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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 8th September, 1931.

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

DEATH OF MR. K. C. ROY.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Leader of the House) : We meet, Mr. President, to-day under the shadow of a sore and sudden bereavement. On the strange and dramatic circumstances in which one of our number was struck down in our midst whilst we were endeavouring to express our sense of loss at the removal of others, I will not dwell, for the thoughts which such an event must create in the mind of any man of ordinary humanity must be present to all our minds ! Standing as we do, Sir, under the immediate shadow of the tragedy, it is difficult to find fitting words to express what is in our hearts, and I will, therefore, Mr. President, be brief, because, in the face of the great tragedies of life, the emptiness of any words which we can use comes home to one strangely. Nevertheless, I will try, if I can, however imperfectly, to say something on behalf of the official Members of what we feel.

I suppose Mr. K. C. Roy was better known to us on the Official Benches, or to some of us at any rate, than any other non-official Member, for I believe it is more than 30 years since he became habitually resident at the headquarters of the Government of India—first, as a newspaper correspondent, and subsequently as the head of a great and important Press Agency. I remember well myself making his acquaintance about the year 1907 or 1908, when I was an Under Secretary to the Government of India. We have all of us for years past—at any rate those of us who are attached to headquarters—seen him from day to day as he moved in the exercise of his profession from one Department to another ; we have received his hospitality ; we have discussed with him all the important public questions that have exercised men's minds : and his removal, therefore, leaves a blank in Simla and Delhi which will long and sensibly be felt. We mourn not only a colleague in the Legislature, but a close, personal friend. Of his public career, I will only say this. As a veteran journalist, he occupied a place in the forefront of his own profession in India. For eight years he was a Member either of the Assembly or of the Council of State, and in that capacity, and more and more as time went on, he played an active and influential part in all important public questions. Two questions he had made particularly his own, and they will always in our memories be associated with his name. One was the Indianization of the Army, and the other, the interests of Indians overseas. I, for one, when these questions come up for our consideration, will always have memories of how near they were to Mr. Roy's heart. Of his many personal qualities, I think what impressed me most was his whole-hearted patriotism, his very genuine kindness, his cordial hospitality, and his genius for friendship, and for all these qualities, we shall long remember him whom we have lost.

[Sir George Rainy.]

Into the sacredness of the sorrow of those near and dear to him, Mr. President, it is not for us to intrude ; but I know, Mr. President, that you will be carrying out the wishes of the whole House if you will convey to them, as you most fittingly can, the deep sympathy and sorrow which all of us feel. I would suggest, Mr. President, that, after what has occurred, you will be meeting the wishes of the whole House if, after we have tried to express our sympathy, you will adjourn the House as a mark of respect to the deceased.

Diwan Bahadur T. Bangachariar (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, while at our first meeting yesterday we were bemoaning the loss of the three departed colleagues of ours—staunch men and true—who had been removed by the cruel hand of death from the scenes of their respective labours during the interval since we last dispersed in Delhi, we little realised that He, the God of Death, was still busy within our fold choosing his victim ! In fact His messengers, Yama Dhutas, as we call them, had already entered our precincts and were laughing at us as it were by claiming another and a greater victim.

Mr. K. C. Roy was indeed a great man amongst us in every sense of the term. He was a universal friend. He was always ready with sage counsel. Young and old sought his advice—official and non-official alike. He enjoyed the confidence of everyone. The most solemn secrets of the mighty and low were not kept as secrets to him. He kept those secrets most rigidly and honourably and at no time was confidence misplaced in him. He was extremely modest and retiring. He used to father the credit really due to him for real achievements, to others. He always kept himself in the background. I know he did so in my own case when we were together in London on the Kenya Committee. He was not of that gushing pushing type of men whom we come across frequently. His manners were sometimes unconventional, but he was every inch a gentleman. His knowledge of men and matters was unique. He had a remarkable memory for names and events. For long we will miss K. C. Roy of Delhi and Simla. Who amongst us has not sought his company in that little room of his where he used to receive us in a most hearty and unconventional way ?

Sir, the Government have lost a wise and a safe guide. The country has lost a sincere patriot. He was not of the noisy set : he was truly and sincerely patriotic. He may be said to be the father of the modern Indian Press. To his genius and power of organisation we owe that world-famous news agency—the Associated Press of India. That agency has not only spread news, but has also been helping in creating healthy public opinion. Mr. Roy was a truly great man. Words fail me. The Assembly has lost a wise and popular Member. We could ill-afford to lose such a true physician at this critical juncture when this country's future is in the throes of a new birth. The Press could ill-afford to lose him now. I am not sure the anxieties which he had about the new Bill for the better control of the Press did not hasten his end. He had, I know, planned to leave Simla, which did not at all suit him, and he would have gone down but for this Bill. The very last words I had with him yesterday on entering the Chamber were about

the Bill, as to how best it should be shaped to meet only the real necessities of the situation and at the same time to see that it does not affect the liberty of the Press. The Assembly will miss his sage guidance in the Committee stages of the Bill. The Assembly owes it to the departed patriot—the seniormost man among Indian journalists—to see that in its anxiety to get rid of terrorist crimes it does not sanction provisions which may have the effect of killing or crippling the Press in the country. To Mrs. Roy no words which we can utter here can give real comfort. You may, Sir, in your message to her give her the assurance that she is not alone in grieving for this great blow she has sustained : the whole country is mourning with her. May Mr. Roy's soul rest in peace !

