

8th February 1940

THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume I, 1940

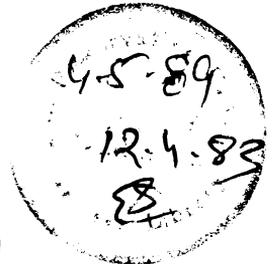
(6th February to 5th March, 1940)

ELEVENTH SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

1940



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M2LAD

Legislative Assembly.

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THE HONOURABLE SIR ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

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KHAN SAHIB S. G. HASNAIN.

Marshal :

CAPTAIN HAJI SARDAR NUR AHMAD KHAN, M.C., I.O.M., I.A.

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SYED GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

MR. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZHNAVY, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 8th February, 1940.

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.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

ENEMY SUBJECTS AND OTHERS DETAINED IN THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT AHMADNAGAR SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

24. *Mr. F. E. James: Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

- (a) how many enemy subjects and others have been detained in the internment camp at Ahmadnagar since the outbreak of war;
- (b) how many have been released up to date; and
- (c) how many enemy subjects have left India for Germany since the outbreak of war?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) No one other than enemy subjects has been interned at Ahmadnagar. Inclusive of eight persons received from Burma, the total number of persons interned there was 888. In addition, 21 persons were interned in local internment camps on the outbreak of war but were released before transfer to Ahmadnagar.

(b) In addition to the 21 releases from local provisional camps, 492 persons had been released by January 27th.

(c) 75.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Are these persons interned like political prisoners in jails or in any other internment camp?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: They are interned in an internment camp which has been constituted for the purpose.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: What arrangements have been made in order to see to their accommodation and comfort?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The camp is established by and is under the supervision of the military authorities.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Is there any other camp besides Ahmadnagar for enemy subjects?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: No.

Mr. F. E. James: May I ask what is being done in regard to the wives of internees—those who are, for example, not able adequately to support themselves?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Those who are unable to support themselves are receiving an allowance from Government.

Mr. F. E. James: What is the amount of that allowance?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The maximum allowance is Rs. 70 a month, except in Bombay and Calcutta where the maximum is Rs. 80 a month.

Mr. F. E. James: Is it under consideration that wives of these internees might be sent back to their respective countries?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: They are free to depart and are being encouraged to do so, but they show no great desire to go back to Germany.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What is the minimum amount of the allowance?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Zero.

SETTING UP OF A MACHINERY TO ASSIST IN THE CONTROL OF EMERGENCY EXPENDITURE.

25. **Mr. F. E. James:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state:

- (a) whether his attention has been drawn to the decision of His Majesty's Government to set up a Select Committee on Expenditure to assist in the control of emergency expenditure; and
- (b) whether, in view of the absence of a Finance or Estimates Committee of the Central Legislature, he proposes to consider the setting up of machinery similar to that set up in the United Kingdom, in order to assist him in scrutinising expenditure with a view to ensuring that unnecessary waste is checked and that the tax-payer is getting full value for his money?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes.

(b) The absence of the Standing Finance Committee or the proposed Estimates Committee does not affect the control of emergency expenditure, since wholly non-voted Estimates fell outside the purview of the Standing Finance Committee and the proposed Estimates Committee. Moreover, the amount of extra expenditure arising out of the emergency in India is, for the present at least and in comparison with the normal scale of expenditure, not of such proportions as to call for the action which has been found necessary to deal with the enormous war expenditure of the United Kingdom. I can, however, assure the Honourable Member that extra expenditure arising out of the emergency, including expenditure on supplies, is being subjected to a most careful and thorough scrutiny by my department, and that the machinery for carrying out that scrutiny has been specially strengthened to enable it to cope with its more extensive responsibilities and to ensure that supplies are obtained on the best terms available.

Mr. F. E. James: Will the Honourable Member tell us exactly in what way the department has been strengthened—merely by the addition of staff or by the placing of additional control in the spending departments concerned?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: In both ways: both by the addition of staff to assist officers on whom the pressure was great and by the actual location of new controlling officers—financial advisers—in departments where formerly there were no such officers.

Mr. F. B. James: I take it that these financial officers who are placed in the spending departments in the control section are under the control of the Finance Department?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes, definitely.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: In view of the fact that the Finance Committee does not exist now and the Finance Member has got no machinery to find out the opinion of the Legislature and of the public, will he consider the question of co-operation of the Legislature, businessmen and others in these spending departments for which there is no budget provision?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The nature and conditions of these new departments are such that I believe I am dealing with them in the most effective way. I do not believe it would be practicable in the day to day problems which arise to associate with the administration a non-official body which could really do anything effective.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I can appreciate about military expenditure, because it is all confidential. But I want some reply why this thing should be followed in the case of supply and other economic matters and why he cannot take the Legislature and non-officials into confidence?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Because I do not think that it will be practicable.

BYE-LAWS REGARDING CONTROL OF TEMPORARY STRUCTURES IN THE RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT.

26. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board at the instance of the Deputy Director of Military Lands and Cantonments in the Northern Command has been compelled to frame certain bye-laws regarding the control of what it calls temporary structures, which include all structures not included within the definition of 'building' in the Cantonments Act?

(b) Is it a fact that the public of Rawalpindi have protested against these bye-laws and submitted objections to the Cantonment Board?

(c) Have those objections been communicated to the Government of India?

(d) What action do Government propose to take on the public objections?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: (a) Owing to the necessity for regulating the erection of temporary structures which do not come under the definition of buildings, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, requested the Cantonment Board to frame bye-laws under section 282 (18) of the Cantonments Act.

(b) Yes.

(c) No, the objections are still being considered by the Cantonment Board.

(d) Does not arise.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if the objections have been sent to the Cantonment Board by the Government of India?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Not as far as I know.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Have these rules received the sanction of the Government or were they subject to the sanction of the Government?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: The bye-laws have not yet been passed by the Cantonment Board and have not yet been approved by Government.

Sardar Sant Singh: Since when have these objections been pending before the Cantonment Board?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: I am not aware of the date on which they were submitted.

Sardar Sant Singh: Will the Honourable Member make inquiries when the objections will be finally disposed of?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: I have got no reason to think that they will not be disposed of quite expeditiously, and that we will be informed of the result in due course.

ALLEGED INTERFERENCE IN THE ELECTION OF THE ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE TERMINAL TAX COMMITTEE OF THE AMBALA CANTONMENT BOARD.

27. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state whether the official members of the Cantonment Board of Ambala who are in majority in the Board interfered in the election of the elected member on the Terminal Tax Committee of the Board?

(b) Is it a fact that the elected members wanted that the President should not interfere in the selection of the elected member, whereas he can nominate the nominated member?

(c) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the Note of Dissent of the elected members on the method of election adopted in the Board and published on page 183 of the November 1939 issue of the *Cantonment Gazette* under the caption "*Dominion Status in Action*"?

(d) What steps do Government propose to take in the matter?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: (a) No.

(b) The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, the President has the same right as any other member of the Board to propose a name for appointment or vote on any name proposed.

(c) Yes.

(d) None.

NOMINATED PRESIDENTS OF CANTONMENT BOARDS.

28. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state in which cantonments Government have nominated officers other than Officers Commanding the Stations as Presidents of the Cantonment Boards? If so, why?

(b) Is it a fact that there are elected Vice-Presidents in all such cantonments who have not been allowed to function as Presidents even during the temporary emergency?

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: (a) To enable the President to give more time to cantonment affairs than it is possible for the Officer Commanding Station to give, directions have been issued by the Central Government under clause (a) of sub-sections (3), (4) or (5) of section 18 of the Cantonments Act, 1924, in respect of Ambala, Delhi, Dinapore, Ferozepore, Jalapahar, Jhansi, Lahore, Lansdowne, Lebong, Lucknow, Mardan, Meerut, Multan, Murree Galis, Naini Tal, Poona and Sialkot Cantonments.

(b) It has not been found necessary for Presidents to delegate their powers during the present emergency.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know why?

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: It has not been found necessary. I can say no more than that.

Sardar Sant Singh: Is it not a fact, Sir, that in all local bodies in the absence of the President, the Vice-President is given power to exercise those powers?

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: I believe so, but in these cases the President has not been absent; he has been permanently present.

CERTAIN APPEALS DECIDED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTORS OF COMMANDS.

29. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state the number of appeals under Schedule V of the Cantonments Act, 1924, which have been decided by the Deputy Directors of Commands separately in each Command during the years 1938 and 1939?

(b) How many of these appeals have been accepted and how many rejected in each Command?

(c) Has any appeal been heard in the Cantonments to which it pertained? If so, how many?

(d) Is it a fact that appeals have been heard at the Headquarters of the Command and the appellants had to incur good deal of expenditure to go to those places for their appeals?

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the table.

(c) No.

(d) The answer to the first part is in the affirmative. As regards the second, Government have no information.

Appeals preferred under Schedule V of the Ordinances Act, 1924, during the years 1938 and 1939.

Command.	1938.				1939.			
	Total No. of appeals.	No. of appeals accepted.	No. of appeals rejected.	No. of appeals not admitted.	Total No. of appeals.	No. of appeals accepted.	No. of appeals rejected.	No. of appeals not admitted.
Northern	3		2	1	13 with- (1 drawn).	2 (1 partial- ly).	9	1
Eastern	11	2	6	3	4	..	1	3
Southern	11	3 partially.	8	..
Western (Indept.) District

REPORT OF THE

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INCLUSION OF CERTAIN AREAS WITHIN THE BAZAR AREA OF THE LAHORE CANTONMENT.

30. *Sardar Sant Singh: With reference to question No. 240 of Mr. Sham Lal, dated the 16th August, 1938, will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state whether Government propose to reconsider the desirability of including those areas within the Bazar area of Lahore Cantonment which do not pertain to the British Military Officers and which do not consist of agricultural land, for example, Mehtab Rai Ihata, Sadar Bazar Market, Sanatan Dharam School, Aggarwal Dharamsala, Lal Kurti Bazar, Lal Kurti Tank and Temple and Garden, Sadar Bazar woodstalls, Id Gah, Diggi temple, Sadar Bazar Cantonment Primary School No. 2, Ihata Ghasi Ram, Cantonment High School play-ground and St. John Gardens and Library?

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to starred question No. 2021 asked by Mr. K. M. Jedhe on the 9th December, 1938.

CALLING OF ALL THE PARTNERS OF A FIRM TO APPEAR BEFORE THE INCOME-TAX OFFICERS IN SIND.

31. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that in Sind, all or some of the Income-tax Officers require all the partners of a firm to appear individually, after a return has been furnished, to be interrogated in connection with the return; if so, under what law is this enforced and under what circumstances are all the partners called to appear when either the manager or one individual partner could supply the information required?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: A report has been called for and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: But will the Honourable Member take it from me that at least one or two Income-tax Officers are acting in the manner stated in this question and are harassing the people? Will the Honourable Member issue some instructions in the meantime?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The Honourable Member has not asked me for any further information. He seems to have supplied me with information.

INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF PETROL IN DELHI.

32. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Is the Honourable the Finance Member aware that the Governments of the United Provinces and the Punjab have levied a sale tax of two annas per gallon on petrol?

(b) Is it not a fact that the salesmen in the province of Delhi have increased the price of petrol by two annas in order to avoid its transport from one province to another?

(c) Who gets the benefit of the additional two annas which the consumers of petrol in the Delhi Province pay for each gallon? Does it go into the pocket of the salesman who runs the pump or into the pocket of the companies which control the sale?

(d) Do Government propose to realise this amount from the company and credit it in the Road Improvement Fund of the Delhi Province?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes, except that the rate of the tax in the Punjab is not two annas but one anna three pies a gallon.

(b) No.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I ask the Honourable Member whether he has found out the actual prices of petrol at Ghaziabad, Delhi and Gurgaon, and what is the difference between those prices?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am satisfied, Sir, that the answer to part (b) of this question is in the negative.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: When the Honourable Member has satisfied himself, then he must have known the prices at which petrol is sold. May I know what are the actual prices at which petrol is sold at Ghaziabad, Delhi and Gurgaon and other neighbouring places?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I have not got the detailed information with me, but I have directed my mind to that very point before answering that part of the question.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I know, Sir, how could the Honourable Member possibly have satisfied himself without knowing the actual prices at the different places, and what method did he adopt to satisfy himself?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: By calling for and investigating the facts.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I know, Sir, how the Honourable Member satisfied himself without knowing the prices of petrol at these three different places?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I did not say I did not know the prices. I said I had not got those details with me at present.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: In what way did he satisfy himself that this is not correct without knowing the actual prices at these places?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I did not say that the prices were not before me when I satisfied myself. I said that I had not got them in my head now.

CREATION OF NEW DEPARTMENTS AS A WAR MEASURE.

33. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to mention the new department or the branches of the departments which they have created as a war measure?

(b) Under whom are these departments placed?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (b). Two new Departments have been created as a war measure, *viz.* (1) the Defence Co-ordination Department, and (2) the Department of Supply. The former is under the control of His Excellency the Governor General, while the latter is in the portfolio of the Honourable the Law Member. As regards the new branches which have been created on account of the war, the information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I know whether the relation between the Honourable the Law Member and the Supply Department is of the same type as his relation with the Law Department of the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: He is responsible for it in his portfolio; it is in the same position as any other matter in his portfolio.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I want to know whether his supervision is only nominal or it is effective?

(No reply.)

DEPUTATION OF A FINANCE DEPARTMENT OFFICER TO THE EXPENDING DEPARTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

34. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state whether it is a fact that the Finance Department deputed one of its own officers in the Expending Department of the Government of India?

(b) Are these officers deputed for a limited period or are they posted for an indefinite period, removeable only by an act of God?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) and (b). I have been unable to understand what is meant by the expression "the Expending Department of the Government of India" used by the Honourable Member.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: By Spending Department, I thought, all those departments which spend money, like the Railways and other departments. But I should like to know from the Honourable Member whether he has deputed officers in all these spending departments for a fixed period or for indefinite period?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: All the Departments of the Government of India are spending departments including my own, and I thought the Honourable Member must have had in mind some particular department. It is a matter of common knowledge that officers of the Finance Department are posted in various spending departments on the Railways, Post and Telegraphs, and so on, but the Honourable Member's question was not sufficiently specific for me to be able to give him a definite reply.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I want to know whether these officers are deputed for a fixed period or for an indefinite period?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: They usually have a definite tenure.

APPOINTMENTS MADE IN CONNECTION WITH WAR WORK.

35. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to lay on the table a statement mentioning the salaries and dates of appointment of all the persons drawing Rs. 50 or more, appointed by the Government of India from the 1st September, 1939, on new temporary or permanent posts having direct or indirect connection with war work?

(b) Were those new posts sanctioned by the Finance Department?

(c) Who made the appointments?

