of those who feel that India cannot, that India dare not, live in an international vacuum. It is all very well for some of our public men to talk in vacuo, to talk of neutrality, which is something absolutely unrelated to realities in the international sphere. Absolute neutrality is not only an academic, it is today an unreal, an unattainable ideal. India trying to live in an international vacuum would have discovered, as Burma perhaps has already discovered, that theoretical independence may mean vacuous inanity. Theoretical independence, in disregard of realities, may well mean in a period of stress and need, helpless and hopeless isolation.

There is another aspect that I want to place before the House. What is the attitude of those who oppose this resolution towards Pakistan? Our relations with Pakistan have not been as cordial or as friendly as many of us would have liked. I was one of India's representatives at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and my colleagues will bear me out when I say that many of the Pakistan representatives definitely tried to create a feeling that India dominated by the Congress is inevitably anti-British, that India has no intention of staying within the Commonwealth. They wanted to work up this feeling in order to mobilise British sentiment on their side, to antagonise it against India. I feel that if we had seceded our secession would have rejoiced the hearts of those people in Pakistan who have no friendly feeling towards India and I feel certain also that the resources and friendliness that are today being given to India by Britain and by America, if we had seceded, would have been diverted from India, diverted increasingly to Pakistan. That is a consideration which I feel many of my friends have not taken account of.

I appreciate as much as anyone else does the bitterness and indignation of every self-respecting Indian at the racial arrogance, the racial tyranny practised by a member of the Commonwealth. But if as a premise or shall we say, as a presupposition, before entering into relations with any nation, we require that nation should in all its dealings measure up to certain perfect moral standards then perhaps we would never be able to enter into relationship with any nation of the world. And because the Commonwealth of Nations, in my opinion, consists of one or two blacklegs, one or two renegades, is that any reason why we should in a mood of petulant frustration, a mood of inferiority, walk out and abjure all the definite advantages that association with democratically minded members of the Commonwealth can and do give us?

Perhaps I am striking a discordant note when I say I do not believe that association with the Commonwealth is going to improve our relations with South Africa. But I do believe that our association will mean that all the influences and the resources—the imponderables exercised in no small degree by America and by England will be thrown in on the side of India and that

matters may not get worse. From my own experience, I believe- I may be wrong-ultimately we will only be able to resolve the South African question according to the measures of our own strength. And that is why I say that our policy must be broad-based, and that India's strength should be built up most rapidly. It may take us five years; it may take us ten years. But any realist, any sober person must realise that the world we are living in today, in the final analysis, one's strength is measured exactly by one's military might, and that is why I feel that ultimately we will only be able to resolve the South African-Indian question when we are in a position to be able to demonstrate militarily-as the Japanese did—at Durban. But that is, as I have said, no reason for leaving the Commonwealth, because it may consist of one or two blacklegs or renegades.

And, finally, Sir, I want to end with this note. As I said, it is fortunate that India has today leaders of the present stature—persons who have been able to rise, as Prof. Shah has not been able to rise, above bitterness and iron of recent political events; that while the dust and din of political battle and political struggle have not subsided, they have the vision to see, without that vision being blurred, to be able to judge without their judgment being clouded, where India's best interests lie. Sir, can any one say to this House that anyone in this country has discharged his duties to the people more selflessly than the Prime Minister? And, if answer that question, as we are bound to answer it, then whatever decision he has taken has been taken against the background of his knowledge, which is perhaps much greater than the knowledge of anyone of us, in the sole interest of India. What then can any Indian do but wholeheartedly to endorse the resolution which has been moved in this House.

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Bihar: General): Sir, I move that the question be now put.

Mr. President : The question is:

That the question be put.

I think the majority is in favour of closure.

The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru (United Provinces: General): Mr. President, Sir, we have had a fairly full debate since yesterday and many honourable Members have spoken in approval of this motion. In fact, if I may say so, some of them have even gone a little further than I might perhaps have gone. They have drawn some consequences and pointed out some implications which for my part I would not have approved or accepted. However, if it is open to all of us and to each one of us to see the future in a particular way.

