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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, 3rd March, 1926.

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

RESOLUTION *RE* IMPORT DUTY ON ARTIFICIAL GHEE.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to move :

“ That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that 100 per cent. *ad valorem* duty be levied, as early as possible, on the import of ‘Vegetable Product’, ‘Vegetable Solidified Oil’, ‘Vegetable Compound’, ‘Vanaspati Ghee’ and any other similar preparations imported into this country for being marketed as artificial ghee for adulteration with pure ghee ”.

Sir, up to the pre-war days the price of ghee was rising only normally along with other commodities, but when the Great War broke out, the Government purchased such a large quantity that the entire produce of the country could not meet the Government demand. In pre-war days, I mean in the year 1914, the Government fixed the price of ghee at 7 annas per lb. for the ghee purchased for its troops, the bazar rate of ghee in those days being Rs. 40 to Rs. 42 per maund, and the demand, as far as the Military Department was concerned, was about 28,000 maunds a year. The troops used to take on an average half an ounce per head of ghee when there was no free rationing. In 1915 the demand for ghee on behalf of the Government began to rise, and in 1916 the total military demand for ghee rose to 9 lakhs of maunds per year, out of which India could supply only 5 lakhs of maunds, and the remaining 4 lakhs of maunds of ghee was being supplied by Mesopotamia, Egypt and other countries. In 1918 the price of ghee rose to Rs. 64 a maund, and the result of this demand was that the people began to adulterate ghee with animal fats and vegetable oils, like tallow, lard, fish oil, and sesum oil, in fact even the fat of pythons was used for such admixture. In the year 1917, the Government demand for ghee fell to 3½ lakhs of maunds. In 1919 the price of ghee rose to Rs. 90 per maund, and in 1920 it rose to Rs. 105 per maund. This rise after the war, as far as I can make out, is due to the Military Department purchasing ghee after chemically analysing it, and that led to a further rise, because generally in those years after the war ghee could not be had in a pure condition. Such adulteration was however always detectable by the expert eye and nose, and the ghee dealers in general could distinguish it in no time. After the war the Government made it a rule to issue free rations to the Indian troops as well, the result of which has been that the Government has become regular purchasers of ghee on an exceedingly large scale. This has caused an abnormal rise in the price of ghee, but its consumption still continues as the intrinsic value of ghee is very well known to Indians irrespective of caste or creed. Every farmer has to keep cattle

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

for field work and has to maintain a permanent complement of live-stock, in addition to keeping cows and buffaloes for breeding purposes. The ghee which he finds surplus to his own domestic requirements is sold by him in the nearest markets. Nobody would deny that ghee owing to its rich and nutritious properties is a necessity of life for Indians as a race. In spite of its dearness Indians have not given up ghee nor have they replaced it even by the purest vegetable oils. The practical experience of thousands of years has taught Indians that ghee is a boon for their health and strength. It frequently occurs that a person who is in the habit of not using oils in his daily food, gets sore throat, cough, indigestion, etc., when he is compelled to eat, though for a few days, food cooked in oil. This is exactly the case when such a person uses Vanaspati Ghee or other similar preparations. The imported so-called ghee is the compound of a certain vegetable oil, and the process under which it has been treated is that the oil is hydrogenated or deodorized. Sometimes it is given the flavour of ghee. It is, however, very difficult to say whether animal fats are also chemically mixed with it, as such fats, if passed through a chemical process, cannot be easily detected. Such a ghee may serve the purpose of the kitchen, but after passing through all the chemical treatment at a very high temperature it loses all its vitamins which even the ordinary vegetable oil contains. At present the price of pure ghee is Rs. 68 to Rs. 70 per maund, and that of imported artificial ghees is Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 per case containing two tins weighing 80 lbs. net. It cannot be said whether in the various brands of artificial ghee the composition of oil and other substances is the same or each has a different composition. Animal fats being always cheaper than vegetable oils, it seems probable that the cheaper brands may have an admixture of such fats. I have seen a letter which one of the importers received from the suppliers to say that their brand does contain fish fat. Artificial ghee has so rapidly gained a footing in the Indian markets that even the producers of pure ghee are freely buying it for adulteration with ghee before marketing it. It is very hard to detect such adulteration without proper chemical analysis. I tried to get information from the Government by asking a question in this House as to the quantity of artificial ghee imported into India, but I was disappointed at receiving no information in this respect. However, according to the best of my information from its importers, the import of such artificial ghee up to the end of 1925 was about four lakhs of cases, or say four lakhs of maunds of 80 lbs. each. Thus the import duty at 15 per cent. *ad valorem* must have been about Rs. 24,00,000 roughly speaking.

Out of these four lakhs of cases, 135,000 were landed at Bombay and a similar quantity at the port of Calcutta. This means that many crores of India's money have gone to Holland, Belgium and such other foreign countries in which India has no interest.

Notwithstanding the Adulteration of Foods and Drugs Acts being in force in the Punjab and perhaps in certain other provinces, the admixture of artificial ghee has during the past few years very greatly increased. The law has, therefore, proved quite ineffective in this respect. A very large, nay, an overwhelming majority of ghee producers having become habitual offenders in this matter cannot all be prosecuted, and so I am suggesting a prohibitive import duty on this stuff to solve the difficult situation so created.