(d) Did the Government of India observe the instructions issued by the Government under the resolution of 1934 about the communal representation in case of such appointments?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

REQUISITIONING OF ARMY IN PROVINCES.

36. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state how many times the army was requisitioned in different Provinces from July 1937, till October 1939, with dates of requisition?

(b) Is the Defence Secretary in possession of reasons for such requisitions? If so, will he please state the reasons in each case?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: (a) and (b). As a result of requests from civil authorities for military assistance, troops moved out of barracks on 25 occasions and stood to on 43 occasions during the period stated.

I lay on the table a statement showing the details asked for.

(i) *Occasion on which troops MOVED OUT of barracks at the request of the Civil authorities between July 1937 and October 1939.*

No.	Date.	Province.	Place.	Nature of disturbance.
1	7th February, 1938	U. P.	Cawnpore	Communal.
2	8th March, 1938	Do.	Allahabad	Do.
3	16/17th March, 1938	Do.	Benares	Do.
4	17/20th March, 1938	Do.	Allahabad	Do.
5	10th April, 1938	Bihar	Jamshetpur	Do.
6	11/12th April, 1938	U. P.	Allahabad	Do.

No.	Date.	Province.	Place.	Nature of disturbance.
7	9/10th September, 1938.	Delhi . . .	Delhi . . .	Communal.
8	14/26th October, 1938 .	Punjab . . .	Multan . . .	Communal rioting.
9	31st January/1st February, 1939.	U. P. . . .	Tikraul (Saharanpur).	Communal.
10	2/3rd February, 1939 .	N.-W. F. P. .	D. I. Khan .	Communal rioting.
11	5/7th February, 1939 .	U. P. . . .	Benares . .	Do.
12	11/25th February, 1939 .	Do. . . .	Cawnpore . .	Do.
13	28th February/3rd March, 1939.	Do. . . .	Badaun . . .	Do.
14	2nd March, 1939 . . .	Do. . . .	Cawnpore . .	Communal.
15	2/7th March, 1939. . .	Punjab . . .	Amritsar . .	Do.
16	2nd March, 1939 . . .	N.-W. F. P. .	D. I. Khan .	No details available.
17	4/23rd March, 1939 . .	U. P. . . .	Benares . . .	Communal rioting.
18	5/6th March, 1939. . .	Do. . . .	Cawnpore . .	Communal.
19	6th March, 1939 . . .	Bengal . . .	Tittaghar . .	Communal rioting.
20	7th March, 1939 . . .	Do. . . .	Titta-Jagaddal.	Do.
21	26/27th March, 1939 . .	U. P. . . .	Benares . . .	No details available.
22	3rd May, 1939 . . .	Do. . . .	Lucknow . . .	Communal tension.
23	23/29th May, 1939 . . .	Bombay . . .	Sholapur . .	Communal.
24	19/20th June, 1939 . . .	U. P. . . .	Cawnpore . .	Communal rioting.
25	25th June, 1939 . . .	N.-W. F. P. .	Abbottabad .	Communal.

(ii) Occasions on which troops STOOD TO in barracks at the request of the Civil Authorities.

No.	Date.	Place.	Province.	Nature of disturbance.
1	August, 1937	Cawnpore	U. P.	Strikes.
2	17th August, 1937.	Madras	Madras	Communal.
3	26th August, 1937.	Peshawar	N.-W. F. P.	Do.
4	15th October, 1937	Jubbulpore	C. P.	Do.
5	15th October, 1937	Saidpur	Bengal.	Do.
6	9th February, 1938	Hyderabad	Sind	Civil disturbance.
7	11/13th February, 1938	Delhi	Delhi	Communal.
8	11/12th February, 1938	Cawnpore	U. P.	Do.
9	11/14th February, 1938	Fyzabad	Do.	Do.
10	8/13th March, 1938	Meerut	Do.	Do.
11	10/13th March, 1938	Delhi	Delhi	Do.
12	18th March, 1938	Jubbulpore	C. P.	Do.
13	14th April, 1938	Poona	Bombay	Civil disturbance.
14	17/18th April, 1938	Bombay	Do.	Communal.
15	23/24th April, 1938	Lucknow.	U. P.	Do.
16	16th May, 1938	Cawnpore	Do.	No details available.
17	4/5th July, 1938	Do.	Do.	Civil disturbance.
18	15th July, 1938	Bareilly (for Pilibhit).	Do.	Communal.
19	22nd July, 1938	Delhi	Delhi	Do.
20	21st August, 1938	Saharanpur (for Deoband).	U. P.	Do.
21	13/14th October, 1938	Delhi	Delhi	Do.
22	14/26th October, 1938	Multan	Punjab	Communal riots.
23	18th October, 1938	Dinapore.	Bihar	No details available.
24	14/15th November, 1938	Lucknow.	U. P.	Communal.
25	15/17th November, 1938	Multan	Punjab	Do.
26	21/22nd November, 1938	Benares	U. P.	Do.
27	24th January, 1939	Bareilly	Do.	Do.

No.	Date.	Place.	Province.	Nature of disturbance.
28	26/31st January, 1939 .	Dehra Dun (for Tikrauli).	U. P. . . .	Communal.
29	1/3rd February, 1939 .	Delhi . . .	Delhi . . .	Do.
30	1st February, 1939 .	Agra (for Aligarh).	U. P. . . .	Do.
31	1st February, 1939 .	Sialkot . . .	Punjab . . .	Do.
32	12/16th February, 1939 .	Cawnpore . . .	U. P. . . .	Do.
33	25th February/2nd March, 1939.	Meerut . . .	Do. . . .	Do.
34	27th February/2nd March, 1939.	Delhi . . .	Delhi . . .	Do.
35	2/3rd March, 1939 .	Moradabad . . .	U. P. . . .	No details available.
36	6/7th March, 1939 .	Jubbulpore . . .	C. P. . . .	Communal.
37	6/7th March, 1939 .	Barrackpore (for Tittaghar and Jagatdal).	Bengal. . . .	Do.
38	8th March, 1939 . . .	Cawnpore . . .	U. P. . . .	Do.
39	31st March/3rd April, 1939.	Lucknow. . . .	Do. . . .	Do.
40	10th May/13th May, 1939.	Jamshedpur . . .	Bihar . . .	Civil disturbance.
41	23rd May, 1939 . . .	D. I. Khan . . .	N.-W. F. P. . . .	Communal.
42	20th August, 1939. . .	Lahore . . .	Punjab . . .	Demonstration against House Tax.
43	2nd September, 1939 . . .	Ranchi (for Sing Bum).	Bihar . . .	Civil disturbance.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: What is the answer to part (b) of the question?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: I have answered both the parts in (a), and I also stated that I was laying a statement on the table showing the details asked for. The Honourable Member will see that something like 68 items are concerned.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I know, with reference to part (b), whether the reasons have also been given?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Yes, in brief, like communal rioting, and so on.

**PURCHASES MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON BEHALF OF THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT.**

37. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (on behalf of Mr. Nabi Baksh Illahi Baksh Bhutto): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state the total value of the purchases made by the Government of India on behalf of the British Government since 1st August, 1939?

(b) In what manner does the Honourable Member propose to spend the sterling credit, created in England on account of these purchases?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Orders placed through the Department of Supply amount to close on Rs. 14 crores, which is being recovered from His Majesty's Government as the purchases are completed.

(b) The sterling received on account of these purchases is being used for financing our ordinary expenditure in England for which we would otherwise have to obtain sterling from the Reserve Bank.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I know, Sir, what is the amount of credit created by virtue of these purchases approximately?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I stated the amount of the transactions as being approximately 14 crores.

FLOATING OF A LOAN IN 1940.

38. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (on behalf of Mr. Nabi Baksh Illahi Baksh Bhutto): Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state whether Government are contemplating to float a loan in the year 1940? If so, for what purposes?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The Honourable Member should await my Budget speech.

INCOME FROM CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.

39. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (on behalf of Mr. Nabi Baksh Illahi Baksh Bhutto): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state how much money Government expect to realise from (i) Customs, and (ii) Excise, in the year 1939-40?

(b) What is the estimated income for the current year, compared with the corresponding income of the last year?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member should await my budget speech.

INCOME FROM EXCISE AND IMPORT DUTIES ON SUGAR.

40. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (on behalf of Mr. Nabi Baksh Illahi Baksh Bhutto): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state what is the contemplated income in the year 1939-40 from (i) excise duties on sugar, and (ii) from import duties on sugar?

(b) What are the estimates made under these heads by the Honourable the Finance Member in his budget speech in 1939?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) I am unable to anticipate my Budget statement.

(b) I would refer the Honourable Member to paragraph 15 of Sir James Grigg's speech in introducing the Budget for 1939-40 where it was explained that the total estimate under both heads taken together was placed at Rs. 4.20 lakhs.

PROFIT OF THE ISSUE BRANCH OF THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA.

41. *Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (on behalf of Mr. Nabi Baksh Illahi Baksh Bhutto): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state what was the profit of the Issue Branch of the Reserve Bank in the year 1938-39?

(b) How was the profit utilised?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) and (b). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Annual Reports and Accounts of the Bank for the years 1938 and 1939, copies of which are available in the Library.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Is it also given in that report as to how this profit was utilised? I am referring to part (b) of the question.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes, I think so.

AMOUNT OF INFLATION IN PAPER CURRENCY.

†42. *Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state the amount of inflation in Paper Currency since 1st September, 1939?

(b) Did Government increase the Paper Currency Gold Reserve by the corresponding amount?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the weekly accounts of the Issue Department of the Reserve Bank which are published in the Gazette of India.

RESOLUTION *RE* GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN RESPECT OF CATERING CONTRACTS ON INDIAN RAILWAYS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Resolutions. Mr. Bhutto. (Mr. Bhutto being absent).

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have been authorised to move this Resolution.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I beg to move.

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to fix with out delay definite principles for the sale of food on Railway stations and in running trains, and end the discussions on the subject in Railway Advisory Committees and terminate the continuous experiments by Railway officials."

I may state at the outset that this Resolution is not intended to censure either the Government or any railway official, but it is due to a feeling which exists in the minds of the travelling public that some definite steps should be taken in this matter. Catering arrangement is an integral part of the amenities of passengers. Catering at a high price will tend to divert the traffic from rail to road. Every person interested in the future prosperity of the railways should take interest in good catering arrangements. No person will undertake a holiday trip in a train unless he is assured of good food and at a moderate cost. Therefore, this question of catering arrangements is an essential part to attract the traffic from road to rail. Persons who have to travel will travel whether you give them good food or not or whether they starve or not. But there are a large number of persons who really go out for pleasure and it is they who are affected very much if they find that they cannot get good food at a moderate cost, and it is the duty of the railway administrations and of every person who is interested in the well-being of the railways that they should attend to their needs. This subject always arouses a lot of discussion when the question is brought up before the House. Let me just give a little history about this matter which really necessitated the moving of this particular Resolution. I raised this question in the Central Advisory Council for Railways on the 18th November, 1931, that is, about nine years ago. The Railway Board at that time gave an assurance on three points. The first was that the contracts were not to be auctioned, because at that time there was a tendency to give contracts to highest bidders. The second point on which they gave an assurance was that sub-contracts would not be permissible, and I admit that so far as this is concerned, they have been following this particular recommendation, though it has appeared in a different form which I will develop later on. The third principle which they agreed to was that the rates should be the market rates. This assurance given in 1931 was not carried out. Sir Leslie Hudson who was a member of the Advisory Council said that we ought to investigate further the question of prices and find out the difference between prices in the different railways. Three years later when I found that nothing was being done, I moved a Resolution in this Assembly on the 26th July, 1934, on the same subject. The Resolution which I moved was in these terms:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee consisting of Railway officials and others not connected with Railway Administrations to enquire as to how far the present system of giving contracts and sub-contracts, to outsiders and not to local persons, for catering to the Railway passengers is responsible for the supply of bad food and drinks at very high prices by the vendors either at the Railway platforms, in the refreshment rooms or in the running trains and to suggest ways and means to remove these grievances."

In the course of the debate, when I moved this Resolution, I made out certain points. The first point I made was that the contracts should not be auctioned to the highest bidder, and that the system of sub-contracts should be abolished, because otherwise the cost of travel will be increased. The next one was that the prices at the railway station should be the same as the prices of articles in the town, and that the practice of giving contract for the whole line to one person should be

stopped. In the course of the discussion I gave the prices of various articles prevalent in the town and at the railway station of the same place. I do not want to tire the Members of the House by quoting in full my speech on that particular occasion, but I would ask them to read pages 689 and 690 of this Official Report. I took evidence personally and also had correspondence with a large number of persons, and it was proved conclusively that the prices in the town substantially differed from the prices at the railway station for the same class of articles; not only this, but the anomaly was that the same contractor had lower price just outside the railway platform and a higher price at the railway platform. I proved by figures my case and I can quote the articles, the places where this practice is still going on, and when I brought this complaint to the notice of the station master he began to justify by saying that it was reasonable to have a little higher price on the platform than outside. I submit that the prices on the platform must be controlled in a manner that they do not substantially differ from the prices prevalent in the town. Those were the four points which I brought out then. I am just reading from my own book on Indian Railways.

"The motion was strongly supported by Sir Henry Gidney and Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi who quoted from a letter to Chief Operating Superintendent. Sir Joseph Bhore, the then Railway Member, gave assurance that the Railway Board will secure the provision of good and wholesome food at reasonable rates for the travelling public."

Two more years passed away and nothing was done. Then this question was taken up again by the Central Advisory Committee two years later on the 3rd October, 1936. This is really a very important committee and they recorded very important evidence and also made recommendations. The Railway Board laid a memorandum before the Advisory Committee. I shall quote a few sentences from it:

"Care should be taken that when a contract is given to anybody who is not a local firm or individual, the contractor is a *bona fide* person who himself or whose firm would carry on the business of the contract. Sub-letting of these contracts should be prohibited and if possible a clause prohibiting such sub-letting should be entered in the contracts. It was further suggested that where local arrangements are not possible and several stations have to be grouped together, the area included in this group should not be too large. In such cases it is expected that it would be possible to make local arrangements within the area of the group."

Further on they said:

"Contracts should be given to men locally available, except in those cases in which it is believed that a more satisfactory service could be given by including several stations in one contract area."

