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THE

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FIRST SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1935



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1935

Legislative Assembly.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 22nd March, 1935.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

DEATH OF MR. T. A. K. SHERWANI.

Mr. Shulabhai J. Desai (Bombay Northern Division: Non-Muham-madan Rural): Mr. President, it is indeed with a very heavy heart that I rise today to request the House to join with me in mourning the loss of one of our dearest colleagues. Mr. Sherwani was elected to this House and was really not able to give the best during the course of this Session. But, in earlier years, history has it that he has rendered great service to the cause of his country as he conceived it both in and out of this House. He was a graduate of the Aligarh University, distinguished both in sport and in knowledge. He was among the band of graduates, young men of the time, at the two great English Universities, from among whom the noblest of them all, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the noble son of almost a nobler father is still spared among us, and, after his graduation, Mr. Sherwani returned to this country and he was called to the Bar, and there he was distinguished by that stability of judgment, courageous but restrained as he always has been. Thereafter, he joined the movement—which has now been distinguished, and many of his fellow countrymen joined in the same—known as the Khilafat movement and the non-co-operation movement which followed. In 1923, he joined this Assembly under the distinguished leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru whose traditions we are attempting to carry on in an humbler vein, but, to the best of our sincerity and ability, we are walking in his footsteps to carry forward the work as he conceived his position to be in this House, and the great link that we had with him, at all events, one of them has been snapped by reason of the death of our friend, Sherwani. He was of the rare type of the evolved Indian of the free future India, for indeed in him there was no distinction in thought, word or deed, either of race, religion or even members of the communities of his own country. He lived and died in India and he gave all that he had to the cause which he loved most. He was a tower of strength to us, and from the height of his manhood he observed and countered to the best of his ability smaller differences of smaller men due to our frailties. He was a man big not merely physically as Providence endowed him, while he was big in mind, the biggest of all, he was big in heart, a gentleman fashioned by nature for the example of his fellowmen. I ask you, Sir, to convey the profound regret, at his untimely death, the regret of this House to the bereaved members of his family, his widow, his father and mother, his brothers and the rest, and I also move, should you so wish it and allow it, that the House do adjourn out of respect for his great memory.

The Honourable Sir Wipendra Sircar (Leader of the House): Sir, I had not the privilege of knowing the late Mr. Sherwani, but any one in touch with politics here could not have failed to know of the name of Sherwani and the leading part he took in politics for at least about 12 years. I cannot usefully add anything to what my Honourable friend has said as I suffer under the disability which I just mentioned. I join with my Honourable friend in requesting you, Sir, to convey to the bereaved family our profound regret at the loss which this House has suffered. I understand also, Sir, that it is the general desire of the House that, following the usual practice on the death of a sitting Member of this Assembly, this House should stand adjourned. While leaving that matter entirely to you, Sir, I will join my Honourable friend in that request.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, we again meet this morning under the shadow of death, and I would like, on behalf of my Party and myself, to associate ourselves with every word that has fallen from the Leader of the Opposition and we desire to convey to the Congress Group of this House our profoundest regret at the loss they have suffered. It is most unfortunate, Mr. President, that our friends should lose three of their Members within a very short period. Two of them did not even have a chance of sitting in this Honourable House, and now one departs within a few weeks of our meeting. Mr. Sherwani was very well-known in India and specially in his own province as a man of sterling independence. I had not the privilege of knowing him intimately, but I have had opportunities of hearing a good deal about Mr. Sherwani from his friends whom I know intimately and who spoke of him in the highest terms as a man of integrity, honesty of purpose and great sincerity. India loses in him a great citizen at a very early age, for I understand he was only 53 years of age. Had he been spared to this country, we are confident that he would have continued to serve his motherland as he had done from the days of his youth. Mr. President, there are many Members of my Party who were intimate friends of the late Mr. Sherwani, I trust you will convey to his family, and especially to the bereaved father and mother, to his widow and his brothers our sincerest condolences. At a time like this, words are not of much use to those whose loss is irreparable. All we can do is to show them that we share their sorrow and I again request you to convey to them our sincerest condolences.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar Representative): Sir, in associating myself with the observations which have been made, I only wish to make a few remarks. Mr. Sherwani was a personal friend of mine. I had the privilege of enjoying his friendship for about ten years and the more I knew him the more I loved him and my regard for him also increased. Apart from my personal relations with him as a public man, the services which he rendered to this country are well-known and I need not refer to them in detail. There was one outstanding feature in that man. He was no doubt a devout Mussalman but he had in him that breadth of vision which enabled him to know how to subordinate communal considerations to the larger interests of the country. That was the example which he set before this country which Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians and everybody else can imitate. As a public man he had an inimitable way of winning over his opponents by his charming manners more than by his arguments even. That charming and magnetic personality which he possessed was a great asset. It was indeed a great asset to the Party to

which he had the honour to belong. In losing such a man, at a time like this, this country is unfortunate and afflicted with a sense of poignant grief of a very severe loss. It is very sad that in this year, during the last few months, we should have the misfortune of witnessing the passing away of friend after friend whose presence would have been of invaluable use and whose need we feel most urgently. However, we have to submit to the inevitable. Sir, I request you to carry, on behalf of this House and on behalf of the Party to which I have the honour to belong, a message of sincere and heart-felt condolence to the members of the late Mr. Sherwani's family.