So far as this resolution of mine and the Declaration of London are concerned, what we have got to see are these : number one, that it fulfils or at any rate it does not go against any pledges of ours; that is to say, that it takes India forward, or does not come in the way of India going forward to her natural destination of a Sovereign Independent Republic. Secondly, that it helps India, or does not hinder India in making rapid progress in the other domains in the course of the next few years. We have, in a sense, solved the political problem, but the political problem is intimately connected with the economic condition of the country. We are being faced by many economic difficulties. They are our domestic concern, no doubt, but obviously the world can help or hinder any policy that we might adopt. Now, does this proposal which is contained in this Declaration help our speedy progress economically and otherwise or not? That is another test. I am prepared to admit that even without external help, we will go ahead. But obviously it will be a far more difficult task and it will take a much longer time. It is not an easy matter to do that.

[The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

The third test is whether in the world, as it is today, it helps in the promotion of peace and the avoidance of war. Some people talk about encouraging this particular group or that, this bloc or that. We are all, I am afraid, in the habit of considering ourselves or our friends as angel and others the reverse of angels. We are all apt to think that we stand for the forces of progress and democracy and others do not. I must confess that in spite of my own pride in India and her people, I have grown more humble about talking in terms of our being in the vanguard of progress or democracy.

In the last two or three years we have passed through difficult times, humiliating times. We have lived through them. That has been something in our favour. We have survived them. But I hope we have learned our lesson from them. For my part I am a little chary now of condemning this or that person or this or that nation, because the hands of no individual or nation are clean in such matters. And there is far too much of the habit of condemning other nations as being the wrong-doers or the war-mongers, and yet doing exactly the same thing oneself.

If one looks round the world—of course one favours certain policies—one is against some things and thinks that those are dangerous and might lead to war, but others are not. But the most amazing thing that strikes me is this: if you look back during the last thirty years or more which have comprised two wars and the period between these wars, you will find the same cries, changing slightly with changed situation of course, but nevertheless the same cries, the same approaches, the same fears and suspicions and the same arming on all sides and war coming. The same talk of this being the last war, the fight for democracy and all the rest of it is heard on every side. And then the war ends, but the same conflicts continue and again the same preparation for war. Then another war comes. Now that is a very extraordinary thing, because I am convinced that hardly anybody in this wide world wants war, barring a few persons or groups who make profit by war. Nobody and no country wants war. As war becomes more and more terrible they want it still less. Yet some past evil or *Karma* or some destiny goes on pushing people in a particular direction, towards the abyss and they go through the same argument and they perform the same gestures like automatons.

Now are we fated to do that? I do not know, but anyhow I want to fight against that tendency of talking about war and preparation for war. Obviously no country and no Government of any country dare allow its country to be unprepared for contingencies. We have to prepare ourselves unfortunately, unless we are brave enough to follow the policy that Mahatmaji laid down. If we are brave enough, well and good, we take the chance. I do believe that if we are brave enough that policy would be the right policy. But it is not so much a question of my being brave or your being brave, but of the country being brave enough to follow and understand that policy. I do not think we have been brought up to that level of understanding and behaviour. Indeed when we talk about that great level, I should say that in the last year and a half we have sunk to the lowest depths of behaviour in this country. So let us not take the name of the Mahatma in vain in this country. Anyhow we cannot, no Government can, say that it stands for peace and do nothing at all. We have to take precautions and prepare ourselves to the best of our ability. We cannot blame any other Government which does that, because that is an inevitable precaution that one has to take. But, apart from that, it seems to me that some Governments or many Governments go much further. They talk all the time of war. They blame the other party all the time. They try to make out that the other party is completely wrong or is a war-monger and so on and so forth. In fact they create the very conditions which lead to war. In talking of peace and our love of peace we or they create the conditions that in the past

have invariably led to war. The conditions that ultimately generally lead to war are economic conflicts and this and that. But I do not think today it is economic conflict or even political conflict that is going to lead to war, but rather the overmastering fear, the fear that the other party will certainly overwhelm one, the fear that the other party is increasing its strength gradually and would become so strong as to be unassailable and so each party goes on arming and arming with the deadliest weapons. I am sorry I have drifted off in this direction.