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : In the absence of Sir Abdur Rahim, Mr. President, I rise to associate the Independent Party with the Resolution that has just been moved. I had not the honour of knowing Mr. K. C. Roy for any length of time, but there are many here who have known him for 15 to 20 years. One point in the career of the late Mr. Roy that most impresses me is that he was a really and truly self-made man. He rose from the bottom of the ladder in journalism to the very highest rung in this country—an achievement which undoubtedly must have required character, honesty of purpose, sincerity and, above all, the capacity to keep confidence. It has been rightly said that Mr. Roy was one of the most unassuming of men, a characteristic which will appeal, I feel sure, to many in this House. He never thrust himself upon anybody, and at the same time was ever ready with a helping hand and valuable advice to anybody who approached him. I personally am aware of the fact that he was most concerned about the legislation that is to be brought before the House very shortly and this was exercising his mind to an extent I could not have possibly believed. It was only yesterday morning—perhaps only a few minutes before the fatal attack overtook him—that he was discussing this question and trusting and hoping that this Honourable House would do the right thing in the right way. I have nothing further to say, Mr. President, except to whole-heartedly associate my Party with the motion which has been moved.

Mr. Arthur Moore (Bengal : European) : The Leader of the House and the other speakers have, I think, said all that can be said in the face of this calamity that has overtaken us. We, on this side of the House, desire to identify ourselves with the motion before the House : and, with your permission, Sir, I should like personally to associate myself with it on behalf of Mr. Roy's colleagues in the Press Gallery and on behalf of the profession of which he was such a distinguished member.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division : Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I knew Mr. K. C. Roy for the last 11 years since I have been in the Indian Legislature. I always found him a great patriot, full of zeal for doing good to his country. He was greatly respected in society, and yesterday, when we met, he did not know that this sudden attack upon him would bring about his loss to this House and to the country. When we came to the House he was talking very cheerfully, mixing with all the new Members and the old friends in the same usual manner which was his characteristic. In him we have lost a patriot

[Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan.]

and a man who was liked and loved by everybody who was his friend in society. With these words I associate myself with all that has fallen from the Honourable the Leader of the House and the other Members of the House.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh : Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, in the tragic and sudden death of Mr. K. C. Roy, the House has lost one of its valued Members and I, Sir, have lost a personal and an intimate friend. Perhaps no one in this House knew him for so many years as I did and none know his earlier career as much as I do. Sir, a little over 30 years ago, I remember the day when Mr. Roy approached me to take him round to my revered friend and my political Guru, the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, and ask him to allow him to work as a Reporter on the *Bengalee* staff. From an humble clerk in the Hindu Hostel, Roy took to reporting and he rose to this eminent position of a journalist by dint of his ability and perseverance. I still remember those days of his career when Roy conceived the idea of this News Agency, and how and under what circumstances he did it. The whole thing comes to my mind vividly today. After leaving the *Bengalee* he worked as a Reporter in the *Indian Daily News*, and while reporting the Congress proceedings of the Benares Session this idea of an Indian news agency came to his mind. Alone did he pursue this work tenaciously and work it out till he achieved his great object. The late Mr. Graham, the Editor and proprietor of the *Indian Daily News* no doubt assisted Mr. Roy, but nevertheless it may be said to Mr. Roy's credit that the idea of the agency originated in his fertile brain. Sir, some of us here are aware of the keen competition he had to face with the Reuter's News Agency till at last he succeeded in combining both. Sir, we, the Members from Bengal in this Legislative Assembly, were proud of Mr. Roy, and his tragic death has plunged us into deep grief. Only a week ago when I met Mr. Roy he complained of ill-health and of high blood pressure, and in spite of his doctor's advice, he would not go down to the plains, but he toiled on serving on the Retrenchment Committee. And only yesterday when I asked him on the floor of this House why he did not go down to the plains, he said to me that probably because he would one day drop down dead and that's why. Alas that prophecy came too true only within a few minutes of its utterance. Sir, our deep sympathy goes to that desolate widow and to the bereaved family. No word of ours, no human sympathy can console them in their affliction, but when they will know that all who knew Mr. Roy mourn his loss, it will undoubtedly lighten the burden of their intense grief. With these words, I associate myself with what has fallen from the Honourable the Leader of the House and the other Members who have just spoken.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I rise to pay my tribute of tears to the memory of one with whom I was intimately associated for nearly 40 years. If one Honourable Member had the good fortune to know him for 30 years, my memory goes back to days nearly 40 years ago when I was a boarder in the Eden Hindu Hostel, of which he was the Assistant Superintendent and it was a peculiar piece of good fortune for me to be associated with him in later years in this Legislature. In my boyhood I was under his guardianship and was brought up by him with affectionate care. Sir, my heart is too full now to give expression to all that I feel. If he was intimately associated with the officials here, he was no less intimately associated with his own countrymen,