The Government, since the termination of the Great War, have been regularly making a yearly purchase of about 3,000 tons of pure ghee for their Indian troops. My presumption is that if the military medical authorities had approved of the use of pure ghee mixed with artificial ghee, the Government would not have lost the big sum of about Rs. 13,55,000 per year, as the mixed ghee could have been had at about Rs. 15 per maund cheaper. The Military Department gives 2 ounces of pure ghee per head for maintenance of normal strength, and as the mixed ghee fails to answer this purpose, the saving has not been effected, and rightly too.

The Indian Ruling Princes, whose States have a reputation for producing pure ghee, are giving serious attention to this matter. The Patiala Durbar, as far as my information goes, has prohibited the import of artificial ghee within its territory. The Gwalior Durbar is keenly watching the situation. An instance is reported to have occurred in the Gwalior State where a merchant importing artificial ghee as oil with the intention of adulterating it with pure ghee fled on the State authorities getting the correct information.

If the Government are unable to see their way to impose a cent. per cent. import duty, I suggest that such duty be levied as to bring its price to a par with pure ghee and thus solve this important difficulty.

I may, for the information of this House, give some figures of the quantity of pure ghee which some of the provinces in Upper India produce for marketing after meeting their own domestic requirements. These figures seem correct as far as my information goes. The Punjab produces about 40,000 maunds of pure ghee, of which as much as 30,000 maunds are consumed through the local markets and the surplus of 10,000 remains for export to other provinces. The United Provinces produce 60,000 maunds, of which 10,000 maunds are consumed through the local markets and there remains a surplus of 50,000 maunds for export. Central India produces 100,000 maunds, of which 90,000 maunds are exported; only 10,000 maunds are consumed through the local markets. The Central Provinces produce about 60,000 maunds, of which 20,000 maunds are for the local markets and 40,000 maunds for export. The present prices are about Rs. 70 in the Punjab, Rs. 65 in the United Provinces and in the Central Provinces and Rs. 63 in Central India.

From these figures it is clear that the Punjab consumes more ghee per head than any other province, and pays a higher price as well. So the Punjab suffers most in this respect. In giving these figures I have not taken into account the amount of ghee which the producers themselves use for their own domestic requirements.

The free adulteration of this stuff with pure ghee is now a daylight scandal which Government should not allow for even a moment.

With these words, Sir, I commend this Resolution for the acceptance of this House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. T. CHADWICK (Commerce Secretary): Sir, as this Council knows, it has been my fate and my interest during the last 3½ years to receive a good many applications for enhanced duties. Some of these applications have been for very heavy increases. It is possible that there are probably a few in this Council—I refer especially to my friends on the front Bombay Bench—who will regard me with sadness as a hardened exponent of high duties. But although I have had many such applications,

[Mr. D. T. Chadwick.]

I have had very few indeed that asked for a cool hundred. The scale of our tariff is high, yet there are only two articles which carry a duty of 100 per cent. or over, namely, matches and saccharine. Matches yield a very high revenue; saccharine has no food value. Here, my Honourable friend from the Punjab wants to add another article to that list. Therefore, Sir, it behoves this Council to look very carefully into the article and see what this pernicious article is which he wishes to add to this little category of two and to see also his reasons for it. Well, Sir, what are these Vanaspati and many other vegetable fats? Some of them are manufactured in factories in Europe and Holland which are renowned for the excellence of the margarine they make. What happened in Europe in the case of margarine? 30 years ago the price of butter in Western Europe was very high. It was largely out of the reach of the poorer classes. Human skill, human industry, human invention found methods of utilising the vegetable oils to produce a wholesome fat of the consistency of butter. That was put on the market as margarine. Dairying interests, vested interests, were horrified at anybody having the temerity and the rashness to produce anything that could be used instead of butter. The States were, however, wiser than those people and did not yield to their request to prohibit this manufacture altogether. They said, and said rightly, that this was a useful pure vegetable foodstuff and that it was unreasonable to prevent people from having access to this foodstuff. The only condition they laid down was that it should be sold fairly under its own name. So it was done. The manufacture of margarine, as we all know, has improved very greatly indeed, and it is now sold in practically all the grocery shops in any large town in Western Europe. The net result is that now another extremely useful foodstuff has been made available to the people.

Now, Sir, very much the same sort of thing is happening here. Vanaspati and other vegetable fats that the Honourable Member has mentioned were first imported into India in 1923. As soon as they appeared, they were seized by the customs officers to make certain that they had not been misdescribed. They were sent to the Chemical Analyser for examination and his verdict upon the sample tins that were sent to him was that "this was a perfectly pure product consisting wholly of pure vegetable products". These articles have been analysed and submitted to examination repeatedly in different municipalities, and in regard to every one of them the decision and result has always been the same. I quote from the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 19th January, 1926:

"Ahmedabad, Jan. 17.

The Sanitary Committee of the Ahmedabad Municipality has expressed the opinion that vegetable ghee has been testified to as harmless by the chemical analysers and no steps can, therefore, be taken against sellers of vegetable ghee nor can its import be prohibited. Food Inspectors, however, should be instructed to keep an eye on the adulteration of indigenous ghee with vegetable ghee. This opinion of the Sanitary Committee was endorsed by a general meeting of the Municipality recently."