They also said that the rents that should be charged to the refreshment rooms should be nominal and the Railway Board memorandum also admitted one other thing, namely, that the vendor must supply wholesome articles at the current market prices approved by the Divisional Superintendent. Selling at the market rate was admitted and also that sub-letting either in whole or in part was prohibited. Now, these were the principles admitted by the Central Advisory Committee. There should be no sub-letting. The prices should be the same as in the local market. The contract should be given as far as possible to local men and in no case should the contract for the whole line be given to one man and there ought to be no monopoly. There was to be no auction. Now, Sir, one more year passed away and nothing was done. In the following year some Members of the Legislature took a deputation

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to the Honourable the Railway Member, Sir Sultan Ahmad, on the very same points. He gave us an assurance that all these points will be looked into. Then two more years passed away and nothing was done. Suddenly we find that there was a Railway Advisory Committee on the 16th September, 1939, and the meeting was held at a time when the Congress Members were absent and the Railway Board had an absolute majority and after settling all these matters from 1931 to 1938, the Board opened the whole question *de novo* before the Central Advisory Committee. The matter was settled time after time and accepted by the Railway Board and why should it be re-opened in 1939, taking advantage of the special position that was created in September?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow (Member for Railways and Communications): Why should it be re-opened in 1940 again?

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: These points should not be raised by a change in the personnel of the Railway Board or of the Advisory Committee or of the officials of the Railway Administration. Some definite principles should be laid down and there should be an end to all this trouble. Let us see in what way they re-opened the whole thing. On page 2 of the Summary of Proceedings of the meeting of the Central Advisory Council for Railways, we find this:

"It is for consideration whether or not contractors should be required to pay a reasonable sum that will meet either individually or in the aggregate all expenses incurred by the Railway Administrations by the provision of facilities and inspection and in addition make some contribution towards general revenues."

It is the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that these charges should be levied from the vendors and the amount to be levied is to be settled by the railway administrations in consultation with the local committees. Some Members objected and said that care should be taken that railways do not make a profit out of this arrangement. The first point that I want to make is that during discussions from 1931 to 1938 it was decided very definitely that the railways will not make any profit out of their catering arrangements which is an unholy profit, yet the Railway Board got the previous decision reversed.

It is not desirable to tax the poor passenger in this way because you must remember one thing very clearly, *viz.*, that if you take away one anna from the contractors, the contractors will realise one rupee from the travelling public. If you want one anna, we will probably let you raise your rates and fares accordingly, but for goodness' sake do not collect this indirect tax. So I would like that the Government should settle this point very definitely that there should be no further talk in this House that the Railway Administration is not going to have any profit from catering business. Now, the second point to which I would like to draw the attention of my Honourable colleagues here is that whenever you leave anything to the Railway Administration subject to the consultation of the Advisory Committee, you really create a chaos, because Railway Advisory Committees have no *locus standi*; and the railway officers may or may not listen to the advice and may not even consult them: because after all every railway officer will try his own experiment according to his own ideas. Such a practice is very dangerous. I might give definite instances, if I had time, to show how this practice may be misused. This is one of the points the Honourable

the Railway Member should settle himself. He may consult any person he likes,—the advisory committee, the railway administration or any group of persons he selects. We would like very much that the Railways should not make any profit from the catering arrangements, and this matter may be settled once for all. If money is needed, there are other sources of revenue. Now the next point was: "Should contracts be given to professional caterers only and should there be any limit to the period for which they are given?", and the Railway Board here says:

"It is for consideration that this point be left for decision to Railway Administrations to meet the various local conditions obtaining."

Now, naturally, on the advice of the Railway Administration the Central Advisory Committee for Railways recorded that the Council unanimously agreed that this might be left to the various Railway Administrations to decide, subject to their consulting the local advisory committees. We know what such consultation amounts to.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): From what page are you quoting?

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: It is on page 3, this is the opinion of your Committee of which you were also a member and the other thing is on page 4, the recommendation of the Railway Board to the same effect. Now, the next point was:

"That the prices charged should not exceed those prevailing in the locality."

This was really satisfactory because they also recorded the same opinion previously. Now as regards the other matters which are very subsidiary, I do not lay very much stress except on one or two points with which I do not agree for instance:

"The Council considered that an extension of the system of departmental catering was desirable."

Now, I shall just draw attention to one or two more points and then enumerate the points on which I lay special stress. One was and I do maintain that even now the prices at the railway stations are higher than the prices in the locality. I challenged this statement several times and quoted the figures several times on the floor of the House. I went so far as to suggest the Divisional Superintendent and the Superintendent of Transportation, East Indian Railway, that I could produce a contractor of approved ability and of considerable experience in catering who will sell articles at the prices which I quoted. I further suggested that the inspectors may see whether the articles are good and of standard quality. But he would never let me have the opportunity to prove that the prices I quoted are prices at which articles could be sold. I challenged that things can be sold at the prices which I quoted, and at which I have given out contracts at the Aligarh University and at which things were supplied there. I saw no reason why the same article should be sold at higher prices than the price at which it was sold in the University. Now, Sir, I shall sum up the points on which I lay stress and I hope other Honourable Members may also give their opinion. The points which I should like to emphasise are:

(1) That the Railways may charge only a nominal rent or nominal fees for issuing licences, but the Railways should not attempt to make

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any profit out of the catering arrangements. Now, in the absence of any definite principles being laid down, the different Railway administration follow different principles. As soon as the advisory committee revised the old principles, the North Western Railway attempted to make some profits out of the catering arrangements and is contemplating to charge, what they call economic and what I call exorbitant rates. Sir, it is very desirable that this should be stopped and the Railway Board or the Honourable Member for Railways should lay down this principle that in every case the Railway Administration should not attempt to make any profit out of this particular item. The second point is:

(2) There should be no monopoly on the part of any particular individual,—either a monopoly of the whole line or a monopoly of all the articles sold at one particular station. This monopoly I never liked in business. I have tabled a resolution that the monopoly of sale is against the fundamental principle of freedom of trade and, therefore, this monopoly should be stopped and there ought to be a fair competition so that the travelling public may find for themselves as to who supplies better food and at a moderate cost. The contract should be given as far as possible to local contractors, but there should be no monopoly in any article. The third point is:

(3) That the articles should be sold at moderate rates, that is, the rates prevalent in the local markets. That is a principle which has been accepted to by the railway authorities and even the Advisory Committee of the 16th September, 1939, did not object to this particular principle, but I say that some kind of machinery may be created to give practical effect to this recommendation. The fourth point is:

(4) No sub-contracts should be permitted. The Railway Administrations have admitted this principle and they are now putting in terms of contract that sub-contracts are not permissible; but in practice they are allowing a kind of sub-contract. Contractors are employing servants on very low, nominal salary and they keep a good deal of the profits for themselves.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has exhausted his time.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I shall only take half a minute, Sir,—and no sub-contracts should be given and the period of a contract should be for one year in the case of hawkers and three years in the case of a restaurant. As regards the point as to who should give the contracts to the various persons, this is a point on which I am not very keen, if it is to be left to the local Administration. Travelling public is not interested in it. I have not discussed throughout my speech about the catering for Europeans because they are in a class by themselves and their situation is very different. The Honourable the Railway Member may frame any rules which will not be covered by my arguments. I don't like differential rent for restaurant rooms and restaurant cars. With these words, Sir, I move my Resolution.

Mr President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Resolution moved:

“That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to fix without delay definite principles for the sale of food on Railway stations and in running trains, and end the discussions on the subject in Railway Advisory Committees and terminate the continuous experiments by Railway officials.”

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution, but I must confess that I do not feel very much enthusiasm in supporting it, because I find that it is worded in such a manner that it leads us nowhere. All that it seeks to recommend is that some definite principles for the sale of food at the railway stations, etc., should be fixed. It does not enunciate the principles which should be fixed. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing controversial in it, and so it is ineffective. If you care to have these things settled, then I feel that the duty of the Honourable Member who has put forward this Resolution is to enunciate cut-and-dried principles which he desires should be fixed. Supposing the Government say that they will fix some principle, the principle being that they will leave the whole matter to the Railway Administration. That is accepting the Resolution no doubt, but at the same time they are not meeting the points raised. Of course, the Honourable the Mover in his speech has definitely laid down some principles and, speaking for myself, I do endorse all those principles. Now, Sir, it is certainly desirable that the whole thing should go on certain cut-and-dried principles and it should not be left to the Railway Administration. If I rise to speak on this Resolution, I do so only to illustrate one typical effect of the present system of going on without any definite principles and leaving the whole thing to the caprice and the whim of the authorities.

Sir, I have been furnished with a copy of a representation made by some of the contractors of the Howrah Railway Station. In the first paragraph of this representation, they say that the Divisional Superintendent, Howrah, had served all of them with notices, dated the 17th January, 1940, requiring them to quit the station premises by the 25th of February, 1940, which comes to about five weeks' notice. In that representation, I find that some of the contractors have been carrying on their business for the last 15, 24 and even 37 years. They have gradually built up their business and they have been in it for such a long time, and yet they find that one fine morning they are served suddenly with a notice to quit the station premises within five weeks. That is the inevitable result of leaving it to the discretion of one particular official or a particular group of officials who do not feel bound and fettered by any rules and principles. It might be said that this is the representation of interested people. Here I have another representation made to the General Manager, East Indian Railway, Howrah, protesting against these notices which have been served upon these contractors. This representation is signed by respectable and responsible persons of the town. I shall simply give the designation of these people. One is a retired Deputy Auditor of the Railway Accounts. One is a Rai Bahadur, pleader and public prosecutor, Hooghly. Another is an advocate and an *ex-M. L. C.* There is another gentleman who is an advocate and is also an *ex-M. L. C.* There is one gentleman who is a Member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and the Chairman of the Howrah Municipality, and so on. They say that these people have been serving the public very well. There have been no complaints against them and they are local people and there is no reason why these very old people should be asked to vacate the station premises within five weeks. May I bring this particular grievance to the notice of the Honourable the Railway Member hoping that pending the adoption of these definite principles, or apart from them, this particular grievance of these

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Howrah contractors may be taken into consideration by the Honourable the Railway Member? With these words, I support this half-hearted Resolution.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Mr. President, I support this Resolution.

12 Noon. The Honourable the Mover made five points. The first point he made was that the railways should not make a profit. The second point was that there should be no sub-letting. The third point was that the price of the foodstuffs that is sold should be fair. The fourth point was that there should be no monopoly of contracts, and the fifth point was that contracts should be given to local persons as far as possible. He then informed the House that at the meeting of the Central Advisory Council for Railways held in Simla on the 16th September the Council unanimously agreed that the giving of contracts had best be left to the various Railway Administrations to decide, subject to their consulting the Local Advisory Committees. My friend, the Mover, also commented upon that and said that it was much better that the Honourable the Communications Member should lay down the policy once for all so that all the railways throughout India may follow that policy and not leave it to the General Managers and Agents to bring up the subject from year to year. Let me now give you a concrete picture. I will give you concrete instances to show that all these five points are ignored. There was a meeting of the Local Advisory Committee in Calcutta on the 26th of January, 1940. I am a Member of that Committee. Certain Bengali contractors came to me on the 25th January stating that they had been called upon to quit the station premises by the 25th February, 1940, that the General Manager had decided to give the monopoly of Indian catering throughout the whole of the East Indian Railway system to a particular firm not only at the Howrah station and in the Howrah Division, but other contractors, such for instance as Messrs. Kapur & Co., who had the catering at stations within the Dinapore Division had also been asked to quit so that the catering throughout the line may be entrusted to Messrs. Ballabhdas Eshwardas for whom the General Manager had a great fancy. These contractors who came to me gave me a copy of their petition to the General Manager in which they requested him to give them an opportunity of presenting their case to him. As nothing came out of it, they requested me to take up the matter at the next meeting of the Calcutta Advisory Committee which was fixed for the 26th January. I thereupon requested them to provide me with a list of the names of the contractors, the duration of their service and their record. I got this list which I shall presently place before the House. Armed with these documents, I attended the meeting of the Railway Advisory Committee on the 26th January. After the matters on the agenda had been discussed, I asked permission of the General Manager to raise this question about the change of contractors. I told the General Manager that the Advisory Committee had not been consulted before the change was effected. I pointed out to him that there was a circular issued by the Railway Board to all the Railways as a result of the Resolution moved by Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad and this circular enjoined on the Railways that in the case, not only of a drastic change, but even of any change, the General Manager should consult the Local Advisory Committee. Surely, change of contractors over the whole system of a railway is a very important change which requires that the Advisory Committee should be consulted. I told the General Manager that as far as I was

aware the Committee was not consulted and yet he gave definite orders that the contractors should quit the premises by 25th February. I asked him to give notice. The General Manager said: "what is the good of giving notice? The next meeting will be after the 25th February. You cannot discuss it then. There is no good of postponing it. I am expecting a fight and I shall fight with my back to the wall". I said: "Thank you very much; the fight will be there".

What is the position? These contractors have been serving for many years. According to the statement given to me one has been serving since 1917. He supplied tea and tiffin to the Hindu regiment during the strike period on more than one occasion. He was entrusted to serve the Viceregal staff at the times of their move to Calcutta annually. He also served His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales staff at Begumpur. The other contractor has been serving since 1929. All these six contractors at the Howrah station, including one Iswar Singh who is a Lieutenant in the army and who is an M. B. E., have been asked unceremoniously to quit the premises. This bombshell was thrown on the 17th January asking them to quit on the 25th February. Why? To make room for a monopolist. The service record of these contractors shows no complaint. I have got a lot of literature on the subject, but I do not want to waste the time of the House by reading it. The General Manager has discreetly allowed the Muslim contractor at Asansol to continue. He knows that Dr. Sir Ziauddin is here to fight out their cause if any injustice is done to the Asansol contractor. The Muslims are not touched. The Marwari refreshment room contractor at Moghul Sarai also is not touched, perhaps because my Honourable friend, Babu Baijnath Bajoria, will rise in arms against the General Manager if he does so. Leaving these two, all the rest have been touched and some of them have already been wiped out of the East Indian Railway and others are to follow so that the contract may be given to the redoubtable Ballabhdas Eshwardas.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The Asansol contractor is there all right.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I already said, my dear Deputy President, that the Muslims are not touched.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member never addresses the House in proper form.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I beg your pardon, Sir. I think I have showed that the Advisory Committee was not consulted. I can give you several other instances. I have got only 15 minutes and, within that short time, I cannot do justice to the cause I am pleading. The Honourable Member for Communications will hear more on this subject during the general discussion on the railway budget. In view of the fact that the opposite Benches are empty, we shall get a little more time to go into all the grievances in detail and inform the Railway Member of the true state of affairs. I have not the slightest doubt that if he is convinced, he will redress all the grievances. I shall bring to his notice the rotten state of affairs in the East Indian Railway administration. The time has come for a thorough overhaul. Temporary stop-gap remedies will not avail. The carriages are rotten and attention is not paid to them. The seats are so narrow that a stout man like myself cannot sleep on them. The tract has not been attended to long enough and now they have to be

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undertaken in so many places as to delay the arrival of trains at destinations. The House wants company railways to be taken over by the State but many of them are surely far better run than the State Railways. Sir, I, therefore, whole-heartedly, support the Resolution and hope that my Honourable friend, the Communications Member, will lay down a policy once for all to be followed by the General Managers or the Agents of the Railways.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I claim to have some knowledge of this subject and as a member of the Central Advisory Council and one of the Local Advisory Committees I have taken some interest in it. I hold no brief for Ballabhdas's or for Kapur's but I will put the facts as they are. Unless some definite policy is laid down there will be no end of this trouble which is only due to the greed of the railway administrations to make money out of these contracts. Before 1937 there was no license fee and only a nominal rent of one or two rupees was charged on refreshment rooms. Subsequently, the railway authorities wanted to make revenues out of this and started to charge heavy amounts with the result that the refreshment room people and the vendors gave bad food. Questions were asked in both the Houses of the Legislature and in the other House the Honourable Mr. Pantulu said:

"Already the food supplied is of a very inferior quality and the cost is somewhat prohibitive. The new venture of the railways to get additional revenue and realising large amounts of fees by auctioning these contracts will very much deteriorate the food and it will make it more costly for third class passengers who are the main customers of these food-stalls."