How are we to meet this major evil of the day? Some people say, "join up with this group which stands for peace", while others say "join up with the other group" which, according to them, stands for some other kind of peace or progress. But I am quite convinced in my own mind that by joining up in this way, I do not help the cause of peace. That, in fact, only intensifies the atmosphere of fear. Then what am I to do? I do not believe in sitting inactively or practising the policy of escapism. You cannot escape. You have to face the problem and try to beat it and overcome it. Therefore the people who think that our policy is a kind of passive negation or is an inane policy, they are mistaken. That has not been ever my idea on this subject. I think it is and it ought to be our policy, a positive policy, a definite policy, to strive to overcome the general trend towards war in people's minds.

I know that in this huge problem before the world India may not be a strong enough factor. She may be a feeble factor to change it or alter it. That may be so. I cannot claim any necessary results. But nevertheless I say that the only policy that India should pursue in this matter is a positive, definite policy of avoiding this drift to war by other countries also and of avoiding this atmosphere becoming so charged with fear suspicion, etc., and of not acclaiming this country or that, even though they may claim to make the world rational, but rather laying stress on those qualities of those countries which are good, which are acceptable and drawing out the best from them and thereby, in so far as it may be possible, to work to lessen the tensions and work for peace. Whether we succeed or not is another thing. But it is in our hands now to work with might and main in the direction we consider right, not because we are afraid or fear has overwhelmed us. We have gone through many frightful things and I do not think anything is going to happen in India or the world that is going to frighten us any more. Nevertheless we do not want this world to suffer or go through another world disaster from which you and I cannot escape and our country cannot escape. No policy can make us escape from that. Even if war does not spread to this country, even so if the war comes from abroad it will engulf the world and India. We have to face this problem.

This is more a psychological problem than a practical one, although it has practical applications. I think that in a sense India is partly suited to do it, partly suited because in spite of our being feeble and rather unworthy followers of Gandhiji, nevertheless we have imbibed to some small extent what he told us. Secondly, in these world conflicts you will see there is a succession of one action following another; inevitably one leading to another and so the chain of evils spreads; war comes and the evils that follow wars come after that and they themselves lead to another war and that chain of events goes on and each country is caught within this cycle of *Karma* or evil or whatever you call it. Now, so far these evils have brought about wars in the West, because in a sense these evils were concentrated in the Western powers; I do not by any means say that the Eastern powers are virtuous. So far the West or Europe has been the centre of political activity, has dominated the politics of the world. Therefore their disputes and their quarrels and their wars have dominated the world.

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Now, fortunately we in India are not inheritors of these hatreds of Europe. We may like a person or dislike something or an idea, but we have not got that past inheritance on our backs. Therefore it may be slightly easier for us in facing these problems, whether in international assemblies but also with the deal with them not only objectively and dispassionately but also with the goodwill of others who may not suspect us of any fund of ill-will derived from the past. It may be that a country can only function effectively if it has a certain strength behind it. I am not for the moment thinking of material or war strength—that of course counts—but the general strength behind it. A feeble country which cannot look after itself how is it to look after the World and others? All these considerations I should like this House to have before it and then to decide on this relatively minor question which I have placed before the House, because I had all those considerations and I felt first of all that it was my duty to see that Indian freedom and independence was in no way touched.

It was obvious that the Republic that we have decided on will come into existence. I think we have achieved that. We would have achieved that, of course, in any event, but we have achieved that with the goodwill of many others. That, I think is some additional achievement. To achieve it with the goodwill of those who perhaps are hit by it is some achievement. It shows that the manner of doing things—the manner which does not leave any trace of hatred or ill-will behind it, starts a fund of goodwill is important. Goodwill is always precious from any quarter. Therefore I had a feeling when I was considering this matter in London and later, in a small measure perhaps, I had done something that would have met with the approval of Gandhiji. The manner of it I am thinking of, more than the thing itself. I thought that this in itself would raise a fund of goodwill in this world—goodwill which in a smaller sense is to our advantage certainly, and to the advantage of England, but also in a larger sense to the advantage of the world in these psychological conflicts which people try to resolve by blaming each other, by cursing each other and saying that the others are to blame. May be somebody is to blame; may be some politicians or big men are to blame, but nobody can blame those millions of men who will die in these catastrophic wars. In every country the vast masses of human beings do not want wars. They are frightened of wars. Sometimes this very fright is exploited to revive wars because it can always be said that the other party is coming to attack you.