Why did these manufacturers, who had brought to a high pitch of excellence the manufacture of margarine, turn their attention also to the production of a wholesome vegetable product similar to that of ghee? The reason for that I think my Honourable friend has largely given. It was that there was in reality a genuine demand for such a product. Long before 1923, the demand in this country for pure ghee had far outrun the supply. Before the war I had the fortune of being the Director of Agriculture in Madras

and I put on one of my Deputy Directors to make a detailed inquiry into the cattle and live-stock of Madras with a view to starting cattle breeding farms and endeavouring to improve the live-stock of the province. Mr. Sampson, who was one of our most careful officers, made a report as far back as 1914, that is 10 years before these new forms of vegetable fat came to this country. He reported as follows :

" Formerly the demand was much more of a local one and was more or less limited; thus there was a competition in the supply and the ghee was good. Now the whole of India, as well as Burma, forms the market, with the consequence that every corner of the country is now exploited by merchants for the supply of ghee. The result is that, at every change of hand from the producer to the consumer, the ghee is liable to be adulterated . . . In the Ceded districts safflower oil is largely used for adulterating ghee. In some cases this is done even by the ryot before it is sold to the petty dealer. The petty dealer, it is usually stated, makes six tins out of four of the ghee which he collects. This is done by adding safflower oil or animal fat, which latter is obtained from the Malas, who melt it down from the carcasses of dead animals. It is stated that at each change of hands four tins of ghee are made into six tins, and, if this is so, there is no wonder that complaints all over the Presidency are loud when the question of the purity of the ghee supply is mentioned. Every district reports the same complaint that ghee is not only very much adulterated but that it has risen greatly in price."

Then we come to the war years. The Honourable Sir Charles Innes, speaking about this Resolution to me this morning, recalled an incident in his own experience when he was during the war years in charge of the civil supplies as Director of Industries in Madras. Then the question of ghee came up and he told me that the proportion of four tins to 6 tins no longer held them, but that it was one bottle made into ten by the time it reached the town of Madras. This was before any of these vegetable products came into this country. I can go further back. Sir George Watt, a name well honoured in Bombay and remembered by my Honourable friends on the other side, wrote in 1885 as follows :

" The chief articles used in the adulteration of ghee are vegetable oils such as cocoanut, ground-nut, cotton, safflower, poppy, sesamum, niger and *kokum*. These are all harmless enough, though cheaper than ghee; but injurious oils are also used, especially mahua, *Salvadora* and castor-oil. Other animal fats, especially mutton, are largely utilised . . . One of the most valuable papers on the adulteration of ghee is that written by Mr. Shroff, who states that the Bombay ghee trade is in the hands of a dozen merchants, and that adulteration is effected, not by the dairymen, but by the traders. The fats used are often most offensive and deleterious substances, at times even obtained from the carcasses of diseased animals. Numerous complaints have been made and even legal proceedings recently taken regarding the adulteration of ghee."

That goes right back to 1885 and my Honourable friend tells us that this adulteration started after the war! Another set of events shews that it is perfectly impossible that this adulteration started after the war, for between 1917 and 1919 nearly every Local Government passed an Act making it an offence to mix anything with ghee and sell it as ghee.

Now, Sir, these vegetable fats have, as I have said, been proved again and again to be a wholesome, clean, vegetable product. My Honourable friend wants to put on a 100 per cent. duty on them. His object in desiring to do so was clear. It was obviously not to increase the revenue; it was to prevent them coming in. He wants in fact to cut off the supply of these vegetable fats. That is, he desires to deprive the people of this country of the chance of having a wholesome, clean foodstuff; in other words, he recommends that we should go back to pre-war days and encourage the adulteration of ghee in the manner which I have already read out to the House. You cannot deprive a country of their cooking fats. People need

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cooking fats; and, as I have shown, the plain truth is that the demand for pure ghee far exceeds the supply. That means that if you cut off the supply of a wholesome alternative adulteration becomes more rampant.

My Honourable friend has given us some figures of the quantity of imports. These imports are not recorded separately in our trade returns. They come under the general category of " Other Provisions ". He told us that the figure was 4 lakhs of maunds in 1925. I have got the figure here of the total imports of " Other Provisions ", in the financial years ending 1924 and 1925. That total imports of all " Other Provisions " in which this vegetable ghee is only one item were 43,000 maunds. Where the balance between his figure and the figure I have given comes from I am afraid I do not know. My Honourable friend has also carefully avoided one great difficulty in which he is, by not alluding to it. If I understand him rightly his objection to these vegetable oils is that they are not wholesome. (The Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das shook his head). Then they are wholesome? I am glad to hear from him that they are wholesome. Therefore, what he wants to do is to prevent the poor people of this country from having a wholesome food! I take it that his objection was that there are no vitamins in them and that I leave to my Honourable friend, Sir Charles MacWatt, to deal with. He states that these fats have lost their vitamins by the process of hydrogenation and that is why he wants to get rid of them. But what about Cocogem which is made in this country? It is manufactured in Southern India from vegetable oils by exactly the same process. If he is going to prevent the import of those vegetable fats because they are made by hydrogenation, then he ought to make it an offence to manufacture Cocogem, or at least put on an equivalent excise duty on an Indian industry since that is also made by hydrogenation. I was rather hoping that I would get some support for an excise duty from one of our chief industrialists and business men of the Punjab, but I see he desires to give a 100 per cent. protection to Cocogem.