He was supported by the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das who said:

"I was not present, otherwise I would have urged that this tax should not be put."

This tax, Sir,

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member ought not to dwell so much on the proceedings of the other House.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: There were similar questions and discussions in this House also. My point is that the trouble will not end unless the railways decide not to make any profit out of this concern. I was present at the meeting of the Central Advisory Council on the 16th September, 1939, and, the first question taken up was about the rent and license fees. My Honourable friend, Sir Ziauddin, wanted that some instances of hardship on the public over the North Western Railway be shown. First, it was decided to have a nominal rent and reasonable license fee. Subsequently, they appointed a subordinate officer to assess the rent and license fee, and the surprising thing is that he recommended persons who were giving nothing or only one or two rupees as rent. The North Western Railway adopted those exorbitant figures assessed by that subordinate officer and began to charge the vendors and refreshment room people accordingly. It is well-known that Ballabhdas, a man from Calcutta, was given the contract in Delhi instead of a local man, and he inflated the offer and paid Rs. 7,000 to the railway. There were complaints and it was decided not to renew his contract, but still it has been extended by another year although no agreement has yet been made. I submit that that should not be done.

Then on the question of rent and license fees the Central Advisory Council laid down no definite principle. This is what they say:

"Charges should be levied by Railways on refreshment rooms and license fees should be recovered from vendors. The amount of such charges, and the method by which they should be levied, should be left to the railway administrations acting in consultation with the local advisory committees."

Again it is left to the railway administrations and probably another officer will be appointed who may swell even the former assessment to say Rs. 4,000 for one place, Rs. 1,000 for another and Rs. 500 for another and so on.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: The Honourable Member has not completed the sentence. If he will read it to the conclusion he will find that the principle is enunciated at the end.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I am coming to that and I shall explain it fairly. I say that if we leave things to the reasonableness of the administration we will be at sea. It is said that it should be nominal and reasonable. But why should not that be decided by the Local Advisory Committee? Why should it be left to the administration? In concluding my above quotation I say the proviso is "reasonable charges". What are those reasonable charges? If an officer says that Rs. 1,000 is reasonable, then it becomes reasonable. It has been said that the Local Advisory Committee would be consulted, but I ask whether the Local Advisory Committee has been consulted either in Lahore or in Karachi since September, 1939. Nothing has been done and the proviso is only an eye-wash. The administration sitting in Local Advisory Council often say to the members: "We have made inquiries: yours is only advice and we may act upon it or not or in our opinion your advice should not be accepted." This happens many a time.

As regards rates for foodstuffs, it is urged that it should be the bazaar rates: but we should be fair to the people who have to come to the stations to sell these things, and make all allowance to them when they have to spend more or engage more persons with the result that their charges go up than those in the bazaar. The rates, therefore, might have to vary a little.

Then as regards this monopoly, it is very disturbing factor to the public. There are some favourites with the administration. I find contractors have been there all along for fourteen years. Then:

"The Chairman explained that the term professional caterers meant those persons who are already engaged in the catering trade either on railways or elsewhere. The term was intended to include those who were not so engaged."

Under this shelter favourites are being taken, just as it was said now that in the East Indian Railway the General Manager has been giving it to this Vallabhdas for so many years and he continues even now to do so and is refusing it to others

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I will finish in two minutes, Sir. Further the Central Advisory Councils report says:

"Should the contracts be given to local professional men or would more satisfactory results be obtained by giving contracts by areas or sections? The Council unanimously agreed that this might best be left to the various railway administrations to decide subject to their consulting the local advisory committees."

I do not agree with this, if you are going to give it to outside people in order to see that local men do not get it, it is not fair. I say that local persons should be given these contracts. As regards inspection of food, if it is to be left to the station masters or inspectors, it will be leaving it in the hands of people who cannot be considered to be very impartial: it cannot be denied that they are helped by these vendors in some ways.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Therefore, I am submitting that the principle should be laid down definitely.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, this question of catering and supply of food at railway stations seems to me to attract a little too much attention in this House. I agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, that we are getting into a great many difficulties regarding this subject. One of my difficulties is that we have to listen to too many questions on this subject and also to too long discussions on it. In my view the real evil lies in the fact that the Railway Board and the Government of India in the Railway Department have lost confidence in their own capacity to manage the railways. For a number of years they have started the policy of having contractors. They have contractors in their own workshops. They have contractors to manage *hamals* or porters at railway stations; and, of course, they like to have contractors for catering food to railway passengers. I suggest to the Government of India that they may have contractors in the place of Members of the Railway Board and

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar: Non-Muhammadan): Will you take the contract?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: . . . they may even think of auctioning the work of the Railway Member, and we may expect even the Governor General's post being auctioned to some contractor. I think that if this evil is to be avoided, it can be avoided only by adopting the suggestion of the Railway Advisory Committee: it is their last suggestion, but the most important one. It is this: the Council consider that an extension of the system of departmental catering was desirable. The Honourable Member says that this has been objected to: not by the House, but by some Members of the House, I admit. But if all this trouble is to be avoided, if the passengers are to be provided with better food, I will not say the best food, if the arrangements are to be better than they are today, the Railway Department should undertake the management of the catering themselves. On

some railways the railway authorities do make arrangements for departmental working in this line, and I think there are not more complaints on that railway than on other railways. The evils complained of are inherent in the system of contracts. You cannot avoid them. Dr. Sir Ziauddin says you should not give auction for different centres; the railway must not make a profit; there must be no monopoly. If there is to be no auction, what will take the place of the auction? Favoritism. Or you should have departmental arrangements for catering food; in the latter case the public should criticise in the Local Advisory Committees, in the Central Advisory Committees and the Legislature. That is the right way. But if you have private contractors, you will have to auction; that is the only way, which is the proper way if you want to have private contractors. If you will not auction, what will happen? There will be favoritism, bribery and corruption. Some people are against monopoly. It is true, private monopoly is not good, I do not believe in it, but if it is State monopoly, it is much better than a monopoly of private contractors. There are people who are against sub-letting, but if you are in favour of contractors, why are you against sub-contractors? There is no reason given for that. The contractors hold the sub-contractors responsible. None of these evils can be avoided if you want to have the system of contractors. If you want to abolish these evils, then you should insist that the Railway Board themselves should make arrangements for providing food to the passengers as they do for several other purposes. Unfortunately, as I said before, the Railway Board has lost confidence in its own capacity. They must have contractors to manage the various activities on the railways. The best thing is, Sir, to have another Railway Board which will have confidence in its own capacity to manage all the affairs of the Indian railways.

Sir, there is one more point which I would like to touch, and that is the policy of the Railway Board generally as regards making arrangements for poorer passengers and for what I may call better placed passengers. Sir, in this Report of the Central Advisory Council it is stated that in the case of restaurants and shops for poorer people the railways can take more money for licenses and for auctions; it is only in the case of European style restaurants they cannot charge high rates, because these restaurants do not pay, and the people who resort to the European style restaurants are not willing to pay more. If I may say so more clearly, they are not willing to pay for the food which they take. If these people want to go to European style restaurants, I think they should be willing to pay for the food they want

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): They get it free.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir Cowasji, you have not read the Report of the Railway Advisory Council. You cannot maintain restaurants for people who want food of the European style without a subsidy. That means you may pay; but you don't pay fully for the food which you take; you live upon the charity of the public. At page 4 of this Report, this is what they say

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: May I know where it is stated there must be a subsidy.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: If the Honourable Member insists, I will read that portion.

"Sir David Devadoss in supporting that view remarked that European catering in most cases is not a paying proposition, because the number requiring European food is relatively small....."

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: There is no question of subsidy there.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: But the word may occur if the Honourable Member will have some patience:

"He added that firms who undertook that form of catering did so in the hope of making up their losses in some other way."

I do not know in what way,—

"possibly out of certain of the refreshments rooms or even by some form of subsidy."

That was his opinion.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I understood the Honourable Member to say that the Central Advisory Council has laid down the principle that there must be a subsidy for European refreshment rooms.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I did not say that. The Reporter will give you exactly what I said. I do not admit that I made that statement. I did not make the statement that the Central Advisory Council said that. I said it is being done. I make that statement on my own responsibility that the Railway Board pays for the losses incurred on account of these restaurants

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: That is not true.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It is a question of investigation. I am quite ready if the Railway Board will make an investigation. This is in accordance with the policy which the Government of India generally follow. They are willing to spend money for the convenience of the rich. I am not alone in saying this, but even some Railway Committee which inquired recently into this matter showed that the first class in the Indian railways does not pay its way; it needs some subsidy. I, therefore, feel that the Railway Board should give up this policy; it is a rotten policy of charging money for providing refreshments for the poor people when you make losses on restaurant rooms and other arrangements for those people who take refreshments in European style. I, therefore, feel that the Government of India should consider this question seriously and they will have a little more confidence in their own capacity and manage all the arrangements themselves, and in the second place change their policy of helping the rich travellers at the cost of the poor people.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Sir, the Resolution which my friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin, has moved is not definite in its terms. He only wants the Governor General to accept the position that some definite principle should be laid down for the sale of food at railway stations. My friend, no doubt, in the course of his speech, has laid down the principles which he wants the Railway Board to accept and enunciate in this matter, but those principles have not

been definitely stated or indicated in the Resolution itself. So the Government, if they are inclined to accept this Resolution, will have to read this Resolution in the light of the principles enunciated therein by the Honourable the Mover, otherwise definite principles, such as the Railway Board may think proper, may mean anything and everything. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the Resolution, as it is worded, does not by itself convey to the House as well as to the Government what exactly is the position which the Honourable Member wants the Government to take. Anyhow, he has made that position very clear in the course of his speech, and I take it to be the intention of the Mover.

Sir, the Resolution is important from the point of view of the travelling public. It is no doubt true that this question has been frequently debated in the Central Advisory Council as well as in the Local Advisory Committees, and also very often on the floor of this House a number of interpellations have been put on this question. That in itself indicates the volume of discontent at the existing arrangements. It is no use being tired of questions being put on this point. It is, in my opinion, a proof that people are not satisfied, that the travelling public are not satisfied with the arrangements that exist at present, and, therefore, more serious attention has to be given to the arrangements which exist at present in the matter of supply of food to the travelling passengers.

One thing I find is that these arrangements are different on different lines, and different even on different branches or sections of the same line. I really do not know why it should not be possible to introduce some uniform arrangement on all State lines so far as the food supply arrangement is concerned. If some uniform arrangement is admitted, then it should not be beyond the possibility of the Railway Board to think of some scheme to bring it about. That is one suggestion which I want to make in this connection. I entirely agree that the system of monopoly should not be allowed to grow, and if it exists anywhere it should be done away with, because it is quite possible that, if there is a monopoly, there is also tendency to extort more from the customer and there is nothing to put a stop to that evil in that case. But in the resolution of the Central Advisory Council, which was read out to this House, one point has been made perfectly clear, namely, that in making any arrangement whatsoever for the supply of food to the travelling public, the Railway Board ought not to make it a source of revenue to itself and should not think of making any profit at all. If that one central point is carefully borne in mind, namely, that it should not be a source of income to the Railway Board, then, I believe, it should not be very difficult to think of an equitable arrangement which will be beneficial to the travelling public and not be unnecessarily costly to them.

I am not entirely agreeable to the suggestion made that the rate at which food is to be supplied at the railway stalls or to the travelling public should be identically the same as the rate obtaining in the market. It is necessary to maintain a higher standard of cleanliness, a higher standard of quality of food and a higher type of service, and if all these are insisted upon, probably a little higher charge will have to be conceded. And what should be the higher charge or the difference which has to be paid by the travelling public in excess of the market rate is a point on which it would not be possible for the Railway Board to lay down a uniform policy

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everywhere. For that purpose it would be necessary to take this question for consideration to the different Railway Advisory Committees who are in a better position and are better acquainted with the various kinds of food that are to be sold on the different lines and different branches of the same line. I am told that at present the arrangement is like this. It is not only that there are different contractors for different stations, but different contractors for different articles sold at the same station. Now, when you have such an arrangement, it is difficult to exercise proper control. So, I am of opinion, although I am not in favour of monopolies—it might be possible for the railway line to be divided into certain sections, and some sections at least may be placed in charge of some responsible contractor if departmental arrangement is not to come into force there. But the present system which you have got, namely, different contracts for different kinds of articles sold there makes the work of inspection and enforcing certain given instructions properly almost impossible. Therefore, I would suggest that the policy of Government should be, in the first place, as has been suggested, to make this arrangement departmental, a suggestion which has already been made, but if for some reason or other the Government think that the departmental arrangement cannot be introduced at once, I think it would be better to divide the line into certain reasonable sections and to place each section in charge of some responsible firm or responsible contractor who can be asked to make the service in conformity with the instructions issued by the Railway Board.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Unless you have two contractors in one place, you cannot avoid monopoly.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Monopoly or no monopoly, if you once make up your mind that you are not to make a profit out of it, I do not care whether it is in charge of this man or that man. We are against monopoly because it is likely to yield to that other evil, but if that evil is going to be eliminated, I am not concerned whether it is in charge of the same man for a number of years or different men for the same year. The result is that the travelling public is not affected if that principle is conceded.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Unless there are two contractors at each station, monopoly is not avoided at all. You must have two contractors in each station to avoid monopoly. Otherwise rates will go up.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I can understand that if monopoly is to be avoided, there will have to be more than one man, that position I can very easily understand. But if I am against monopoly, it is for this reason that the monopoly is likely to give undue privilege in the hands of one man, so that he may demand more than what is reasonable from the customer. If that evil can be eliminated in some other way, I am not against monopoly. Monopoly by itself does not frighten me, but what frightens me is that it is likely to yield to the evil that the contractor, the monopolist, may demand more than what is reasonable, and there is nothing to put a stop to that evil.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Will you give the contract on different sections to the same contractor?