Therefore, I want this House to consider not only that we have achieved something politically—that we would have achieved in any event, nobody would have been able to prevent us—but what has a certain relevancy and importance is that we have achieved it in a way that helps us and helps others, in a way which does not leave evil consequences behind when we think that we have profited at somebody else's expense and that somebody thinks of that always and wants to take revenge later on. That is the way and if the world functions in that way problems will be solved far more easily and wars and the consequences of wars will perhaps be fewer. They would be no more. It is easy to talk about the faults of the British or of the imperialism and the colonialism of other countries. Perfectly true. You can make out a list of the good qualities and the bad qualities of every nation today, including certainly India. Even if you made that list, the question still remains how anyone is going to draw the good from the other parties and yourself and to lay the foundations for good in the future.

I have come to the conclusion that it does not help us very much either in the government plane or in the national plane to lay stress on the evil in the other party. We must not ignore it; we have to fight it occasionally. We should be prepared for that, but with all that, I do not think this business of maintaining our own virtues and blaming the other party is going to help us in

understanding our real problem. It no doubt gives an inner satisfaction that we are virtuous while others are sinners. I am talking in religious phraseology which does not suit me, but the fact is that I do wish to bring this slightly moral aspect of this question before this honourable House. I would not dare to do any injury to the cause of India and then justify it on some high moral ground. No government can do that. But if you can do a profitable business and at the same time it is good on moral grounds, then obviously it is worthy of our understanding and appreciation. I do submit that what we have done in no way, negatively speaking, injures us or can injure us. Positively, we have achieved politically what we wanted to achieve and we are likely to progress, to have more opportunities of progress, in this way than we would otherwise have in the next few years.

Finally, in the world context, it is something that encourages and helps peace, to what extent I do not know; and lastly, of course, it is a thing which in no way binds this country down to any country. It is open to this House or Parliament at any time to break this link, if they so choose, not that I want that link broken. But I am merely pointing out that we have not bound the future down in the slightest. The future is as free as air and this country can go any way it chooses. If it finds this way is a good way, it will stick to it; if not, it will go some other way and we have not bound it down. I do submit that this resolution that I have placed before this House embodying, approval of the Declaration, the decision at the Conference in London, is a motion which deserves the support and approval of this House, not merely, if I may say so, a passive approval and support, but the active appreciation of all that lies behind it and all that it may mean for the future of India that is gradually unrolling before our very eyes. Indeed all of us have hitched our wagons to the Star of India long ago. Our future, our individual future depends on the future of India; and we have thought and dreamt of the future for a long time. Now we have arrived at a stage when we have to mould by our decisions and activities this future at every step. It is no longer good enough for us to talk of that future in terms merely of resolutions, merely in terms of denunciations of others and criticism of others; it is we who have to make it for good or ill; sometimes some of us are too fond of thinking of that future only in negative terms of denouncing others. Some Members of this House who have opposed this motion and some others who are not in this House, who have opposed this motion, I have felt, have been totally unable to come out of that cage of the past in which we all of us have lived, even though the door was open for them to come mentally out. They have reminded us and some of our friends have been good enough to quote my speeches, which I delivered fifteen and twenty years ago. Well if they attach so much value to my speeches, they might listen to my present speech a little more carefully. The world has changed. Evil still remains evil, and good is good; I do not mean to say that it is not; and I think imperialism is an evil thing, and wherever it remains, it has to be rooted out, and colonialism is an evil thing and wherever it remains, it has to be rooted out; and racialism is an evil and has to be fought. All that is true. Nevertheless the world has changed; England has changed; Europe has changed; India has changed; everything has changed and is changing: and look at it now. Look at Europe which for the last three hundred years has a period of magnificent achievement in the arts and sciences and it has built up a new civilization all over the world. It is really a magnificent period of which Europe or some countries of Europe can be greatly proud, but Europe also during those three hundred years or more has gradually spread out its domination over Asia and Africa, has been an Imperialist power and exploited the rest of the world and in a sense dominated the political scene of the world. Well, Europe has still, I believe, a great many fine qualities and those people there who have fine qualities will make good, but Europe can no longer be the centre of the world politically speaking, or exercise that influence