Now, I can sympathise heartily with one purpose he probably has in view, namely, that articles of food should not be adulterated. There I am with him entirely, and it is doubtless the desire of every Member of this Council that articles of food which are sold should be wholesome and clean. That aim should be attained not by trying to prohibit the entry into this country of clean and wholesome food, but by enforcing the laws which already exist in most provinces against adulterating ghee and which provide for the punishment of traders who adulterate ghee with other products. In other words, the proper way to deal with this question and all other questions of a similar nature is that which was enunciated by the Ahmedabad Municipality in the extract which I have just read, namely, that there is no case whatever to prohibit the import of these vegetable oils, but that food inspectors should be instructed to keep an eye on the adulteration of indigenous ghee and take the necessary disciplinary action. If that were done and done vigorously and if that could be enforced throughout our bazars, not only ghee but also many other foodstuffs offered for sale to the people of this country would be vastly improved both as regards quality and quantity. Such kind of action has been found necessary in every country in the West, and the time is coming, nay has come, when it ought to be enforced also in India. We should not try to cut off supplies. Let every man have as much variety of food as he wants, but let us try and see that food offered for sale is clean and is good. The administration of such

Acts is in the hands of the provinces. It is not the task of the Central Government.

THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the whole point is ghee is much more easily digested than vegetable oil. My Honourable friend who has just now spoken said that ghee is adulterated in India with gingelly oil, cocoanut oil, ground-nut oil, and so on. I do admit that such admixture is going on in India. That is no reason why we should permit some other oil to be imported from other countries. The question is whether the vegetable oil which we have got in India is purer than the imported oil or not. Now the vegetable oil produced in India is not in such a bad condition as the vegetable oil imported from outside. Of all the fats ghee is the easiest to digest. I think it is admitted by all including the scientists that ghee is also one of the thinnest of fats. It is so very easy of absorption. In India most of us are vegetarians. Those who are not vegetarians use large quantities of ghee with their fish and meat. If ghee is adulterated with lard or vegetable oil imported from outside, the food gets spoiled. Even the gingelly oil and cocoanut oil, if they are kept for more than a certain number of months, become rancid and they spoil the system. I know of instances where attacks of diarrhoea were due to the use of bad oil. Of course in India we are using vegetable oil mixed with ghee but this must be put a stop to. In India the death-rate is rising. About 26 per cent. of the deaths among infants is due to digestive troubles, such as diarrhoea, dysentery or other allied troubles. The death-rate in India is double that of the United Kingdom. (*An Honourable Member*: "Is it owing to ghee?") It is owing to ghee. Most of our things are fried in ghee. Our cakes are fried in ghee. If the ghee is bad, it brings on diarrhoea, indigestion and dyspepsia. The Honourable Member who has just spoken also said there is provision in the Municipal Act to prevent adulteration. I do not know about the other parts of the country, but so far as Madras is concerned, the provisions of the City Municipal Act are a dead letter. For want of proper equipment, and for want of proper laboratories, the fixing of the standard of purity has not been done. No cases can be prosecuted unless the standard of purity is fixed. So far as Madras is concerned, the Act is nothing but a dead letter. I said ghee is a very fine fat. Ghee is not only a fat but it contains some kind of vitamins. These are very essential to keep our lives safe. Unless we have vitamins in the foodstuffs we take, we are apt to contract certain kinds of diseases. In good old days when sailors had to travel long distances without any fresh vegetables they were supplied with vegetables preserved in tins. For want of fresh vegetables which contain vitamins, they used to suffer from a disease called scurvy. People who are accustomed to eat rice, if the rice is very polished and the husk is removed, suffer from a disease called beri-beri. As for ghee it is not fat but fat with vitamins, that is necessary. Without vitamins the system can never be in a healthy condition. The Sanitary Commissioner of the United Provinces once wrote:

"by cheapening the price of milk so as to bring it within the reach of the poorer classes, more would be effected towards reducing infantile mortality than the presence of any number of trained *dhais* would accomplish."

Again the death-rate among females between the ages of 15 and 30, that is to say during their child-bearing period, is appreciably higher than the death-rate of men of corresponding ages, and this is doubtless due mainly to the want of nourishing foods, such as milk and ghee which they most

[Dr. U. Rama Rau.]

require at this period of life. Indians are practically vegetarians and even among non-vegetarians the quantity of fish and flesh consumed being considerably small, milk and milk products form their chief sources of nutrition. Owing to a number of causes, economic and otherwise, which it would be needless for me to go into now, the output of these nutritious foodstuffs is becoming considerably low. The market is full of patent foodstuffs which do not contain vitamins. To meet the growing demands of the people various artifices are resorted to and adulteration is among them the most successful one. Pure unadulterated ghee, Sir, is very hard to procure in these days. The Indian markets sell mostly adulterated ghee. So far as I know there is absolutely no control whatever over the adulteration of foodstuffs. These vegetable oils and vegetable compounds, apart from their unsuitability as substitutes for ghee, will only go to augment the sources of adulteration. They will be sold in the market as ghee and at the rate at which ghee is sold. This is really fleecing the ignorant public and the Government must come to their rescue now. To prevent their being marketed as artificial ghee, which has no nutritive value whatever except the nutrition of the fat in it and to avoid the risk of adulteration with pure ghee, which would tell upon the health of the people, Government must impose a prohibitive tariff. I even object to cocogem and margarine, both of which contain no vitamins at all. With these few words, Sir, I strongly support the Resolution moved by my friend.