Mr. M. S. Aney: Not necessarily. Different contractors may be placed in charge of different sections.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Not the same man?

Mr. M. S. Aney: Not necessarily the same man. In fact, I should like to avoid the same man being put in in charge of different sections.

There is another point to which I wish to refer before I sit down. I am told that there is a kind of discrimination observed by the railway authorities in the case of the arrangements made for the supply of food to certain higher class passengers and supply of food by the Hindu and Muslim contractors, a point to which some reference was made by Mr. Joshi. I am told that most of these European restaurants and other persons who keep their stalls there have to pay practically no rent at all, or they get their rooms for a nominal rent, and sometimes for no rent at all. I am also told that they have also an exclusive monopoly to supply passengers with certain kinds of drinks. That is a great source of income to them.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah (Bombay City: Muhammadan Urban): That has stopped.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Stopped in Bombay, but not everywhere. My Honourable friend comes from Bombay and so he knows the arrangements there, but other persons are more fortunate in this matter. They make money there.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: We are penalised.

Mr. M. S. Aney: You are becoming more virtuous for that reason,—that is what we are told.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: That I am doubtful about.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I am told that this policy of allowing them a monopoly of selling drinks enables them to make large profits. The complaint of the Indian contractors is that either the European contractors should be brought down to their level, or they, that is, the Indian contractors, should be raised up to the level of the European contractor. They must be given these concessions or facilities or that those concessions and facilities which the European contractors enjoy should be done away with: One of the two things must be done and both of them must be asked to accept the contract on uniform conditions, and there should be no discrimination of any kind whatsoever. I was told at the meeting of the Railway Standing Committee that in that case it would be impossible, on certain lines at least, to maintain European restaurants, and so on.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Don't do it.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I believe European passengers should have no objection to being served by the Indian contractors if they get the proper type of food. They should have no objection to the other method being tried. Those persons who take advantage of the European arrangements are in a position to pay more. If they want to lead that fashionable life and to

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enjoy a particular type of food—I do not know whether it is better food or not, because I have not tasted that food at all—they should be in a position to pay more. I may also say that the Indian contractors have to pay for the electric installation at the stations and they have to pay very exorbitant rents.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has exceeded his time limit.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I have also finished, Sir. That is a point which the Railway Board might well look into. These are the few suggestions that I want to make, and, with these remarks, I support the Resolution of my Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, commending the Resolution for serious consideration of the Government, I would like to point out that the question of Indian catering has not been satisfactorily settled as yet in spite of best efforts and best desires. The Central Advisory Council for Railways considered this question from time to time and it was discussed also, as Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad pointed out, in the meetings of the Council held on the 3rd October and 8th October, 1936. Certain principles were laid down, namely, "no subletting should be done and in no case there should be a monopoly in any form, no monopoly at all to any individual firm or of any particular class of catering. No particular line of catering is to be given to one firm over a large area." Another thing was that there should be no spirit of getting any profit or gain from these contractors by way of licences or rents. This matter was again brought before the Central Advisory Council for Railways on the 16th September, 1939, where I had the good fortune of being present. It was agreed that the details would be left to the General Managers of the Railways subject to the advice of the Local Advisory Council, but what do we find in practice? The powers conferred on the General Managers are being used for making experiments according to their own humours and whims and they do not at all care to take the advice of the Local Advisory Committees as my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, has just pointed out, in connection with the question of the Indian Refreshment rooms. General Managers are being guided by different principles invented by themselves for their experiments. The principle initiated by the General Manager, East Indian Railway, is that of a monopoly for one caterer all over the line. He wants to introduce a system analogous to the system of European catering and he says that he wants one man for the Hindu side of the catering and one man for the Muslim side of the catering all over the line. This is an argument put forward by the administration with a view to maintaining one single contractor for Hindu and Muhammadan refreshment rooms on the lines of Kellners. Without going into details of the position of food supply by Kellners on European methods and by Indians on various lines of various preparations of Indian tastes confined to certain localities, I would like to point out the following discrepancies in the argument. Kellners have only to cater the refreshment rooms whereas the Hindu and Muhammadan contractors have two distinct divisions of the so-called contract, (a) the catering of refreshment rooms,

and (b) the vending of sweets and *puries*, etc. Honourable Members would realise that the two different jobs of the Indian contractor require special arrangements on two different and distinct lines. By no means it can follow that, if an Indian contractor can cater satisfactorily the refreshment room, it is also to be presumed that he will be able to arrange vending of sweets and *puries* with the same satisfaction and the same may also be argued *vice versa*. So far as the catering of Kellners is concerned, the food is the same throughout India, from Cape Comorin to Peshawar, whereas Indian food differs after every 300 miles or so. The food which suits the taste of a Bengali will not suit the taste of the people of Madras or of the United Provinces. Nobody having the least idea of the territorial divisions and the different cultures existing in this country would consider that the same arrangement can be introduced in Indian catering as are done by the Kellners for the European style. Indian side of the catering requires altogether different arrangements.

There is another point which I want to place and that is that the idea of the administration to give a monopoly to a single contractor from Howrah to Delhi or Ghaziabad will take away the sense of competition from the contractors. People living in different parts of India can realise what hardship it would mean to a man of Lucknow if he is supplied with Indian food of the most delicious type catered in Madras. This fact alone is sufficient to convince anybody of the necessity of maintaining contractors who have definite facilities in the areas in which they cater. The administrations will find themselves in an impossible position in the event of complaints which may be even so numerous that the administration may feel to cancel the contract of the one who holds a monopoly, but the administration, having removed competitors, will not be in a position to get any other contractor immediately to take up the particular area where the administration is convinced of the incapability of the monopolist contractor. It might take them eight months or six months or even four months before they can find a substitute. But what about the period during which the mischief may be continued in spite of the consciousness on the part of the administration that it is very wrong that the passengers should be definitely dealt with in a bad manner. It may be argued that the said monopolist may be chastised and asked to mend his ways, but the normal pressure of admonitions and benedictions can hardly be worthwhile depending upon for any better results unless the administration is in a position to give any contractor a substantial threat of penalty and cancellation. Unless replacement is possible no good can ever be served.

Another factor is that the local authorities, say even the Divisional Superintendents, will have hardly any control on such a monopolist caterer, and this will only relax the sense of supervision on the part of

1 P.M. the local railway authorities who have been normally vigilant in the event of bad reports from the travelling public. The position of the Divisional Superintendents will be reduced to that of the public in this matter who may only report the complaints. I hardly believe any officer would have the courage to deal with a big monopolist who is running a big firm in a particular place even if he is not behaving properly, as the subordinate officer's position is only reduced to that of a reporter and nothing more. The monopolist on the East Indian Railway, Ballabhdas Ishardass, being big financiers and having their office at a place like Calcutta, will hardly be approachable by the travelling public or even by

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

the responsible representatives of the people. How can a man at Lucknow or Moradabad effectively complain in such a case? Moreover, can a firm at Calcutta, who never own any hotels or outside catering any where, make the same adequate arrangements at Lucknow or Moradabad as a local firm can do who are running hotels in those places. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai has pointed out that one Ishardass Ballabhass has been given a big contract over a large part of the East Indian Railway, although they were condemned for the purpose of catering contracts after their experience at the Delhi Station a few years ago. But now they are in the favoured position of being considered to be the monopolists of the East Indian Railway for the Hindu side of the catering. There is a lot of hue and cry over this firm. I have received and many other Honourable Members have received representations from many people, including Seth-Lall Mehendur Kumar, Tundla, Sethlall Hundilal, Etawah, and others. I am speaking for the East Indian Railway mostly, because that is my constituency, and I am conversant with most of the facts there. I have received copies of appeals from lots of people on the Howrah, Lucknow and Moradabad Divisions and elsewhere. Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi pointed out in his speech that the General Manager of the East Indian Railway said he had not laid his hands on the Muslim contractors. Unfortunately the position is not quite that. The position is this. I know that recently Issa Brothers secured an independent position on the East Indian Railway and that at Lucknow and Allahabad also Issa Brothers have been given this position, and that it was said by the General Manager, East Indian Railway, that there are no Muslim contractors, professional caterers of a good type available except his favourites. But I do not know what efforts were made by the administration to procure or find out one, and whether any opportunities were given to other Muslim contractors to come forward and make their offers. I do not want to refer in this connection what experience we have had of Issur Das Ballabh Das, and Issa Brothers, but the less said about them, the better. They may be the favourites of some particular individual or of the East Indian Railway authorities, but the less said about them, the better, so far as their catering is concerned. However, we feel that, in spite of the best efforts of the Central Advisory Council from 1936 to 1939, the Indian catering question has not been solved. One principle was evolved in 1936, but the same was not worked up, and, then, as soon as, in 1939, we gave certain powers to the administration in a good spirit, we find that the powers are being abused.

Now, this Assembly wants to take cognizance of this fact that, in spite of these efforts of the Central Advisory Council, we have not been able to do what we should have done, and it is high time that the Railway Board itself, in conformity with the advice which we are giving and in accordance with the spirit of the speeches we are making on the floor of this House, should evolve a principle soon and that principle should be at least this, to my mind and according to the opinion, I think, of the majority of the Honourable Members on this side, *viz.*, that there should be no monopoly on the part of any individual or firm of contractors, and that so far as the two sides of the Indian refreshments and catering are concerned, efforts should be made to have them separate and we should not give one contract to the same person, and that areas and divisions should be divided in a way which will no doubt make it economic to those

professional contractors to have their arrangements but those areas should not be large enough. Say, for the East Indian Railway, you can make one or two Divisions available to one contractor and there the limit should be kept. The same about Muslim refreshment rooms. I do not want to dwell much on the profit-making side of the railways, because this has been the sense of the attitude of the Advisory Council members as well that the Railway Board and Railways should not at all try to make any profit out of the licenses or rents collected through these people. A point was brought out by Mr. Joshi, and it was that a sort of subsidy was being given to the European caterers. I have no information whether it is so at all. However I differ from him; my experience is, and I am not shy to say this, that so far as the arrangements as regards the European refreshment rooms are concerned, they have been more satisfactory than the Indian refreshment rooms.

Mr. President. (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has got two minutes more to finish his speech.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I would just commend this Resolution to the Honourable Member for Communications and Railways for his serious consideration, so that he may examine the whole position on the lines of the speeches that we have made and note that we would not like any firm to hold a monopoly in any particular way, and that the regions should be divided in such a way as would be in the best interests of the passengers, and that efforts should be made for the supervision of the food supplied. There was advice given to that effect in the meeting on the 16th September, 1939, that the administration should appoint Food Inspectors, but I do not know whether any inspectors for particular areas have been appointed or not. It should also be impressed on the administration that this is also very necessary in the interests of the travelling public and of everybody in this country. So the simple purpose of this Resolution is that we want to impress it upon the Government of India that the situation is not very healthy and that the actions of certain General Managers are most objectionable. Then, the railway officers in trying to make experiments bestow favours on some particular individuals, because they think that those individuals may be particularly fit. That Issur Das Ballabhdas, who were once condemned, I think, as my friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, pointed out, should be the chosen favourites again now is something surprising and this is done by replacing so many experienced old and good contractors. With the remarks, Sir, I resume my seat.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I think I had better begin with my old friend, Mr. Joshi, who, ploughing an almost lonely furrow, suggested by way of a very gracious, if an unconscious, compliment that I and the Railway Board would do the catering very much better than those in whose hands it now rests.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Unfortunately you do not feel that.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: We are more modest. But I did not gather that that was the general sense of the House. In fact the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution definitely said that he was

[Sir Andrew (Now.)]

opposed to any extension of departmental catering, and I take the Resolution generally as dealing with the principles which should govern the contracts that are issued for catering. I shall only, before leaving Mr. Joshi, refer to one point, namely, the question of catering for those who live in European style. I am opposed to any idea of subsidies on Railways, and the principle laid down in the Central Advisory Committee meetings did not involve a subsidy; and as regards the rents for refreshment rooms which my Honourable friend raised, what we want to do is to try and charge an economic rent in all cases. If we cannot get that type of rent, we have to consider whether the rooms should stay in the interest of attracting traffic which we might otherwise lose or we should close them. At the moment, we are actually looking into the question of the refreshment cars which cater for those who live in European style. I was struck in my tours by the very small amount of custom that some of these attract, and we are very doubtful whether it is worth while continuing their running. We shall look into the question of withdrawing some of these facilities.

Now to come to the Resolution itself, I think the Honourable the Mover himself would recognize that the wording is somewhat unfortunate. I am asked "to end the discussions on the subject with the Railway Advisory Committees." Well, food is a subject of perennial interest; it is the only subject of conversation recorded in the garden of Eden; I have no doubt that men will be complaining about food so long as the world lasts, and I am not prepared to give an undertaking to stifle discussions in Railway Advisory Committees on the subject. Again, I am asked to terminate "the continuous experiments of railway officials." Well, if I have one complaint to make of some railway officials it is this that they do not make enough experiments. No big business can go on without their making experiments. I am glad that the Mover of the Resolution considers that the railway officials are making continuous experiments. I know they are, in many directions. However, to come to the spirit of the Resolution, I think I will be able to meet the House in certain particulars.

Let me first deal with the question of finality. What the Honourable the Mover was anxious to get was finality and he accused me or the Government of always "re-opening this question". Now who re-opened it? He referred to the fact that in 1936 certain principles had been adopted by the Central Advisory Council. Then, he went on to say that he and certain others had gone on deputation to Sir Sultan Ahmad. Let me read a passage from the Memorandum appended to the last meeting of the Central Advisory Council for Railways:

"In October 1937, however, a deputation of Members of both the Houses of Legislature met the Honourable Member for Railways (Sir Sultan Ahmad), and put forward recommendations which differed in some quite important respects from the recommendation of the Central Advisory Council."

In other words, they were not content with the settlement then reached and they wanted it re-opened. Sir Thomas Stewart accordingly indicated in the debate in 1938 that it was necessary for the Railway Board to re-examine the position, so that the reopening came to a large extent from this deputation and I have no assurance that after we have laid down principles again, it will not be reopened once more by another deputation. Then, the Railway Board accordingly had to consult the

General Managers again and we again brought the subject up before the last meeting of the Central Advisory Council that was held about the end of last Session. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad suggested that we took advantage of the Members of one Party being absent and that the Railway Board had a majority. Nothing could be further from what happened. The Railway Board had no majority apart from my own vote. We had one representative of the Railway Board, Mr. Sankara Aiyar. The Advisory Council included such stalwarts as Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr. Aney, Mr. Nauman and Mr. Lalchand Navalrai and on certain points they reached unanimous conclusions.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Please read out the names of other persons also.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Members have this list in front of them and I do not propose to read out all the names. But my point is this that on certain points we reached unanimous conclusions and it is certainly not right that on one of the points on which a unanimous conclusion was reached, certain Members, including Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, should get up and say that they do not agree with it.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: We never thought that the General Managers will make such extravagance and abuse their powers.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Precisely. The Honourable Member now finds that the unanimous conclusion we reached may lead to unfortunate results and so he wants to go back on it. So there is no finality in the matter. Who reopened the matter today? Really, this is not a matter on which I can promise to lay down principles that would be acceptable for all time. So long as there are contractors and so long as they complain to Honourable Members of unfair treatment, so long naturally this question will continue to agitate the minds both of Members of this House and of the public outside and of the Advisory Committees.