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over other parts of the world, which it has done in the past. From that point of view, Europe belongs to the past and the centre of world history, of political and other activities, shifts elsewhere. I do not mean to say that any other continent, becomes a dominating force, dominates the rest—not in that way. However, we are looking at it in an entirely changed scene. If you talk of British Imperialism and the rest of it, I would say that there is no capacity for imperialism even if the will was there; it cannot be done. The French are, imperialistically, in parts of Asia. But the fact remains that capacity for doing it is past. They may carry on for a year or two years, but it just cannot be done. The Dutch may do it elsewhere and if you look at it in the historical perspective all these things are hangovers of something past and the thing cannot be done. There may be strength behind today; it may last even a few years and therefore, we have to fight it and therefore, we have to be vigilant—I do not deny that—but let us not think as if Europe or England was the same as it was fifteen or twenty years ago. It is not.

I was saying about our friends who have criticised us and taken this rather negative and passive view. I mentioned at another place that view was static. I said that, in this particular context, it was rather reactionary and I am sorry I used that word because I do not wish to use words that hurt and I do not wish to hurt people in this way; I have certainly the capacity to use language, clever language to hurt people, and dialectical language, but I do not wish to use it, because we are up against great problems, and it is poor satisfaction just to say a word against an opponent in an argument and defeat him by a word, and not reach his heart or mind, and I want to reach the hearts and minds of our people (*Loud cheers*) and I feel that whatever our domestic differences might be—let there be differences honestly felt—we do not want a cold regimentation of this country (*Cheers*).

So far as foreign affairs are concerned, there may also be differences, I do not deny that, but fundamental things before any man who is—whatever else he may be—an Indian patriot, who wants India to progress and the world also to progress, must be necessarily Indian freedom, that is, complete freedom, India's progress, economically and the rest, India playing a part in this freedom of the world and the preservation of peace, etc., in the world. These are the fundamental things: India must progress. India must progress internally. We can play no part unless we are strong in our country economically and otherwise. How we should do so internally may be a matter of difference of opinion. Now I think it should be possible for people who differ considerably in regard to our internal policy, it should be possible for us to have more or less unified foreign policy in which they agree or mostly agree. May I make myself clear? I do not wish in the slightest to stop argument or comment or criticism; not that; and I want that; it is a sign of healthy nation, but I do wish that argument to be the argument just of a friend and not of an opponent who sometimes uses that argument, not for argument's sake, but just to injure the opposite party, which often is done in the game of politics. I do not see any major difference for any person. I do see a major difference between those individuals or groups who think in terms of other countries and not of India at all as the primary thing. That is a basic difference and with them it is exceedingly difficult to have any common approach about anything; but where people think in terms of India's independence and progress in the near future and in the distant future and who want peace in the world, of course, there will be no great difference in our foreign policy. And I do not think there is, in fact, although it may be expressed differently. Although a Government can only speak in the language of a Government, others speak a language which we all used to speak, of opposition and agitation. So, I would beg this House, and if I may say so, the country to look upon this problem not in any party spirit, not in the sense of bargaining over this little matter or that.

We have to be careful in any business deal not to lose a thing which is advantageous to the nation. At the same time, we have to look at this problem in a big way. We are a big nation. If we are a big nation in size, that will not bring bigness to us unless we are big in mind, big in heart, big in understanding and big in action also. You may lose perhaps a little here or there with your bargainers and hagglers in the market place. If you act in a big way, the response to you is very big in the world and their reaction is also big. Because, good always brings good and draws good from others and a big action which shows generosity of spirit brings generosity from the other side.

