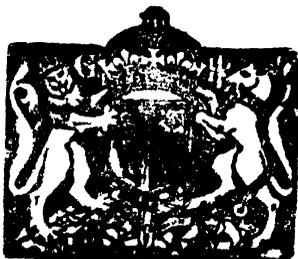


LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

MONDAY, 9th FEBRUARY, 1931

Vol. I—No. 16

OFFICIAL REPORT



CONTENTS.

Member Sworn.

Death of Pandit Motilal Nehru.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 9th February, 1931.

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

MEMBER SOWN:

Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Nominated Non-Official).

DEATH OF PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Leader of the House): We meet today, Mr. President, under the shadow of bereavement. India is the poorer by the removal of Pandit Motilal Nehru, who for the last ten years has held a foremost place in the public life of the country. Of his policies and of his achievements, this is not the time or the place to speak; so far as he is concerned, the chapter is closed and the record sealed up to await the judgment of history. That he will fill a large place in the pages of the historian, none of us can doubt, and however the value of his work may be assessed, no one will question his whole-hearted devotion to the interests of India as he conceived them, or impute to him any motive other than an honest desire to serve his country.

There are many in this House, Mr. President, who can speak of Pandit Motilal Nehru from a greater degree of intimacy than any that I can claim. But he had a personality which impressed itself on the most unobservant. Eminent as a lawyer, eminent as a speaker and in the first rank as a political leader, he could not but take a foremost place wherever he might be, whether within these walls or outside them. The quickness of his intellect, his skill in debate, his adroitness as a tactician and his strength of purpose rendered him a formidable adversary in controversy. These qualities were there for all to see, but he had other qualities which lent distinction to his character in private life as well as in politics, and it is these I most often recall. An endearing courtesy, a ready sense of humour, a freedom from malice and bitterness and a wide and deep culture rendered him unrivalled as a host and the most charming of companions. We shall not again see in this House his well-remembered figure, but we shall often recall that exquisite neatness of his attire which aptly symbolised the clean fighter and the great gentleman, and that impressive face, deeply lined and care-worn, on which character and intellect were so deeply imprinted.

On behalf of the Government of India, Mr. President, I have tried to say something of what is in our minds and hearts, and I am authorised to say that His Majesty's Secretary of State for India desires to be

[Sir George Rainy.]

associated with our expression of regret and sorrow. I believe it would be in accordance with the wishes of every one in this House, Mr. President, that you should convey to the family of the deceased our sense of loss and our deep sympathy in their bereavement.

Sir Hari Singh Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muham-madan): Sir, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to support the Resolution that has been moved by the Leader of the House. He said that there are many in this House who must be more intimately acquainted with Pandit Motilal Nehru than the distinguished occupant of the Government Bench. Sir, I happen to be one of those who were friendly and intimate with the late Pandit Motilal Nehru for at least forty years. I knew Pandit Motilal Nehru as a lawyer, as a politician and as a gentleman, and I can vouch for the fact that as a lawyer he was as clean a fighter as he was as a politician. He was, Sir, a self-made man. He easily distinguished himself at the Bar of Cawnpore, and from there he shifted his practice to the High Court at Allahabad, from where his name and fame soon spread throughout the land. Up to about ten years ago, there was not a single *cause célèbre* in the United Provinces and the adjoining provinces where Pandit Motilal Nehru's services were not requisitioned. He had amassed a great fortune, and when he found that the call of his duty demanded his sacrifice, without a moment's hesitation, he gave up his large practice and dedicated the rest of his life to the service of his Motherland. Sir, the history of Pandit Motilal Nehru from the year 1920 down to the date of his death is well-known to his fellow countrymen. In the second Assembly, he came as a Leader of the Opposition, and in the third Assembly, he continued to guide that well disciplined body of Swarajists whom he led. Feeling that his work outside the Assembly called him, he left the Assembly, and since then, he had been devoting his life to the service of his Motherland. Sir, Pandit Motilal Nehru not only sacrificed his life, but his liberty, for the service of his countrymen and we feel today that India is the poorer for his death. Sir, I remember the day when he tabled his celebrated Resolution for the calling of a Round Table Conference. It is a sad sight, Sir, that while the Round Table Conference has closed, he who sowed the seed of the Round Table Conference should not have lived to garner the harvest. I am sure, Sir, that if he had lived, he would have felt that the work, that he had begun and in consequence of which the Round Table Conference was called, had ended in formulating a constitution for this country which was well worthy of his consideration. Sir, Pandit Motilal Nehru had personal friends in this House and outside, and I am certain that while he came in close contact with all sorts and conditions of men, there is not one today who does not mourn his loss. In the loss of Pandit Motilal Nehru, India has lost a great patriot, a great leader, a great friend, and above them all, one who had consecrated his life for the good of his fellowmen. Sir, the effect of his loss will be felt not only in India but in countries outside of it, because Pandit Motilal Nehru was not only known in this country but was also known to people outside it. Sir, I feel that as a Member of this House I should ask it to adjourn today out of respect to the memory of the deceased. As I have said, and as the Leader of the House has pointed out, Pandit Motilal Nehru was the