An Honourable Member: Or until we learn to fast.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Precisely.

Let me come to the more precise points which have been raised. There have been references to the charges made by the railways. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai read part of a sentence; the part which he omitted contained the principle which the Central Advisory Council had adopted and in spite of my request he did not complete the sentence. The sentence went on to say:

"bearing in mind the paramount importance of adequate supplies at reasonable rates to the travelling public."

Let me make the position quite clear. There have been attempts in the past to treat this matter on what I may call purely commercial lines. There have been attempts to call for tenders and in one or two cases large profits were the result. We have definitely in pursuance of the advice of the Central Advisory Council abandoned that policy and we are prepared to abide by the conclusion that they reached. We shall charge the charges that they suggested. Quite obviously, contractors and others are being relieved from charges that they have to meet in ordinary shops

[Sir Andrew Clow.]

and it is not unreasonable that we should charge rent and impose a licence fee, but we are not after to seek to make this a source of substantial profit and the charges will be reasonable and in accordance with what we provide. Where we provide electric light, surely it is not necessarily unreasonable that we should charge for it?

As regards prices, that is a subject also dealt with in that meeting. It is a very difficult subject. Contrary views have been expressed today. Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad has said that he is for the old idea, that the price in the station should be exactly as it is outside. He had a discussion with a station master who pointed out that his attitude was not quite reasonable. Well, I think, as Mr. Aney suggested, the station master was nearer the correct view than my Honourable friend. It is not in many cases reasonable to ask that a man should serve within a station where he is to meet only a limited number of people and where he may have to send a man at particular times of the day and where his sales are very limited. It is not really reasonable to ask that he should, in all cases, adhere to the price at which he can sell in a large shop in the bazaar with a constant flow of customers and with a large off-take.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: On a point of personal explanation. I was talking of the shop of the same person which was just outside the platform and which also belonged to the Railway administration and not the one in the bazaar.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: A shop outside the platform caters for the public. Inside the platform he may be limited to a few times a day at which he has got to send supplies, which may grow stale, and he meets travellers from various parts of India and with different demands.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member can continue his speech after Lunch.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, I come now to what I think was the main subject that was exercising the minds of those Honourable Members who spoke on this motion, that is the subject described, not perhaps entirely adequately as the question of monopolies. Normally, of course, there is always a monopoly. If you give a contract to a single man, even at one station, there is a monopoly. That constitutes a monopoly in the sense that he has no competitor offering goods in competition with himself. So far as I could gather the House did not seem keen that we should have rival competitors urging the claims of their wares on stations which are already sufficiently noisy. In fact, Mr. Aney did not like the idea even of separate contractors for different kinds of commodities. What seems to be more intended to convey by this dislike of the monopolist was the idea that a particular contractor could hold contracts over a very wide area indeed. That is a question which arises

distinctly different issues and it was probably purely for that reason the Central Advisory Council last September thought it better not to lay down any hard and fast rule but to leave it to the local administrations. Even when we have given to local officers the power to enter into contracts, we have found cases where officers in the adjoining areas find that their own contractors are not doing very well and there is another contractor giving excellent food and, therefore, they ask him to undertake the contract. In that way particular firms have at times extended their field of operations over major portions of railway in the past, and they often serve more than one of the State railways with which we are now dealing. But I was rather impressed by some of the arguments adduced and particularly those made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Muhammad Nauman, when he said that food differs about every 200 miles and that, therefore, a man catering over a very wide area of line is not so likely to meet the local needs and local tastes as a man belonging to that area. It does not of course always happen that you can find within restricted areas suitable men. On the other hand one consideration is that the larger the scale of operation on which a man works the smaller the margin of profit with which he can afford to work which gives the larger man a distinct advantage from the point of view of public interest against the smaller. But I do not propose to develop the arguments for and against any further, because it does seem that the desire of this House is that this question should be re-examined in spite of the conclusion reached at the last meeting of the Council. I propose, therefore, if the House favours this course, to convene another meeting of the Council and refer this whole question of monopolies and the principles that should govern the areas subjected to single contractors. We will make another attempt to see if we can evolve a satisfactory principle. I hope that will meet the general sense of the House.

If that is agreeable, there is one further point with which I have to deal. That is the point raised by you, Sir, and by Sir Abdul Helim Ghuznavi and related to the case of particular contractors at Howrah, and that I know has been exercising the minds of some of the other Members who have refrained from speaking. In that case, I should in fairness to the General Manager make clear that his conclusions on the point were formed before he had received the conclusions of the Railway Board arising out of the last meeting of the Central Advisory Council. But this is obviously bound up with the question of monopolies which we have been discussing at such length and I am prepared to give the assurance that until the Central Advisory Council has met again, the effect of this notice given to the contractors at Howrah will be suspended.

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, usually after an assurance given by the Honourable Member for Government, there does not remain much for any of us on this side of the House to say anything on this Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad. But, Sir, the fact is that though the language of the Resolution is rather loose and apt to be construed according to one's own ideas, yet as the Honourable the Member for Railways himself admitted, the spirit of the Resolution could be easily found out, if he is prepared to look into the matter.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Is not his assurance satisfactory?

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali: Yes, it is satisfactory. But the feeling about this matter is so great and serious in my own province,—the United Provinces,—that I thought it as well to make a few remarks. Two of the most important nationalist papers, the *National Herald* of Lucknow and the *Leader* of Allahabad have represented in very strong terms about the subject dealt with in this Resolution. It is, therefore, the duty of Honourable Members of this House to take up this question in all seriousness and earnestness. I do not stand here today to criticise what the Honourable Sir Andrew Clow has said. I submit this monopolist system is most repugnant to honest working of the railway administration. This question of proper catering on the railways has of course to be discussed and some finality arrived at. The importance of the subject demands that the Railway Member ought to go very thoroughly into the question. Had the public not been stirred to such lengths, the daily papers would not have taken up this question. I am glad that the Honourable Sir Andrew Clow has given the assurance that those people who have been given notice to quit will be given some more time. I find that 90 per cent. of the contractors have been removed and that only ten per cent. still remain. If such a large percentage of contractors are asked to quit, then there will be terrible unemployment and in the present state of chronic unemployment we should not do anything to add to their number. I do not want to go now into those questions again but I hope that the assurances given will not merely remain in the records of this House but will be acted upon by the Agents and Managers of Railways in view of the importance of this question in relation to the health of the people of India.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Honourable Member that he will look into the matter and specially the question of profits and monopolies, the notes that I had prepared for my reply are of no use, and I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Resolution.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, I want to make one point clear. The Honourable Member referred to profits and monopolies. I made the principle of profits quite clear and it is the question of monopolies, as Mr. Nauman urged, that we are proposing to refer to the Central Advisory Council.

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

RESOLUTION RE AIR DEFENCE OF INDIA.

Sir Syed Raza Ali (Cities of the United Provinces: Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I beg to move:

“That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to strengthen the air defence of India by providing suitable air training for the Indian youth and establishing an auxiliary air force, commensurate with the size, population and requirements of the country, to be manned by Indians.”

On this occasion, I do not feel called upon to go into the history of England's past relations with India with regard to the vital question of defence. That history, as this House will surely remember, is a long one which unfortunately contains some sad chapters. Let us hope, however, that those chapters have been closed for good and that it will not be necessary for us to refer to them again. It has been authoritatively declared now that the objective of His Majesty's Government is the grant to India of full dominion status, that is to say, dominion status of the Statute of Westminster variety; and it has been pointed out that the intervening period between now and the attainment of that status should be the least practicable. This means, I take it, that every effort will be made by England to help Indians to undertake the defence of their own country, for, on the face of it, it is impossible for any country to become or to remain autonomous unless it is able to defend itself. In view of the authentic pronouncement to which I have already referred, the question that has been raised by me this afternoon ceases to be controversial. The defence of any country consists of three important arms, namely, the army, the navy and the air force. Today I do not propose to discuss the position of Indians either in the army or in the navy. Before the Session comes to an end, I hope to have an opportunity of raising a debate on the entire question of India's defence and the position that Indians occupy with regard to the remaining two arms, namely, the army and the navy. I will, therefore, examine today what part Indians play in the scheme of the country's air defence. In view of the terrific conflict that is raging in Europe I have no desire to invite the Defence Secretary to give us any information which is likely to be of any use to the enemy. I myself will carefully confine myself to such reports and statements as have been published from time to time either by the Government of India or by the League of Nations.

Let me now come to our air force at once and describe to the House briefly what the position is. Our air force is divided into two classes. The first class consists of the force known as the Indian Air Force. The other class which is by far the more numerous consists of the Royal Air Force officers and airmen who are sent out to India for a definite period, which, I believe, is three years, to do duty in India. Now, it will be very interesting to compare the numerical strength of the Indian Air Force and of the Royal Air Force that is sent out to India, as I submitted, for a definite period. The Indian Air Force, according to the published reports, comprises one squadron with reserves. In April, 1936, which is the year for which figures are available, its total strength was, in fact, 507, including both officers and airmen. According to a reply that was given by the Defence Secretary a few months ago, it appears that the Indian Air Force is manned by Indians. It appears, however, that the majority of responsible posts in officers ranks are held by Britishers. According to this yellow paper, which is entitled "Return showing the actual strength of the Army and Air Force in India on the 1st January 1939", of the 38 officers enumerated in it, there were only 12 Indians and the remaining 26 were Britishers. Perhaps my Honourable friend, Mr. Ogilvie, will be able to clear up the point, in view of the answer he made a few months ago to the effect that the Indian Air Force consisted—I believe these are the words he used—almost entirely of Indians.

As against this, let us turn to the numerical strength of the Royal Air Force functioning in India. According to the Armaments Year Book,

[Sir Syed Raza Ali.]

issued by the League of Nations in the year 1938, its strength, was 2079. Now, it is important to remember that that was the strength in April 1938, nearly four years ago. I am sure changes have taken place since, and possibly the number of the Royal Air Force has materially increased during the last four years. As I said, I do not want the Defence Secretary to give us the figures since the 8th September, 1939, which is a very vital and crucial date; but I am sure there is no harm if he were to state what was the numerical strength of the Royal Air Force, say in the beginning of 1939. It is important also to remember that there was not one Indian who was a member of the Royal Air Force and who could have been included in this number of 2079. All these 2079, whose numbers probably have increased, were sent out to India for a definite period, and all these are part and parcel of His Majesty's Royal Air Force in Great Britain. The connection of these officers and airmen with India is only of a superficial character. We know that the system under which Britishers function as members of the Civil Government and after serving in India for twenty, twenty-five, thirty or even thirty-five years as the case may be, go back to England and take with them all the valuable experience that they have gathered in India during the course of a whole life-time almost, is bad enough. But when we consider the position obtaining either in the British Army to which I will make only a casual reference, but will not discuss for obvious reasons, or when we take into consideration the case of the Royal Air Force, we find that the position is infinitely worse. What is the object, may I know, of bringing in these birds of passage and asking them to stay in India for three years and then go away, taking with them all the valuable experience that they have gained in this country during the period of their service here? India does not save much money by this system, I dare say. I suppose it does save a certain amount of money, but the money that it saves thereby does not represent a very large sum. How do we save and what do we save? The only way we save is that instead of setting up training schools and educating and training our own men to replace the Royal Air Force, the Government allow these men come to this country ready trained, and become air pilots or observers or mechanics or officers as the case may be. No doubt, if we were to start a training school in our own country, the initial cost would involve us in large expenditure. But I am not at all afraid to face it. In the long run it will be a saving scheme because then we will not be required to pay the high salaries we have to pay to these men serving here as members of the Royal Air Force. In terms of squadrons, I may point out to the House that in 1938, the Royal Air Force stationed in India consisted of four squadrons in addition to certain other units.

Now, justice and fairness demand that we should have an Indian Air Force. I do not mind if you call it the Royal Indian Air Force; just as is the practice in the dominions. Canada has got a Royal Canadian Air Force; Australia has got a Royal Australian Air Force. But mark the difference between the two forces. Whereas the Royal Air Force functioning in India is entirely recruited in England, so much so that I believe there is not a single Indian in that force in India today, the similar force in South Africa for instance or in Australia or Canada is recruited from the nationals of that dominion alone. I am not sure about the position in Canada and Australia, but I know this much that

it is impossible for an Englishman from England as such to offer himself for recruitment to the air force of South Africa. They simply will not look at a man from any other country, be it England or Scotland or Wales, unless that man has acquired a South African nationality: unless a man becomes a South African national, it is impossible for him to be accepted for any Government post, much less for recruitment in one of the defence forces.

Now, there is no reason why we should not establish an Air Force of our own. Let me make my position clear, because the words 3 P. M. "Auxiliary Air Force" occur in my Resolution. What I mean by the term "Auxiliary Air Force" as used in my Resolution is that the Indian Air Force functions merely as an Auxiliary Air Force and no more. Our main Air Force consists of the Royal Air Force as I have explained to the House, and the Indian Air Force is no more than an Auxiliary Air Force serving in India. Now, Sir, I feel that the time has come when we should try and increase our Indian Air Force as it exists today and proportionately decrease the Royal Air Force. What I mean is this. We know that our Indian Air Force at present consists of one squadron and the Royal Air Force is composed of more than four squadrons. Let us try to raise the strength of our Indian Air Force from one squadron to two and then to three, and then to four and so on, and decrease the numerical strength of the Royal Air Force proportionately. That is the only way to have a real Indian Air Force. Now, how are we going to achieve our object? I do not think there are any insuperable difficulties. At present the officer class of our Air Force is sent out to Cranwell for training. They are trained there for 18 months, with some six months training in some British unit. Now, I hope His Majesty's Government will accommodate us by arranging things in such a manner that the number of our officer recruits to be trained at Cranwell may be larger. I sincerely hope it will be possible to do so. If it is not possible to do so, then surely we should set up and start a training school here in India. We know that a large number of training schools are going to be started in Canada. I am sure Honourable Members will remember the Empire Air Training Scheme unfolded in one of his recent speeches by Mr. Chamberlain. According to that scheme, there are going to be no less than 67 training schools in Canada. The number of staff that is going to be engaged on training work will come to 40,000 and the number of aerodromes that are going to be established or are going to be enlarged will be upwards of 80. Now, when England is making such a serious effort, surely it is up to us, in order to strengthen the most useful and strongest arm of defence, namely the air force, to establish at least one training school for officer class in India. The cost, I am afraid, will involve us in a large outlay, but I am sure the money is worth spending

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): What will be the cost?