THE HONOURABLE SIR BIJAY CHAND MAHTAB MAHARAJADHIRAJA BAHADUR OF BURDWAN (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, from the speech of the Honourable Mr. Chadwick I have been able to gather the fact that these different vegetable oils that are imported into India are from the point of view of purity not an undesirable foodstuff. Well, with that I have no quarrel. I rather regret that I did not have an opportunity to discuss with my friend from the Punjab the wording of this Resolution, for the Resolution as worded puts the Government not only into a difficulty, but I think it can be construed, whether rightly or wrongly, that a dead-set is being made at quite a whole-some foodstuff because it comes from foreign countries. I am sure that is not the object which Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das has in view. I think what the Rai Bahadur really means is that those who are accustomed to use pure ghee for their food should have better facilities for procuring it. Had he worded his Resolution in that way probably we would have got a very sympathetic reply from the Government. In Southern India if you go to the bazaar to get some food you will never get any food that is cooked in ghee; it is invariably cooked in some kind of vegetable oil; perhaps because the people of that part of India prefer food cooked in vegetable oil or because there is not sufficient pure ghee to be had. But in Upper India if you go to the bazaar, whether the ghee is adulterated or not, you certainly get food in the bazaar cooked in some sort of ghee. Naturally the question is not only one in which a protective tariff arises, but really the question is to devise some means to increase the output of ghee in the country, and, whether that object can be achieved in the way that my friend desires by the wording of his Resolution or not, I have every sympathy with his Resolution inasmuch as it seeks to bring to the market a purer and unadulterated ghee. I therefore hope that the Honourable Member in charge, whilst he may not be able to accept the Resolution

as it has been worded, will give us some indication as to whether the provincial Acts have sufficient safeguards for this purpose. In Bengal the member in charge passed the Bengal Act within 48 hours. I do not know whether it has achieved any success or not. Unfortunately some of my Marwari friends who generally are the loudest in advocating putting purer ghee on the market, are in some cases the largest buyers, though not the consumers of this adulterated stuff which contains the fat of the boa constrictor and the python. I found out that fact when the Bill was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council, and when it was passed in 48 hours. Had it not been the pre-reform days probably we would have sat for days together to pass even legislation of that kind. But my main point is this, that I do think there is a grievance among not only Hindus but Indians generally who like to have their food cooked in pure ghee that this other stuff is not only being sold as vegetable oil—one would not mind if it was sold as vegetable oil—but that in spite of these provincial Acts, facilities for adulterating ghee and putting such stuff on the market are being given by the importation of these stuffs. I should like to draw the attention of the Government to this suggestion that the attention of the Provincial Governments may be directed to the Acts now in force in different provinces to see whether any further rigorous measures to stop this adulteration is possible. Those are all the observations I have to make on this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES MACWATT (Director General, Indian Medical Service): Sir, we have heard that about 4 lakhs of maunds of vegetable oils are imported annually, and I presume that if they are imported into India they are also consumed, for otherwise they would not continue to be imported; and if four lakhs of maunds are consumed annually the natural inference would seem to be that these are required to supplement the ghee which we are told is so much in demand and of which there is not enough to go round. We are also informed that this has led to the modern system of adulteration. Well, as far back as 1889, when I was serving with the Lushai Expedition, I remember well that we were troubled with bad and adulterated ghee being supplied, a considerable amount of which we had to condemn. In Calcutta I was stationed on military duty in 1892. Ghee was exported to the Andaman Islands for consumption. A military board assembled monthly on commissariat supplies, and I remember even then there was considerable condemnation of adulterated ghee: so that the adulteration of ghee is no new thing which has come about since the war. When serving in the Punjab I had the privilege of being associated with the Punjab Food and Adulteration Act which was passed in 1919, and which provided that anyone who exposed for sale an article which was labelled ghee and which contained any other product in it was liable to prosecution, and I think that a weapon was given into the hands of the Police to carry this into force.

THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU: How many were prosecuted?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES MACWATT: I am afraid that I have left the Punjab for some time, so I am not conversant with the facts, and I could not give that information. But I understand from the Honourable Dr. Rama Rau that this law is practically null and void in Madras. Well it seems to me that as in the past it has not been enforced, you can scarcely impose a hundred per cent. *ad valorem* duty on

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the importation of pure vegetable oils, unless it be to encourage local production in India, on the analogy of the steel duty. India has great possibilities for turning out pure vegetable oils, but so far apparently the country has not waked up to that fact. If an article is not represented as Indian ghee, I cannot see how any serious objection could be taken to the sale of it. There has been an extensive use for cooking during the war of these vegetable oils, and a certain number of people such as the Labour Corps, said they liked it—I think some of us have possibly used vegetable oil on occasions, and without bad effects. There is no reason why vegetable oil should not be a sound product, and, if it were not labelled ghee, there is no reason why it should not be sold either. I believe there ought to be a legitimate demand for this article; so I do not see why it should not be met. Lots of people cannot afford to take the amount of ghee that others can: and if they can get a substitute in good wholesome vegetable oil, there is no reason why they should not be allowed to get it as long as they do not buy it as ghee. I have heard my Honourable friend, Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das, talk about vitamins, and my Honourable friend on the other side made a few remarks which were very illuminating about vitamins, but unfortunately my auditory apparatus was not sufficiently acute to catch what he said. If I am not going too far into scientific matters, I think I may mention to Honourable Members that there is not much information about these vitamins up to now. They are still under investigation, and some research workers are very busy at them. We have a research officer of the I. M. S. at Coonoor who is investigating the subject of deficiency diseases; he has elucidated a good number of points, and he is still working. Research workers are also at work to find out what the chemistry of vitamins is. So far, apparently we know of four vitamins—Vitamin A, which is contained in green leaves and vegetables, also in the yolk of eggs. A deficiency of this Vitamin A in the human dietary causes a greatly lowered state of general health which results in an abnormally high death-rate from acute infections, particularly of the lungs. Then there is Vitamin B which we get concentrated in the whole meal of cereals and the seed coverings. A deficiency of this for any considerable time such as results from the consumption of highly milled rice with all the coverings of the seed taken off, is followed in due course by paralysis of the limbs, and widespread inflammation of the nerves, known as acute neuritis. Much as we have learnt of the part vitamins play in nutrition, we have as yet but touched the fringe of knowledge regarding them. Probably the absence of Vitamin B has an intimate relation to gastro-intestinal health. Its deficiency, in association with other food faults accompanying it, is probably much concerned with the intestinal ill-health so common at the present day. Then I think my Honourable friend was talking about infants not getting ghee: well, I do not think infants are fed on ghee; they get or should get mother's milk. Vitamin C is the vitamin that is supposed to prevent scurvy. An important fact in this connection is that the milk of animals, cows and others, is very poor in this Vitamin C; and all children fed on cow's milk require to have their diet supplemented by raw green vegetables and such things as orange or lemon juice. Now the fact is that people who do not get good ghee get vegetable products containing essential vitamins instead; and if they have a proper dietary consisting of vegetables and other things in the proper proportion, and if the vegetable oil itself is pure, as I think the vegetable oils and products turned out and

sent from Europe are pure, there is no reason at all why they should not be consumed so long as the consumers know what they are consuming. It would be a great hardship, it seems to me, for the poor people, to put a hundred per cent. duty on to this quite suitable diet for human beings.

THE HONOURABLE SIR CHARLES INNES (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, I had not intended to speak when I came to the Council of State this morning; I had merely intended to listen to what was sure to be an interesting debate. But I have to ask permission just to say a few words. I shall take the Council back to the exact terms of this Resolution. The Resolution, as it is worded, puts an entirely impossible task on Government. As it is worded, it would mean that the Government would have to distinguish vegetable products imported for the purpose of being sold as artificial ghee or for adulterating pure ghee and vegetable products imported for the purpose of being sold as vegetable products. As the Resolution stands, I say without hesitation that it is entirely unworkable. But, Sir, I am not concerned with the exact wording of the Resolution. I wish to point out that the whole theory of the Resolution is wrong. It is misconceived. The theory of the Resolution is that these vegetable products are imported into India for the purpose of adulterating pure ghee in India. Now, the Honourable Mr. Chadwick has pointed out perfectly clearly that the real fact is that pure ghee in India is very rare. Ghee is greatly adulterated, and owing to the demand having exceeded the supply has increased very greatly in price, and it is those factors which have given rise to a perfectly legitimate demand for vegetable substitutes. If you stop the import of these vegetable substitutes, the economic result would be merely that you would increase the adulteration of ghee and you would increase the price. From our point of view, and I am now speaking merely from the tariff point of view, there can be no justification whatsoever for imposing a prohibitive duty on these vegetable produces.

The Maharaja of Burdwan has, I think, brought out what is the real issue in this debate. He has pointed out that Indians want to have pure ghee made in the ordinary way, and they do not want to have imposed upon them ghee mixed with vegetable oils or any other substance whatever. In the first place, Sir, I would point out here that the issue raised by the Maharaja of Burdwan is not raised by the Resolution, because I do not for a moment believe that these vegetable products are brought out to this country for the purpose of mixing them with Indian ghee. The person who wishes to adulterate ghee uses the much cheaper and much nastier materials available in India. These vegetable products are made in Holland and Germany. They are made from materials imported from the tropics. They may be palm kernels from the west coast of Africa or they may be kopra or ground-nuts or whatever it may be imported from the Far East. They go through very elaborate, very expensive and very technical processes and in themselves they are not cheap products. Therefore, I put it to the Council that it is most unlikely that people who adulterate ghee in India will adulterate it with these comparatively expensive products. As I said, the Maharaja of Burdwan has brought up what is the real issue in this debate, namely, whether anything can be done to ensure that pure ghee is sold in India. Now, the obvious point which I have to make is that this is a matter for Local Governments and not only that but for the transferred halves of Local Governments. The

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Maharaja said that an Act was passed in Bengal dealing with this subject. I should like to read the exact section of this Act which deals with ghee :

"In the case of ghee it shall contain only substances other than curds which are derived exclusively from the milk of cows or of buffaloes and shall fulfil such conditions as may be prescribed by the Local Government."