Leader of the Opposition in this House, and it would be befitting that we commemorate this event by closing all business for the day. I hope the House will agree with me.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I also rise to join in mourning the sad death of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Sir, there are occasions when words are a very inadequate medium for conveying one's feelings, and this is one of those occasions when no words that I can command can adequately express the feelings which I have in my mind. It is said, and truly said, that calamities do not come alone. India had not yet survived the shock which she received on account of the sad death of Maulana Muhammad Ali when another calamity has befallen this unhappy country in the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Pandit Motilal Nehru is not dead. As Mr. Gandhi remarked before his bier, he will live long. Hafiz Shiraz, the famous poet, says:

Hargiz Namirad āñkeh dilash zinda shūd bá ishq

Sabt ast bar jarida-i-ālam dawām-i-shān.

"Never will die the man whose heart is enlivened with love." (*Of course with the love of one's country and motherland*) "His name will always remain in the history of the country in golden letters."

But in fact it is a misfortune that we have lost him at a time when his services were mostly needed by his country. Sir, we know that the Prime Minister of England, in his last speech at the Round Table Conference, said that it was unfortunate that there was no settlement of the question of minorities, and the differences between Hindus and Mussalmans could not be settled at that Conference and therefore he left the question to be settled among ourselves. We know that in India nobody was more fitted to handle this question and there was no one who could settle this question in a more amicable manner than Pandit Motilal. Pandit Motilal Nehru, as we know, began his education with a Muslim Maulvi. He adopted the Muslim culture, and I can say that there is nobody now in India among the Hindus, except Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who in culture can pass as a Mussalman in the society of educated Mussalmans. His influence was as great among the Mussalmans as it was in his own community, and therefore his death at this time is nothing short of a great national calamity. I need not detain the House very long by recapitulating the history of his life. It has been published in all the papers all over the country, and in this House it has been outlined by the Leader of the House, and my Honourable friend Sir Hari Singh Gour. I only wish you, Sir, to convey our sense of grief and sorrow to that noble lady, his consort, who throughout his life shared his sorrows and his pleasures, and who up to the end was fighting with her noble consort the battle for the freedom of India. You should also convey our sympathy to his great son, a worthy son of a worthy father, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who has already made his mark on the public life of the country, and I hope that Pandit Motilal's mantle will befittingly fall upon his shoulders.

With these words, I associate myself with the motion which has been moved by the Leader of the House.

Sir Hugh Cocke (Bombay: European): Sir, it is always a privilege to be associated in a tribute to a great man, and we on these Benches are only too anxious to join in this tribute and in the expression of our sympathy with Pandit Nehru's widow and in our desire that this House should adjourn out of respect for his memory. Pandit Motilal Nehru

[Sir Hugh Cocke.]

was not only a very distinguished Member of this House, but he was a very delightful personality, and those of us who have been in this House with him remember the many occasions on which we had the benefit of his advice and his friendship. We did not know him in his early years, but we have read of his accomplishments, first as an advocate with his excellent abilities in argument, pleading and advocacy, and later as a politician who in his earlier years I find described as one of the moderate politicians of India. I pass over those times when I had not the privilege of his friendship, and come down to the days when I and others knew him in this Assembly as a stern and strong advocate of Indian aspirations. It is sad that Pandit Motilal should have been taken away—sad from his point of view particularly—at a time when his work appeared to be bearing very noble fruit, and it is sadder still I think for India that he should have left us at this particular time. His example is one which I am sure we can all follow in many ways. He was a great exponent of Indian nationalism. He was not only that. He was always ready with his genial character to enter into discussions with us in the lobby on any matter which interested India. He brought to this House his great experience and ability in advocacy and used it in his country's cause. I say no more in his memory, a memory which is a very real one in this House, the memory of a man who fought hard for India's attainment in the realm of nations, a respected and respectful opponent and a very worthy friend.