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I do not know. I believe Mr. Ogilvie will be able to throw light on that subject. But may I ask Honourable Members to remember one thing. It was only in September last that a large grant was made by His Majesty's Government on Chatfield Committee's Report to meet the expense of military equipment in India. I believe the figure runs into crores,—I have not got the figure just now, but I think it runs into several crores. Part of that sum, I believe, we can utilise for this

[Sir Syed Raza Ali.]

purpose. My friend Mr. Aney has just supplied me with certain figures, and I find on a reference to my own speech in this House on the 5th September, 1939, that the amount is 33 crores. Now, 33 crores is not a very large sum when one remembers that military expenditure has a knack of running into huge amounts; but still I take it that there will be no objection on the part of His Majesty's Government to India devoting some of this money to the establishment of a training school for our youngmen who are to be given air training.

Sir, the strength of the Indian Air Force properly so-called is 507. If you compare that figure with the Air Forces of other Dominions, you will find that we are in a hopeless position. For instance, take the case of Australia. Australia has a population of only 68 lakhs, and yet the strength of the Australian Air Force is 2,478. I am referring here to figures for the year 1935. I am sure the number has enormously increased since. Then take the case of Canada. Canada has a population of just over 11 million, and Canada has a strength taking into account both permanent and non-permanent branches of the Air Force, of 1842. Again these figures relate to 1935-36. Take the case of South Africa. South Africa has a total population of 98 lakhs, of whom only two million would be human beings properly so-called, because according to South African notions, the only civilized people are whitemen. Yet the strength of South African Air Force is 1966. If you take the population of these countries into consideration, you will find that they are tiny countries. Their Air Force strength, however, is enormous compared with the small Indian Air Force that we can claim as ours. The second method of strengthening the Indian Air Force that I would suggest this afternoon is this. If it is found on a careful examination of the whole problem—and I think it is time to examine the whole problem in its various aspects and bearings—that India even when helped by England is not in a position to incur the initial outlay that would be necessary for starting a training school, then I would reluctantly suggest that we should take advantage of the Empire Air Training Scheme which is going to be started in Canada.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): We have no place there.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: My Honourable friend says "we have no place there". Sir, we had no place there, but I think we will have a place there now. After all, remember a very great change has come over political opinions and political views of the people both in England and in India. Things are not what they were before the 9th January, 1940. A very important pronouncement has been made since. I do not think it is right for us to assume that that pronouncement was made only to be thrown into the waste paper basket. (Interruption by Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya.) I am sure, my Honourable friend will allow me to disagree. There is no reason why we should doubt the *bona fides* of that statement.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has got two minutes more.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: The second course that I would reluctantly recommend would be that we should take advantage of that Empire Air Training Scheme the centre of which is going to be in Canada. Of course, Canada

is at an inconveniently long distance from here. If we are to send our young men there they will have to be sent out from here to England and transhipped from England to Canada, which will mean heavier expenditure, more time and greater inconvenience. I would like to avoid that as much as possible. To begin with, I am for having an air training scheme in our own country. Failing that, let our young men be educated in England at Cranwell. I would again ask the House not to be full of doubts. As a matter of fact, if there has been fault on the side of England, I do not think we can say there has been none on our own side. One minute more, Sir, and I shall finish. In fact, life is full of surprises, but there is no greater surprise in the political life of India than this, that there are people who shout the loudest for independence and yet evince very little interest, if any at all, in vital problems relating to the defence of the country. It may be that it is possible for even inexperienced men when made provincial Ministers to manage or mismanage provincial affairs, but things become very different when you deal with affairs that have to be decided on a battlefield. A general, a colonel, requires long training, and, Sir, it is time that we seriously undertook the problem of giving air training to our young men and having an air force manned almost entirely by Indians for the defence of the country. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Resolution moved:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to strengthen the air defence of India by providing suitable air training for the Indian youth and establishing an auxiliary air force, commensurate with the size, population and requirements of the country, to be manned by Indians."

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott (United Provinces: European): Sir, I have every sympathy with the Resolution of my Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali, that Government should take steps to strengthen the Air Forces of India by providing suitable air training for the youth of India and, in this, I include domiciled Europeans, Anglo-Indians as well as Indians.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: All those who have their homes in India.

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: The only real difficulty is that of finance and I hope the Mover can get over that difficulty without taxation. We are still on an emergency taxation basis and have been since 1932 and we are informed that a new tax stares us in the face, namely, the Excess Profits Tax. There is no taxable margin left to provide for necessities.

Let us, however, examine what Government has done. There is a very small Indian Air Force, but, although small in number, it is remarkably efficient and should be extended at an early date. There is also an Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve. I have for the last three years been urging its formation, and although it was admitted as necessary, it has only recently been formed. The response to the appeal for about 500 air men was excellent. There were over 8,000 applications, unfortunately, of these, 5,600 were not suitable, and 2,400 have been or will be interviewed. Already 1,200 have been interviewed and have produced only 130 men for the Volunteer Reserve and 100 men for the Royal Air Force.

Mr. G. M. G. Ogilvie (Defence Secretary): I should like the Honourable Member not to be so detailed in his giving of numbers which at this juncture is not advisable.

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: My object in giving those numbers is to prove what a good response there has been. There are still 1,200 to be interviewed. The full requirements you will see have not been filled. The wastage is so great as the education, medical and eye sight tests are high and the men have to be skilled in engineering or electrical trades. It would seem from the figures that there is no necessity for panic to have more men recruited, but a great effort should be made to get the right type of men to offer themselves and I hope my Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali, can help the Defence Secretary by obtaining more and better recruits.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I undertake to do it.

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: I can assure him that the Air Force is a good school in which to learn a trade and I venture to say without fear of contradiction that a mechanic or electrician who joins the Air Force will at the end of the war command a better paid job in civilian employ.

You ask what steps Government are taking to train pilots and engineers. The Government subsidy to flying clubs comes to Rs. 1,75,000 and a further Rs. 51,000 is being spent in lowering flying costs to 84 selected candidates.

Mr. C. M. G. Oglvie: I must ask the Honourable Member not to give these numbers if he would be so good.

An Honourable Member: Where did you get these numbers?

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: They were given in the budget of last year.

Mr. C. M. G. Oglvie: I must ask the Honourable Member not to give numbers in the public interest.

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: There are a number of flying clubs each of which is training X number of pilots, Y number novices, and Z number who have a certain knowledge of flying. The subsidy given reduces the flying cost of the selected candidates from X Rs. per hour by Rs. 20 per hour for the training period which is a certain number of hours. The Government have also lent each of the flying clubs a training aeroplane which costs a certain sum of rupees. The total amount spent in assisting the youth of India to fly is a certain sum. One of the Port Flying Clubs had a certain number of applicants for some of its vacancies. I hope Government will be able to make larger provision in the next budget. The number of young men who can be trained is governed to a large extent by the number of machines available in India and the difficulty is to get the machines which are needed elsewhere owing to the war. If there should, however, be intensive war in the Air the wastage of men and machines will be enormous and in this lull which may precede the storm every opportunity should be taken to train the personnel. In peace time it takes a certain number of months to train a pilot but in the last war we had to make use of pilots with only a few months training. I do hope we shall not be forced in this war to use such raw material. I was glad to see that several Indians have been taken into the Royal Air Force for the duration of the war. There is one point I would like to bring to your attention and I hope my remarks will be brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Air. I understand that the Royal Air Force have

taken in a number of Indians, domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians and I presume that this is only for the duration of the war. I ask what will be their position at the end of the war? I wish Sir Henry Gidney were well enough to be here to put his community's case. The Afghan War, the South African War, the Great War on several fronts and many frontier wars have shewn that the Indian has plenty of pluck and grit. We hear everyday what the Dominions of Australia and Canada are doing in the way of Air training and I see no reason why India should not be allowed to participate and be given an opportunity to at least defend herself as far as the Air is concerned. The best way of defence is to be prepared and to be able to look after yourself if attacked. Must the whole of India be taken as wedded to a non-violence creed? My friends on my right are giving you many proofs that this is not so. Sir, my Group and I support the Resolution on general lines.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: Sir, I do not know whether to congratulate my Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali, on his Resolution or to sympathise with him in the fate that awaits his Resolution.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I will accept either.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: I know you are a great optimist and you go on hoping. My experience and I am sorry to say my belief is that so far as the training of Indians is concerned either for the purposes of the Army, Navy or the Air Force, the interests of England and India clash.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Not necessarily.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: They do. Why hide the truth. I know it that there is no keen desire on the part of those who govern this country, to train us. If we want independence, call it substance of independence, call it Dominion Status with or without the Statute of Westminster, the one argument that is placed before us is 'what about your defence? You cannot defend yourself'. But if you say train us for the defence of our country they say you are not fit and there are no funds. I went down on my knees and prayed that Indians be trained for the Army, Navy and the Air Force. With all the goodwill in the world, the argument that is always produced before us is the argument produced by my friend, the Honourable Mr. Ramsay Scott, that there is paucity of funds. I know war is going on now. There is an emergency and Government cannot easily find the money. At other times there are other schemes which the Government have on hand and they cannot spare money for our purposes. The truth is that there is no will and, therefore, no way. I want to tell you my own experience in this line. In March, 1938, I published a pamphlet and distributed it amongst the Members here and to other friends outside in the country. There I pleaded that war is going to take place in 1939-1940. I begged my countrymen and those in, whose hands our destiny lies to prepare us for the defence of the country. I told them that the best thing is to give us training for the Air Force, to make us air-minded and to do all that is possible to help us to defend our country. I said God forbid that there be a war, but if there is one we will be nowhere. Every Englishman will be required to defend England. As a matter of fact we know that what is going on today is only a nominal war and an economic warfare. Everyone knows that even England has not

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dared to drop a bomb on Germany and Germany has not dared to drop a bomb on England. They have been only dropping leaflets and carrying on propaganda. Not that they are interested in any propaganda or that they believe that that sort of propaganda is going to bring out anything, but the real fact is that if one country drops bombs on another country, there will be retaliation. Both the countries are vulnerable and the result will be that Industrial Centres will be wiped out. There will be a terrible loss of life and property. Suppose for argument's sake that Italy joins Germany. I know Italy is never going to join Germany but suppose it does. Then I want to know whether it would be possible for the British fleet to cross the Mediterranean or the Suez or to defend the shores of this country. Suppose Russia invades India. The Russian forces are within 500 miles of Gilgit and Afghanistan, what is to happen to us? (An Honourable Member: "Russia cannot fight even Finland.") Let snow disappear and Russia will finish Finland in fifteen days. I pleaded that in such a contingency we would not be able to defend ourselves, we will be nowhere, but no help was forthcoming. My friend, Mr. Ramsay Scott, has done a lot for aviation. He is the Vice President of the Flying Club in the United Provinces. He is the Vice-President of the Aero Club of India and Burma. All credit to him. He has been doing all that is possible but what has been the attitude of the Government of India? I went down on my knees and pleaded that our youths should be trained. I appealed to my esteemed friend, Mr. Ogilvie. He sent my scheme to the Royal Air Force Department. Comm. Peck, who was in charge, thought well of my scheme. He sent for me, discussed the scheme with me and said that mine was a very good scheme and that he was going to recommend it. He even sent a good note to the Defence Department. As soon as the Air Marshal landed here, I was phoned up and I was told that the Air Marshal was very much interested in my scheme. I saw the Air Marshal. He thought well of my scheme and I thought that the scheme would be blessed by the Government of India, I was hoping against hope that that would be done, I was led away, just as my Honourable friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali. I had forgotten the lessons of history, I believed that sad chapters of the past have been closed and I hoped that the Government of India was going to help me but it was not to be. I asked a few questions on the floor of the House and the Honourable Member—not of course the Army Secretary, he has been always most sympathetic, but the Honourable Member in charge of Communications replied that gliding was a mere sport and the Government was not going to waste money on gliding. Now, when England took to it, when the British Government began to subsidise gliding, when gliding institutes and clubs were started in all the counties of England, when England declared that training in gliding was the cheapest and the most economical way of making youths air-minded and giving them training when their experts declared that it was not only very cheap but that the youths trained in gliding turned out to be better pilots than those trained on aeroplanes, that youths can be sent up in the air in an aeroplane after 15 days training in a glider even then the Government did not do anything here. I pleaded before the Government of India that that "your own experts are declaring this thing, will you help me?" Then we met in conference, and I think you, Mr. Deputy President, yourself, were present at the conference. The Government spokesman told us that "if you do not import Germans and German machinery, then you might stand a chance of getting some subsidy." We agreed, we declared that we

had nothing to do with Germany or the Germans and that we were prepared to get British experts. We were told that "if you send for a British expert, you must pay Rs. 1,000 a month as salary". We agreed. I pleaded only that the Government should bear the cost of the salary. I went on in the belief that the Government was going to help us. Then other difficulties arose. But hoping against hope, I went on doing what I could. I arranged with an expert in England to come over here. He sent me a cable that he was willing to come on £ 40 a month. Then one of the officials of the Government of India wrote to me that the amount that I was willing to pay was not sufficient to maintain a European and I must increase the figure so that he might maintain a proper standard of living. I do not know what transpired, but by the next mail I got a letter from that expert demanding Rs. 1,000 salary, and he had previously been demanding only about Rs. 500.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: How did the Government official come to know what was happening between you and the expert?

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: I do not blame the Government or any official?

Sir Syed Raza Ali: How did he come to know of it?

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: I do not blame anybody, I am simply narrating facts. Then I was told that provided we agreed to act and live as a subordinate body to the Aero Club, we might get a subsidy. Some correspondence passed between us but nothing came out of it. I am afraid I may be divulging a secret, my Honourable friend, Mr. Ramsay Scott

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: Are you sure it is in the public interest to disclose such information?

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: I am simply praising you for the help you gave me.