Therefore, may I finish by commending this resolution to you and trusting that the House will not only accept it, but accept it as something, as a harbinger of good relations, of our acting in a generous way towards other countries, towards the world, and thus strengthening ourselves and strengthening the cause of peace.

Mr. President : The House will recollect that there are two amendments to the motion. I would put the motion of Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena; if it is carried, it will obviate the necessity of putting the other amendment to vote.

Shri Lakshminarayan Sahu (Orissa: General): *[Mr. President, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.]

Mr. President : Mr. Lakshminarayan Sahu wants to withdraw his amendment. Does the House permit him to do that?

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

Mr. President : Mr. Shibban Lal Saksena's amendment alone now remains. I now put Mr. Shibban Lal's amendment to vote.

The question is :

That in the motion, for the words "do hereby ratify" the words "has carefully considered" be substituted and

That the following be added at the end of the motion:

"and is of opinion that membership of the Commonwealth is incompatible with India's new status of Sovereign Independent Republic. Besides, the terms of membership are derogatory to India's dignity and her new status, and as such are bound to circumscribe and limit her freedom of action in international affairs and tie her down to the chariot-wheel of Anglo-American power bloc. India with a population of 350 millions out of a total population of about 500 millions of the whole of the Commonwealth cannot accept the King of England as the Head of the Commonwealth in any shape or form. Also, India cannot become the member of a Commonwealth, many members of which still regard Indians as an inferior race and enforce colour bar against them and deny them even the most elementary rights of citizenship. The recent anti-Indian riots in South Africa, the assertion of the all White policy in Australia and the execution of Ganapathy and the refusal to commute the death sentence on Sambasivam in Malaya in spite of the representations of the Indian Government clearly show that India cannot derive any advantage from the membership of the Commonwealth and that Britain and the other members of the Commonwealth cannot give up their Imperialist and racial policies.

"Considering all these facts, and also considering the fact, that the Congress Party, which is in an absolute majority in the Constituent Assembly and in other provincial legislatures in the country, has had the Complete Independence of India with the severance of the British connection as its declared goal at the time of the last general elections, any new relationship in contravention of that policy with the British commonwealth can only be properly decided by the new parliament of the Indian Republic which will be elected under the new Constitution on the basis of adult suffrage."

*[] Translation of Hindustani speech.

[Mr. President]

“This Assembly therefore resolves that the question of India’s membership of the Commonwealth be deferred until the new Parliament is elected and the wishes of the people of the country clearly ascertained. The Assembly calls upon the Prime Minister of India to inform the Prime Minister of Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth accordingly.”

The amendment was negatived.

Mr. President : I now put the original motion to vote.

The question is:

“Resolved that this Assembly do hereby ratify the declaration, agreed to by the Prime Minister of India, on the continued membership of India in the Commonwealth of Nations, as set out in the official statement issued at the conclusion of the conference of the Commonwealth Prime Minister in London on April 27, 1949.”

The motion was adopted.

(Loud Cheers)

Maulana Hasrat Mohani : Sir, I want to know categorically who are in favour of this Resolution, and who are against it. Besides, I want to know who are neutral.

Mr. President : Do you want a division?

Several Honourable Members : It is too late now.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani : My contention is this. Those who are neutral are against this Resolution. I want to Know.....

Mr. President : There is no means of knowing who the neutrals are.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani : This decision of the House will not be final...
(Interruption)

Mr. President : Does the Maulana want a division?

Maulana Hasrat Mohani : Yes, Sir . . . *(Interruption)*.

Mr. Tajamul Hussain : Sir, it is too late now to demand a division. He should have asked for it immediately before you had declared that it had been carried. It is too late now.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani : This is wrong. I at once rose.

Mr. President : I do not think even if the Maulana gets a division, he would get the votes. I do not think it is necessary now to have a division because it is asked for too late.

We adjourn now till 8 o’clock tomorrow morning.

The Assembly, then adjourned till 8 A.M. on Wednesday, the 18th May 1949.