Raja Sir Vasudeva Rajah (Madras: Landholders): Mr. President, on behalf of the Landowners' group in this Assembly, I should like to associate myself with the observations that have been made by the Leader of the House and the speakers who preceded me on the great loss the country has sustained in the passing away of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Sir, there is no one here or outside, whatever his politics or predilections, who does not share in the grief caused by the great leader's death. His Excellency the Viceroy, when he expressed his and Lady Irwin's regret at the sad news of Pandit Motilal's death, and sent to Mrs. Motilal Nehru and her family a message of "most sincere sympathy" in their "sorrow", was not only speaking for himself and Lady Irwin, nor even for the entire body of officials whose administrative head he is, but for the country as a whole. When the dust and storm of controversy subside, when India has taken her place in the comity of Nations, Pandit Motilal's name will be gratefully remembered as one of her master-builders. He had placed in the service of his country all his resources and the great intellectual powers with which Providence had abundantly endowed him. An unsurpassed success in his own profession, he was almost unequalled in his capacity for sacrifice in his country's interests according to his own lights. He died full of years and full of honours, and his name will live in history as a maker of modern India. It is gratifying to feel that when the shades of death were gathering thick on him, he must have had supreme satisfaction in having been able to witness the dawn of a new and happy era of great promise which has brightened the Indian horizon. We share in the deep sorrow caused by his great loss and offer our sincere sympathies to all the members of his family through you in their bereavement.

Mr. T. B. Phookun (Assam Valley: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, on behalf of my province and on my own behalf, I beg to associate myself with what has been said by the Leader of the House and the Honourable gentlemen who have spoken on the subject. I feel overwhelmed with grief in mourning the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru, because his loss is irreparable, and my grief is all the more great because I had the privilege of his personal friendship. His was a towering personality, as everybody will admit, not only in the field of politics but in almost all spheres of life. His immense sacrifice, his indomitable courage even at his age and with his state of health brings him to the forefront of patriots. Sir, a hero of a thousand battles, I wish that his soul may rest in peace and will inspire us and lead us from victory to victory in this our great fight for freedom.

Mr. K. Ahmed (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I beg to associate myself with what has been said about Pandit Motilal Nehru by the Leader of the House and my friends. His death at this momentous time has caused an irreparable loss to this country. He was not only a politician of great eminence but he was a gentleman of true type. His effort to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity was the outstanding feature. It is up to us all to follow his noble example. He came to this Assembly in the year 1924 and from the discharge of his duty as Leader of the Opposition we found that this Assembly got its life and dignity. People of this country began to think since then that this country had got a Parliament of its own and it was really a representative gathering where important matters could be discussed. Sir, as Leader of the Opposition, he has impressed not only his followers, but many of us, including Members of the Treasury Bench. He was a great personality in the House and he commanded great respect equally from his friends and foes for his charming manners and clean methods of fighting. His social life in the country as well as amongst the Members of this Assembly was remarkably friendly. As far as I know, Sir, he was eminently a constitutionalist, and was only driven occasionally to extremism by others and outside influences. He was a great lawyer of exceptional ability and he earned a reputation at the Bar. I remember while he was carrying on the big propaganda of Swarajism against the Simon Commission in the year 1928, he appeared in a case in which both he and Sir John Simon had worked together. He was a great friend of us. He loved his country, loved his people and his friends equally. We were grieved and shocked to hear of his death in the early hours of last Friday, the 6th February. The country became so dull; the streets of Delhi looked like desert places. People looked lifeless. Work in the business places and in the markets all stopped, and the town became dull and sad at this bereavement. Indian political life has become poorer by his death and the country has suffered a great loss. His life was a life of struggle and of the greatest sacrifice a man of his distinction ever made. He was a personal friend of mine; and I was intimately known to the members of his family—I knew each and every one of them. I used to meet them during the Session and they were all so accomplished and social that it was a great pleasure to mix with them from time to time; and therefore it is really a matter of great regret today that we shall no longer get a chance in this world of seeing our friend, the late Pandit Motilal Nehru.

[Mr. K. Ahmed.]

It is only right, Mr. President, that this Assembly should adjourn for the day out of respect to the great personality who has gone from our midst. He has passed away from us and we will not find him any more. He has served his country and served his people.