Now, the Local Governments in practically all the provinces have taken powers to deal with this evil. As I said, it is a transferred subject and it is not open to the Government of India to issue instructions to Local Governments and in any way try to get them to tighten their law on this subject. We must leave it to Ministers to deal with it in consultation with their local Councils. The matter is one which excites so much interest in India that I think we may rest assured that the importance of it will be brought from time to time to the notice of the Ministers by their Councils. In the meantime, we will undertake to forward a copy of this debate to all Local Governments in order that their attention may be drawn to the point brought out by my friend the Maharaja of Burdwan :

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, I suggest to the Mover and to the Government Members that a *via media* could be found to frame the Resolution in such a manner that it may be accepted by the Government. For instance, we can say that pure ghee should be marked as such and adulterated ghee should be marked as adulterated. If this were done, I think it will not be difficult for the Police or for anybody to prosecute the man who was keeping the wrong stuff. As to the ghee itself, I think, I can safely say from my experience of the past two decades and a half—as I have been more or less a living history of it because there has not been a single expedition within this period that I did not attend and where I had the chances of meeting soldiers and seeing their rations—that in the expeditions of Somaliland and Tibet the ghee used to be very much better than what it was during the world-war. But whatever stuff it was mixed with, I do think that it was not very bad for the health of the troops because they did not suffer from its use. During the last Kabul War, however, the adulteration of ghee had proceeded to such an extent that it became uneatable even for rough peasants from whom you recruit your soldiers. I made a complaint to one of the Supply and Transport officers and he said that it was pure ghee. So, the next time when I went to Simla I also reported this matter and they said that this ghee should be sealed and sent to the Chemical Examiner. The result of this chemical examination proved that it was anything but ghee. I wrote my report on ghee and mentioned in it the various ways in which ghee was mixed with various things, one of them being that ghee was mixed with pure oil and potatoes and when you put it on the fire there was nothing left of it. There are various local methods of adulterating ghee. This we will have to admit. Sir, the oil that comes into this country comes from outside and my friend Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das and other Hindu friends really should insist that this oil should come from outside ; if it did not, the adulteration in India might be with the fat of an animal which is religiously prohibited to Hindus or it may be with the fat of an animal which is religiously prohibited to Muhammadans. But if the ghee is mixed with oil, there is no fat in it. So, my suggestion is that we should not stop

the import of oil. My friend, the Mover, has already told the House that ghee is not to be found in such abundance that everybody can buy it pure. So, we would be practically stopping the ghee from remaining in its pure condition and if the imported stuff were taxed, we would be taxing the pockets of the poor, which is not advisable. All the same, though I am against the Resolution we, the Punjabis, are more or less partisans in some way and, if my friend Lala Ram Saran Das presses his Resolution to the vote, I shall vote with him. (Laughter.) But, as there is every chance of its defeat, I suggest that he should withdraw his Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Sir, Mr. Chadwick has told this House that ghee is being mixed and adulterated for a long time. I said the same thing in my speech. I did not say that the adulteration of ghee began after the war so far as the ordinary stuffs were concerned and which were not hydrogenated and deodorised. What I meant to say was that it was after the war that these vegetable products began to be mixed freely with pure ghee. Mr. Chadwick, after all, admits that this adulteration has been going on for some time. I also know that, but as the articles mixed were not hydrogenated and deodorised they could be easily detected by the sense of smell or of taste. But, as the article now comes in such a condition that it has no odour or smell and as it has practically no taste, it is very difficult to detect it. Two wrongs do not make a right and I think it is the duty of the Government to stop this foul practice which they themselves admit has existed for a long time. Mr. Chadwick said that when margarine was first introduced into the British Kingdom, there was much opposition from the indigenous producers of butter.

In that connection, Sir, I may say that ever since margarine was introduced into England it has been sold as margarine but not as butter. (*An Honourable Member:* "No.") That is as far as my own information goes. I have not myself been to England and so I cannot give any opinion in this matter from my own personal knowledge. However, I am subject to correction in this respect. The Honourable Mr. Chadwick said that this artificial ghee is a useful stuff for food and is harmless. During the course of the discussion he looked at me asking whether this was not a fact. I said it is a fact. Nobody says that this vegetable ghee has got any poisons in it. What I say is this, that it is a stuff which most people are accustomed to mix freely with the pure ghee. The Honourable Sir Charles Innes doubts this statement of mine. With due deference to him I want to draw his attention to the fact that most of this vegetable product does go to the ghee-producing centres. In the Punjab, the United Provinces and in Central India you will find that the ghee-producing centres are the only places to which this vegetable ghee is consigned, and I have this knowledge as I come in contact with a great number of merchants in the Punjab and the United Provinces who know that the producers are mixing this vegetable compound very freely and the only reason for doing so is that which I have already stated, that it cannot be easily detected. The Honourable Major-General Sir Charles MacWatt says that in 1889 in the Lushai Expedition a supply of ghee was condemned by him as being adulterated. That takes us back to a long time and shows that, notwithstanding our various laws on the subject, we have not been able to stop this adulteration. Dr. MacWatt also said that this vegetable compound comes in because there is a legitimate demand for it. There is a great secret import of cocaine into India. Can we say that it has a legitimate demand? That demand is only