Sir Leslie Hudson (Bombay: European): Sir, I wish to associate my Group and myself with all that has fallen from the other Honourable Members on this sad occasion. It is unfortunate for us,—I refer to my Group,—that his almost continuous absence from the House, from illness, prevented us from making that closer contact with the late Mr. Sherwani that we should have liked to have done and to have made his acquaintance better. My Honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, referred to Mr. Sherwani's proficiency in sport and in studies; and it certainly made a great impression upon my Group and myself to see the manly way in which Mr. Sherwani accepted the verdict of this House at a very early period of this Session. I wish to associate myself in the request that you convey the condolences of this House to the bereaved relations of the late Mr. Sherwani.

Mr. A. H. Ghusnavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh; Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the passing away of Mr. Sherwani removes from our midst a great personality and makes us feel distinctly poorer. It has added to the toll which the cruel hand of death has already levied on the Members of this Assembly ever since the recent election. Just like Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy, Mr. Abhyankar and Mr. Sasmal, whose deaths we mourned so recently, Mr. Sherwani was a man of faith, hope, charity and action. What was more, all of them shared that noble characteristic which was to act up to their convictions and live the life they believed in, fearless of consequences. Those who, like myself, have had the privilege of working with Mr. Sherwani in this Assembly could not help being impressed by the sincerity of his purpose, the resoluteness of his determination and his fairness to his political opponents. Mr. President, hushed must be the voices of criticism and all differences of opinion in the suddenness of the tragic circumstances of his death which makes us feel and realise, at any rate for the time being, what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have known Mr. Sherwani since his childhood and more intimately since 1907 when I came back from Europe. He had a very brilliant career at Aligarh. He was the Vice-President of the M.A.O. College Union, the highest distinction which any under-graduate could achieve at Aligarh. He was also Captain of the Aligarh football team and he also had a very brilliant record in sports. His record in the college was so good that he could easily have become a provincial officer had he chosen that particular career. I myself was willing to nominate him for this post and he would have been appointed immediately. But he preferred, in his college days, to choose an independent career for which he was evidently well-fitted. After leaving the college he continued to take interest

[Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad.]

in all educational matters. He took a very prominent part in drafting the constitution of the Aligarh Muslim University, and after the establishment of the University he was elected a member of the Court of that University and afterwards a member of the Executive Council. And his interest in all educational matters was as keen as his interest in political affairs. Of course his public life after he left Aligarh is well-known to every person and I need not mention it here. Although he was my neighbour here it was my misfortune that I happened to be away from Delhi and could not serve him in his last few days as I would have very much liked to do. One thing which also impressed me is that all his colleagues showed the greatest sympathy for him from the very moment he fell ill. As far as we are concerned, it is of course our religious obligation to show sympathy with the sick and the diseased, but the sympathy shown by his other colleagues produced a very great impression on my mind. Within a short time he became very popular and he will long be remembered in political and other circles. In him I have lost a personal friend in whose career I have always taken very great interest. I now express my sympathy with all the members of his family whom I know very well. It is really a great blow to his family and I associate myself with everything that has been said by the previous speakers.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I fully share the feelings of sorrow expressed by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and other speakers on this sad occasion. Mr. Sherwani I knew before he came to this Assembly, and I was always impressed by the charm of his manner, by his straightforward character and by his patriotic zeal. His was a personality which could not fail to impress any one who came in contact with him. He belonged to a very distinguished family of Aligarh, and several Members of that family I have had the privilege of knowing rather intimately, and Mr. Sherwani, in his life, showed in a remarkable degree those characteristics which are associated with a family like his. We all know that he was always ready to make sacrifices in the cause in which he believed, and it is a great pity that he was not spared to serve his country longer in this House. Until a few days ago, he worked among us, and on one occasion he spoke with his usual vigour on a subject in which he was much interested. I feel that the country has lost a very patriotic servant in Mr. Sherwani, and it will be my duty to convey the feelings of sorrow and regret of this House to his bereaved family, his aged parents, his widow and his brothers. As requested, I propose, as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, to adjourn the House for the day.

I wish also to notify to Honourable Members that the election to the Committee which was to be held today will be held tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 23rd March, 1935.