Sir, I associate myself entirely with what has been said by the previous speakers and support the motion of the Honourable the Leader of the House that our feeling of regret at the sad bereavement should reach his devoted wife, Mrs. Motilal Nehru, his son and daughters, and his relations.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural):

Sir, I rise to pay my tribute of tears to the great leader of Indian nationalism. One of the brightest stars in the political firmament of India has passed away from our midst at a time when the country needed most his sage and wise guidance. Sir, his was a dynamic personality. A born leader of men, he guided the political life of India for a decade with great success. He was the prophet of Indian nationalism. I had the privilege, along with many others, of sitting at his feet to learn political lessons, which has stood us in good stead in after life. Sir, our hearts are now too full to give adequate expression to what we all feel. About his career as a lawyer, his eminence as a politician, enough has been said by the previous speakers and I will not reiterate it. Sir, I offer my respectful homage to our departed leader, of whom it can be justly said,—

“Life’s race well run,
Life’s work well done,
Now comes rest.”

I trust and hope that he will ever guide and watch our work here on earth from heaven and lead us to salvation.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural):

Sir, Pandit Motilal Nehru’s death has come at a time when India could ill-afford it. When we needed him most, he has been taken away from us. This is a time when we require men of his strong character, strong calibre and men who can create public opinion in India, men who enjoy the confidence not only of their own communities but the confidence of other communities as well. Pandit Motilal Nehru was one of the foremost leaders of India who had among Mussalmans not only many personal friends but a large following. He had the confidence of his own community and of other communities as well. Men of his character and ability are required when we are going to settle many of those intricate problems which cannot easily find a solution in the future constitution of the country. People of Motilal Nehru’s ability are very few in our country, and therefore his loss is all the greater at this juncture. Pandit Motilal Nehru had a liberal mind and he was one of those politicians who always liked to see the other man’s point of view as well. He not only impressed on the public the point of view which he had in his mind, but he was equally ready to see the point of view of other communities; and therefore, Sir, his loss at the present time is all the greater, although at any time his loss would have been great to India. We feel it more. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir, was a great friend of mine and of my family. He had been our lawyer for a long time, and I met him for the first time when I had no concern with politics at all. I had known him as a great

friend, and my province, Sir, feels the loss greater, because he was one of the foremost people in the United Provinces who enjoyed the confidence of the entire public, irrespective of caste or creed. I remember, Sir, in 1916, when Pandit Motilal Nehru was thinking of standing for the Imperial Legislative Council and there was going to be a tug of war between several candidates, Pandit Motilal Nehru was the only man who had the solid support behind him. There was not a single Mussalman who was not ready to vote for Pandit Motilal Nehru. He had such a great hold, Sir, in my province. Since then, Sir, he became the foremost leader of India, and my province along with the whole country mourns his loss. Sir, I on behalf of my Party associate with every word which has fallen from the Honourable the Leader of the House, and I wholeheartedly support the suggestion made by the Vice-Leader of the Opposition Party that the business for today may be adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed soul.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury (Bengal: Landholders): Sir, though my lips are dry and my language fails to give adequate expression to my feelings owing to overwhelming grief, still I venture to stand on my legs because I feel that I should just express my thoughts at least to endorse every word that has fallen from the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution. Sir, recently I had been to Allahabad when I heard of the illness of Pandit Motilal Nehru, and even when he was in such a bad condition of health I saw he was full of patriotic zeal and he said that we had achieved Swaraj that a radical change had come over the political condition of the country. Sir, the country can ill-afford to lose such a leader as Pandit Motilal at this juncture, and it is our peculiar misfortune that we are here today to mourn the loss of such a great patriot who served this country so well. In this connection I should remind every Member of the Opposition Benches to remember the words uttered by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, who attended the funeral ceremony which was held at Allahabad, and I would also appeal to the Government to change their policy and stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of the country and try to make the new constitution a success.

Mr. S. C. Shahani (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to join in the homage that is being most fittingly paid to the sacred memory of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru. The mourning in the country over his death has been unparalleled in its poignancy. The congregations of people at the portals of his temporary residence in Lucknow, the congregations for his *darshan* at the portals of his residence in Allahabad and the congregations on the banks of the Sangham, as also the mammoth meetings held all over the country, go to show that he was deeply respected and deeply loved by the people at large. One can easily see why the feeling of the people of this country over his death has been so profound. The hopes of this country have been centered in two men, one of whom has been Pandit Motilal Nehru. Gandhiji has been the soul of the nationalist movement, but Pandit Motilal Nehru has been the brain of it. Pandit Motilal guided the nationalist movement in the country wisely. He was most wonderfully constituted in his mind. His success in the legal profession was phenomenal; and after he gave up his legal practice to serve his country, the part that he played was altogether unsurpassed. We know how he decided to enter the Councils, contrary to the wishes