and I, for one, knew how his heart throbbed for the progress and freedom of his Motherland. Sir, he was an architect of his own fortune. I remember those days when he came helpless to the city of Calcutta and built up a career for himself, and thereby he also opened a career for our young men in those days. One other great man of my own province, the late Iswar Chandar Vidyasagar, of revered memory, is the only one with whom he could be compared. I only hope that the memory of those days when we were associated with him may help us on this Opposition side of the Legislature and the Official Benches to go hand in hand in the onward march of the progress of the land of our birth and the land of their adoption so that from Heaven he may witness that his lifelong labours have fructified in giving India a constitution with which every one will be satisfied, officials, Anglo-Indians, Indians as well as Europeans. I do not know how to console the widow whose loss is more than that of anybody else's in this House, but sorrow shared is sorrow soothed and the whole country mourns the loss of a true and sincere patriot. With these words I beg to associate myself with all that has fallen from the lips of the previous speakers.

Sir Abdur Rahim (Calcutta and Suburbs : Muhammadan Urban) : I wish to pay my tribute to the memory of Mr. Roy, who died practically on the floor of this House only yesterday. I was closely associated with him in the Retrenchment Committee, and I can speak with knowledge that he brought to bear upon his work an amount of information and an amount of ability and shrewdness of judgment which cannot be over praised. Mr. Roy had many friends and I can quite understand it because he had an amiability of character which attracted to him all those who ever came into contact with him. He has now passed away, and I am sure the sympathies of all the Members of this House will go to the bereaved widow and the children. Mr. Roy was the founder of the Associated Press, and as such he rendered very great service to the public in this country. So far as I can understand, he rose without much help to the eminent position of a journalist which he occupied in this country. Sir, I do not think it is necessary for me to add more, because every one who has known him will long cherish in his heart his kindliness of disposition and his great warmth of character.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I rise with feelings of pain to speak on this Resolution, especially as the tragic incident took place yesterday at the psychological moment when I was expressing to the House how we mourned the death of three other Honourable Members of this House. Sir, I knew Mr. Roy since 1928, and the qualities which I found in him and which made him out a gentleman were that he had a genial nature and specially obliging manner. I do not think any man who went to him with a request returned disappointed. Sir, I have also seen his usefulness fully as a colleague in this House and I really deplore his passing away at this critical moment when specially the Press Bill is before this House. I express my deepest sympathy and I support this Resolution.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, as President of the Upper India Journalistic Association, to which position the late Mr. K. C. Roy invited me to succeed him a few months ago, and on behalf of the Indian journalists of whose profession he was the leader, I beg to associate myself with all the words and all the sentiments that the Honourable the Leader of the House gave

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

expression to today. Sir, the language of genuine grief is short, and I am really too much choked with grief today to talk about my personal associations with the late Mr. K. C. Roy, which extend over a period of seventeen years. Let us all pray for the progress of the late Mr. K. C. Roy's soul.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz (West Central Punjab : Muhammadan) : Mr. President, by the tragic and untimely death of Mr. K. C. Roy yesterday, India has lost a great and a rare personality. The loss of this House is greater still. The illustrious deceased was a fine journalist, a sincere patriot and a very able and fluent speaker. His opinion always carried great weight and conviction, and during the debates of this House he showed great independence and courage. It is indeed very sad that at the present juncture of India's constitutional history when we needed his services most he is taken away from us by the cruel hand of death. But God's will must be done. His end was probably hastened by the hard work he did on the Retrenchment General Purposes Sub-Committee of which he was a distinguished member and on which he showed great ability and a wide knowledge of different subjects. Sir, universal sympathies will be felt with the equally distinguished widow of the deceased. We deeply mourn the irreparable loss. The illustrious departed soul was one of the most popular persons with all sections of all communities. Well he has fulfilled the wish of the Persian poet who said :

Yād dāri keh waqte zadane to

Hamān khandan budand wā to giryān,

Anchunān zi keh būde murdane to

Hamān giryān shawand wā to khandan.

“Rememberest thou that at the time of your birth all around you were laughing while thou kept weeping : but O man, livest thou such life that after your death, all may be weeping while thou mayest be rejoicing in the next world.”

Sir, my family and I have lost a great and sincere friend. With these words, I associate myself with the motion proposed by the Leader of the House.

Mr. President : Gentlemen, I wish to associate myself with all that has been said by Honourable Members on this sad occasion. I first came to know Mr. Roy many years ago when he was struggling to firmly establish the Associated Press. When I compare the work which that organisation did then with what it is doing now, I cannot but admire the strenuous efforts by which, passing through various vicissitudes, Mr. Roy has brought up the Associated Press to its present standard of efficiency. In many directions and especially in his contact with the Members of the Legislature, everything that has been stated here is based on solid fact. The loss which the country and this Legislature has sustained is practically irreparable. I do not think many words are called for to express all that one feels on an occasion like this. It will be my duty to communicate to his widow and the members of his family the deep sympathy and sorrow of this House and as a mark of respect to his memory I adjourn the House till tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 9th September, 1931.