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

confined to a few interested merchants whose profession is to mix this vegetable compound with pure ghee. So it cannot be said that there is a legitimate demand in its true sense. Dr. MacWatt has also said that infants in the Punjab do not take ghee but I might mention, Sir, that it is the infant's mother which is given more ghee after confinement than she is ordinarily given, so that it is for the sake of the infant that the mother gets more ghee and in case that ghee is not pure it will tell badly on the health of the child.

Dr. MacWatt also said that when this article is purchased by the consuming public they know that it is a vegetable compound and not ghee. With due deference I want to say that they do not know that and the ordinary poor consumer has to buy it as if it were pure ghee.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES MACWATT: I was rather misconstrued. I said that the law laid down that if a man exposes or has for sale on his premises stuff that he sells as ghee, it has to be labelled as ghee and if you took a sample and had it analysed and find it is adulterated, the man is liable to punishment.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: I am glad that Dr. MacWatt has elucidated this point. I might mention that all the tins that contain ghee are not at all labelled. In fact they have no label at all and so people can be misled. He refers to 1919 when in the Punjab the adulteration of Food and Drugs Act was passed. I happened to be a colleague of the Doctor Sahib in the Punjab Council and I remember that the enactment of this Act was necessitated by the free amount of mixtures in the ghee which was against the habits of the people and which the people strongly resented. That was the reason why this Act was brought into force. I am sorry to say (and Dr. Rama Rau rightly intervened) that ever since that Act was passed there has not been a single prosecution. At times the municipalities have taken an interest in the matter but when they have found that the adulteration is taking place on a very large scale and that it involved wholesale prosecutions they have not launched any prosecutions because if they had done so the import of ghee into the towns would have suddenly stopped for some time.

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes said that as the imported ghee is comparatively expensive it cannot be adulterated. With due deference to the Commerce Member I may be allowed to say that the price of the imported artificial ghee ranges from Rs. 35 to Rs. 45 per maund as compared with the pure ghee which sells at from Rs. 63 to Rs. 70 per maund, which shows that adulteration can be made with advantage.

THE HONOURABLE SIR CHARLES INNES: But will the Honourable Member tell us the price of oils, such as castor oil, and the other common adulterants?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: As far as those oils are concerned, and Cocogem, I might say that the price of Cocogem and the price of these oils has been ruling high enough so that no encouragement has been given to those who adulterate ghee for committing this offence. And, Sir, why is that? I have already stated that it is because when articles of this kind, excepting Cocogem, are mixed, they give a particular odour to the ghee and they can be easily detected. Cocogem has maintained a high price and that is the reason why it has not been used for adulteration with pure ghee. In case the price of Cocogem

was on the same level as imported artificial ghee I think Cocogem would have also been found a favourite article for admixture. I am not advocating a protective duty for Cocogem. My object in moving this Resolution has been to draw the attention of the Government to the seriousness of the problem. The Honourable the Maharaja of Burdwan has suggested that more pure ghee ought to be produced. That is the right thing to do, but it will take time, and although various Provincial Governments in the past have been trying to increase the supply of ghee, the increase in supply has not met the demand. As the Honourable the Commerce Member has given an assurance to this House that due consideration will be given to this matter, and that the attention of Provincial Governments will be drawn to it by sending them a copy of to-day's debate I beg leave to withdraw this Resolution.

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

INDIAN REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. C. ROY (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I beg to move that the Bill further to amend the Indian Registration Act, 1908, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration.

The House is aware, Sir, that Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar is the author of this Bill, and the object of the Bill, in his own words, is to enable the Local Governments to invest selected sub-Registrars with powers to hold an inquiry into matters of execution of a document when it is denied by the executor. Sir, the Bill was accepted on behalf of Government by Mr. Tonkinson and was passed by the Legislative Assembly on February, the 19th. I may state for the information of this House that the Bill has been accepted by the majority of Provincial Governments and also by the majority of local Administrations, and I commend it to the consideration of this House.

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. C. ROY: Sir, before I ask you to put the final motion to the House, I may mention that I have seen certain observations about the suitability of the Sub-Registrars in the provinces. Sir, I knew many Sub-Registrars in my time in Bengal, and I have seen some in the Punjab, and I am quite convinced that if they are empowered to do the work under this Bill, they will do it well and to the credit of their service as well as to the credit of the Government and the country, and anything that is done to enhance the prestige and the power of Sub-Registrars will, I hope, meet with the consent of this House. I move that the Bill be passed.

The motion was adopted.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 6th March, 1926.