[Mr. S. C. Shahani.]

of Gandhiji himself. He was a constitutionalist at heart, and wanted to advance the cause of his country through constitutionalism. He, at first, incurred the displeasure of the whole country for entering the Councils; and yet the part that he played in the Councils earned him the gratitude of all the people who revered him for his determination to correlate the work in the country to the work in the Councils. We also know how his reports have been classic documents. The Report that he put forth on the occasion of the martial law and the Dyerian deeds in the Punjab will undoubtedly be considered a classical work. It presents in a most moderate and reticent manner the peoples' case. Then the Nehru Report which he put forth will be considered as a masterpiece of statesmanship. No doubt, it had to be withdrawn on account of communal opposition, but when passions cool down and when communalism looks beyond its immediate narrow objects, it will be recognised that it is the only document which lays down the lines on which the problems of the country can be solved. When his suggestion with regard to an amicable settlement of the Indian question by a Round Table Conference was unheeded, and later when the Simon Commission was appointed in the face of universal condemnation, he decided to throw in his lot, constitutionalist as he was, with his own son; and we know how he sacrificed himself in the fight for freedom, how he went to jail and how he endured the suffering to which he subjected himself. He dies in 1931 when his own suggestion with regard to the settlement of the country is nearing fruition. It is a pity at this time we shall have to go without his sage counsels. But the truest resolve on the part of the country would be to determine to carry on the campaign chalked out by him vigorously. Meanwhile, we should all combine to send our respectful condolences to the bereaved family, and according to me, to Gandhiji too, whose devoted and loyal friend he ever was, and who in his turn loved to be guided by his counsels.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhamadan Rural): As one who was most intimately associated with the great Pandit for about fifteen years of his public life, which was a privilege, and as one who had the misfortune to measure swords with him towards the evening of his life, I think I owe it to myself and to the great departed, Sir, through your courtesy and this opportunity, to associate myself with the observations that have fallen from the previous speakers. Well might it be said on an occasion like this that the good that men do lives after them, the evil is oft cremated with their bones. So let it be with the Pandit. Sir, his greatest good for the greatest number was the immolation of his life at the altar of his beloved Motherland. He was a great fighter all his life. He fought for his clients in good old days when he was a giant at the Bar, pitted against great legal giants like Dr. Sir Sundar Lal. Later on, he suspended his practice, rode into the non-co-operation movement and faced jail itself only to emerge from it to fight again. He always fought for what he thought was right and proper. Sir, he fought the No-changers in the Indian National Congress when they resisted Council entry, side by side with the Tilak of Bengal, the greatest man of his day—Deshabandu Das, with whom it was my privilege then to travel long distances and address meetings. Pandit Motilal Nehru fought against the Hindu Mahasabha because he felt at the last but one General Election

that he must fight it on behalf of the Congress, and he fought it as only he could have fought though the tide was against him then. That was a trying time when it was my privilege to stand close to him and join in the fight. Again, Sir, he fought when conviction came to him, and with that conviction, courage, when he left this Chamber riding again into the centre of the civil disobedience movement, and to jail itself. He was a great fighter, he fought always, as the Leader of the House has said, with clean weapons. He fought sometimes with a bludgeon, sometimes with a rapier, sometimes, alas, even with a boomerang, but he fought well and fought powerfully. To him, the fight was a fight for the right, and "to follow right because right is right were wisdom in the scorn of consequence". Like the Happy Warrior, he comprehended his trust, and to the same kept faithful with a singleness of aim. Finally, as Maulvi Muhammad Yakub has truly said, men like Pandit Motilal Nehru do not die; alike are life and death when life in death survives and the uninterrupted breath inspires a thousand lives.

Mr. President: Gentlemen, I should like to associate myself with the Honourable the Leader of the House and other Honourable Members who have spoken on this mournful occasion. I would only add one word to the tribute that has been paid to the memory of Pandit Motilal Nehru, and that is, that it is most unfortunate that he should have been taken away at the present juncture in the history of our Motherland when his services would have been most valuable. The present position is such that all national leaders are required to rise above the situation and to help in the promotion of the political progress of our country. That Pandit Motilal Nehru, one of the foremost national leaders, should have been taken away is a matter of extreme regret.

Agreeably to the wishes of this House I shall convey a message of sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

I take it that it is the general desire of the House to adjourn without transacting any business as a tribute to the memory of the departed leader, and in response to that desire, I now adjourn the House to 11 o'clock on Wednesday next.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 11th February, 1931.