Sir. Europeans as well as Indians came forward to help me of their own accord and they, in their own goodness, without a word to me, approached the official concerned here and placed our cause that some sort of help or subsidy should be given. I do not want to disclose the reply they got. If my friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali, had known that reply, he would not have moved this Resolution today. Sir, I have still been doing everything possible to get a glider so as to make our youths air-minded but, unfortunately, I have not yet succeeded, although I hope to succeed in spite of all that is being done. Fourteen Indian States have given me a subsidy and fourteen Ruling Chiefs have become our patrons. Some of the Provincial Governments have given us grants. I have remitted the money to England but on account of the freight and insurance charges and shipping difficulties, I have not been able to import gliders yet. But I want to tell my friends here that even if I cannot get gliders and experts from England, I hope and I have reason to believe that I will get gliders and experts from Japan and I have plans to train 20,000 youths in three years. I am doing all that is possible and I hope I will succeed some day. But, so far as the Government of India are concerned, in spite of the

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Defence Department being sympathetic, in spite of the Royal Air Force Head Quarters being sympathetic, Honourable Members who guide policies and look at things from political angles

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has got one minute more.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: I can say their attitude has been always one of opposition. My friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali, spoke about Canada and the empire training scheme. As soon as this scheme was launched, I raised the question whether any Indian was going to be trained. They are going to train twentyfive thousand youths in three years; they are going to spend money, they will be able to manufacture their own gliders and their own aeroplanes but even in 2,500 youths Indians have no place. Sir, I can assure the House that we can produce our own gliders, our own aeroplanes manufactured by Indians in India, but we are told we have not got the material, although the Himalayas have the heights and the altitudes where we can get all sorts of timber. In fact, we can get better timber than what they get in Alaska. But just as the Army Department does not get the right type of youths for making them Generals or Colonels and just as they do not get the right type of youths to be enrolled in their Navy and Royal Air Force, in the same manner they do not get the right type of timber in this country which can be given the shape of a glider or an aeroplane. We are told we cannot manufacture motor engines. The general practice all over the world, including England, Japan, Canada and America is that every manufacturer of aeroplanes is not also a manufacturer of motor engines that are required for an aeroplane. Generally, what these manufacturers do is that they manufacture the aeroplane and they import the engines from the manufacturers of motor engines who specialise in this line. I said all this to the Honourable Member of the Government of India. I can guarantee that the ordinary carpenter in this country can manufacture a glider which will be as good as that manufactured anywhere else. But my difficulty all along has been that if I get it manufactured by an ordinary carpenter and an ordinary artizan in this country, this Government of India will refuse to give me the certificate of airworthiness. I want my Honourable friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali, to take note of these facts and then to plead the cause of aviation. So far as I am concerned, I know that the Government of India is not going to do anything. Happen what may, it is not in their interest to train us or to create an Indian Air Force. They do not trust us: why then ask them to trust you? Time is in our favour: tide is in our favour. Let us hope that a time will come which will compel them in their own interest to train us or we ourselves will be so powerful that we will train ourselves in spite of them. That is the only thing that can happen in this country and that is the only thing possible in this country. But if my friends want to dream and continue to believe that because there has been a declaration that they are going to grant us Dominion Status, although no specific period is being mentioned and I know that, whatever may happen, Government is not going to declare when that time will come then I wish them luck and I wish them success and it is in this spirit that I commend the Resolution of my Honourable friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali, to the Members of this House.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, the Resolution moved is so simple, modest and urgent in its nature that I wonder if the Government of India is going to take up any attitude but that of sympathy and accept it as it stands. This Resolution is mainly confined to take early steps to strengthen the air defences of India by providing suitable air training for the Indian youths. It does not require much argument that in these days when there is a conflagration in the centre of the world and which threatens to spread over other continents than that of Europe, the Government of India should not fail to realise the extreme danger which threatens India in case of an attack on its borders.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) resumed the Chair.]

In the despatch that was published about the Chatfield Committee's report, they laid extreme emphasis on this. This is what they said:

"It is for these reasons that the despatch in section 12 lays extreme emphasis on the fact that recent developments have brought into far greater prominence India's potential vulnerability to attack in forms and from directions which would so vitally affect India's own well-being that they would demand her immediate co-operation in effective measures for defence of points outside India which are strategically essential to her security."

That is to say, the expert Committee which considered the defences of India only recently have emphasised two points. The first is that the Indian defences are not adequate. Let us face the facts bluntly and squarely. The second point was that the potential danger from the neighbouring countries is great and, therefore, early steps should be taken to ward off that danger so that at the time of need we may not be found wanting in our defences. While replying to the adjournment motion that was tabled by the Mover of this Resolution in September last, the Defence Secretary expressed the desire that he wants to see India self-sufficient in the matter of the manufacture of mechanical parts of the military armaments including the aeroplanes. But he said that it was too early to expect from the present state of industry in India that India can manufacture her own aeroplanes and other mechanised parts. The declaration of war has given stimulus to industry. Every country is trying to manufacture its own essential equipments so that reliance on outside help should be cut down to the very minimum. Therefore, the two factors which are needed at present and needed urgently are, first the preparations for manufacturing our own aeroplanes and other things and, secondly, to train our Indian youths in order to equip them with the responsibility of defending India's own border. It is really wonderful that the Government of India should not give their full attention to the second part of the case. We find that while air pilots, engineers and others are being trained hurriedly in thousands in other countries, very little is going on in India itself for training the pilots and other necessary man-power to man the air force of India. My friend, the Mover of this Resolution, has quoted figures from the speech of the Prime Minister of Great Britain showing that an attempt is being made to establish training camps and training schools in Canada, a country, which I should say, has no fear from outside aggression at all. Neither from the sea coast nor from the land borders have they got to be afraid of. I wonder why this base has been chosen for the training of air pilots for the British Army except this that reasons of race affinity compelled them to do so.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar: Non-Muhammadan); Racial bias.

Sardar Sant Singh: I would not call it racial bias, with due deference to my Honourable friend. Whatever it is, here in India the country is large, and at the same time we have very few Indians who have been trained as pilots so far. There is practically no activity going on to bring up the air force to an adequate number which may be considered safe for India's future. I remember having once put a question, seeking information from the Defence Department, whether it was a fact that some foreigners, Afghans were being trained as pilots in India at the cost of the Indian exchequer. Though full information was not given to the House, yet it was admitted that there were some such people. May I ask the Honourable the Defence Secretary whether it is not possible now to open centres for the training of pilots and for the necessary personnel for the air force in India? If it is, then why such steps are not being taken in hand immediately. It may be said that the Honourable the Defence Secretary may come forward with the reply that the money at the disposal of the Defence Department is not adequate to undertake this. May I ask the Honourable the Defence Secretary to state what steps they propose to take to adequately furnish the defence of India and in what way they propose to do. Can't they retrench expenditure from other sides and appropriate that money for the purpose of air force because, after all, as the modern warfare has shown, the air force is the most important arm of defence, more important than even the army and the navy.

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: The Delhi training centre has been allowed to go into liquidation by the Government of India.

Sardar Sant Singh: It is the most surprising thing. However what I mean to say is that the urgency of the problem calls for immediate action. The difficulty which the Government of India naturally feel is that as they purchase their equipment from outside and thus drain the money from this country and send it abroad, they cannot get adequate return in the form of taxation and they cannot provide for the defence of India. Whatever may be the reason the new taxation that is proposed to be levied in the form of excess profits cannot be justified on any ground unless the money is utilised for opening training centres for air pilots and for mechanising the equipment of the army in India. There is a relation between spending the money in India and getting it back in the form of taxes. But if the Government of India continue in their policy of sending Indian money outside and then demanding more money in the form of taxes from India, they are following a most unsound financial policy so far as India is concerned. I will ask a plain question from the Defence Secretary. Is there any political ground for not equipping India with adequate air force? I am putting this question very bluntly, because some of us feel that the air force is not being developed not because fit persons are not to be found in India to act as pilots but because of certain political considerations. I wish the Honourable the Defence Secretary clears this point in his reply.

Mr. M. S. Aney: He will give a political reply.

Sardar Sant Singh: His 'sincerity' I cannot doubt. It depends upon the nature of the reply which he gives. You cannot ask me beforehand what opinion I will hold after hearing his reply. I must wait and see.

The second point which I want to emphasise is this. I refuse to believe that in a country like India inhabited by 35 crores of people, there cannot be found physically fit men living who can act as pilots. I have not been able to understand and fully appreciate the point of view of those who laid down the qualifications for being trained as air pilots and those qualifications include a knowledge of English language as well. Why should it be so? The pilots trained in other countries may be literate, but why in India should you have this qualification as a condition precedent for training up pilots. From my experience of expert mechanics, expert motor drivers I can say that literacy qualification is not indispensable. They are illiterate and yet they are experts in the mechanical field. Why should you not open centres where physically fit, though illiterate, men are afforded opportunity for being trained as pilots of the Royal Air Force. The difficulty comes in when education is made a condition precedent for such training.

One more remark and I have finished. I understand there are very good pilots who have been trained from the civil aerodromes and yet they have not yet been absorbed in the air force in India. I will certainly suggest to the Defence Department to immediately employ all those who are fully qualified as air pilots from these civil aerodromes. With these words, I commend this Resolution for the acceptance of the House.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, there is no patriotic Indian who would not shed the last drop
4 P. M. of his blood if it came to the defence of his motherland. There is no patriotic Indian who would not like to have a very strong army—say 50 lakhs in number, a very strong navy with hundreds of battle-ships, a still stronger air force with tens of thousands of aeroplanes so that if the time came when we have to fight with Russia, we could meet her at her own game on our borders. There was a time when the war broke out that I thought that Russia would move forward her steam roller to the borders of India. But now circumstances have changed and the participation of Turkey on the side of the Allies—Britain and France—has changed the mid-eastern situation. So there is no danger of our having to grapple with Russia in defending India. But there are other potential enemies and we have to keep in mind that contingency. The demand therefore of my Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali, with regard to this aircraft and aviation question is a very modest one and I am sure the Defence Secretary will look upon it sympathetically. There is very little harm to Imperial interests in establishing a training school for Indian pilots in India which will give us six or seven or ten squadrons for defending India. Some of our friends say that the Britishers do not trust us and they will not have Indian pilots. I will not dwell upon that. But I should like to point out one thing. The Honourable the Mover opened his speech by saying that times have changed and the British Government have in so many words promised us Dominion Status, and so we must defend our country if we appreciate the responsibilities of Dominion Status. He seems to think that Dominion Status like a ripe apple has already fallen into his basket and, therefore, we, as members

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

of the British Commonwealth, must come forward with our army, navy and air force. I think that time has not yet come. Only the other day Gandhiji saw the Viceroy who assured him that the British Government had made up their mind to grant Dominion Status to India of the Statute of Westminster variety, after the war was over. But there were certain vital differences, not communal differences between Muslims and Hindus, but difference with regard to defences. Defence as a reserved subject is with the Government and as India is looked upon as the brightest jewel in the British Crown, in order to protect this bright jewel England would go to any lengths. She is more interested in defending India than either Sir Raza Ali or Sardar Sant Singh. Britishers will take very great care and shed the last drop of their blood to protect this jewel from Russia or Japan. So if you have Dominion Status, as the Viceroy has promised, in five minutes you can have ten thousand squadrons. But you have got nothing of the sort and now you pray and cringe and flatter. Our friends of the Congress Party are not here to take part in this debate, and I feel that their absence has made the proceedings of the House quite dull. However I as a Muslim am greatly interested in the result of the war. Turkey which is the leader of the Muslim nation throughout the world has with her allies Persia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and Arabia joined England and France. Turkey is in the same boat as England and the downfall of England means the downfall of Turkey which the muslim world will prevent at any cost. So it is my duty to help Britain and France. But I should like to help them as a free Indian and with the conviction that I have an army and navy of my own, that my industries and my social, political and cultural life and my material resources are at my command. With these brief remarks I commend this Resolution to the notice of the Defence Secretary in the earnest hope that he will treat it sympathetically and do something to start an institution in which Indians will be trained as airmen and pilots.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Sir, the lot of him who has to answer a Resolution in this House is, I feel, often a hard one in that he has very little idea of what the speakers or even what the Mover is going to say. And in this case I must say I was taken rather by surprise. I understood Sir Raza Ali's motion to mean, when I read it, that what he wanted was a large, presumably a very large, expansion of the Indian Auxiliary Air Force. But I find now that what he is asking for is the substitution of the Royal Air Force by regular Indian squadrons and the establishment of a flying training school in India with a view to strengthen that force to meet whatever demands may be made upon it. In the first place I must say that I view, and Government also view, the desire expressed by Sir Raza Ali and those who have supported this motion with the greatest possible sympathy; and if, as I propose to do, I point out certain difficulties in the path that must not be taken to show that I do not, and that Government do not, sympathise with it.

The House is probably bored by the constant repetition of the financial problem which at every step stares us in the face. But in this particular context it is of very great importance. A modern air force costs almost as much as a modern navy. The cost runs literally into hundreds of millions of pounds; and if you were to wish to equip India to face any

possible danger that might eventuate, then the task is frankly entirely beyond this country's powers. If, that is to say, India became the primary object of attack, the main object of attack of a first class power, she would, whatever her political position, have to rely upon imperial reinforcements and she would not rely in vain. As regards the position in which we find ourselves now, we can say that the preparations which we have made and the forces which we have at our disposal are sufficient, within the limitations allowed by the fortunate circumstances of India, to do all that we expect them and require them to do. Our defence forces have each their allotted task in accordance with the strategic requirements: all that we can hope to do with our very modest resources is to meet those and perhaps to have a little up our sleeve. But anything in the way of a vast expansion, which would be entirely unnecessary to meet the requirements which we normally even now envisage, would be absolutely beyond our powers to attain.

I have given some figures before in the House of costs, but perhaps there is no harm if I do so again. A modern bombing aeroplane costs Rs. 2½ lakhs, a fighter 1½ lakhs, and an army co-operation plane one lakh. A squadron consists of 12 aeroplanes, but in order to maintain your squadrons in war time you must have at least 100 and preferably at least 200 per cent. reserves, as aeroplanes are extremely expensable articles. During the war of 1914-18, one very famous squadron had as much as 80 per cent casualties. I am merely pointing out to the House the figures involved. The equipment of a single squadron costs 80 lakhs, and its recurring expenditure from 20 to 25 lakhs. These are big sums.

One of the main points made by Sir Syed Raza Ali was that of the air forces in India,—the Royal Air Force was disproportionately strong as compared with the Indian Air Force. Here, I must join issue with him when he says that the Indian Air Force is an auxiliary air force. It is not an auxiliary air force, it is a regular air force and is fit and capable of taking its part side by side with the Royal Air Force anywhere at any time. The Indian Air Force Squadron, as the House knows, is comparatively new. The first Indian officers emerged from Cranwell in late 1932, that is only seven and a half years ago. The Indian Air Force Squadron was definitely at the time in the nature of an experiment. The experiment has been pressed on as fast as our means and opportunities allowed us. It has been very considerably accelerated during the last year or so. The result has been extremely successful. The Indian Air Force Squadron is a squadron of which India may be proud. It is an admirable squadron. An enormous amount of time and trouble has been taken in preparing this beginning of the Indian national air force and it has been well worth the time and trouble taken. I think Members must, therefore, at least concede to the Royal Air Force that they have done their part well in starting the Indian Air Force on its way in the way in which they have done it.

Sir Syed Raza Ali's figures were rather old; and the position as regards the Indian Air Force Squadron is now very different. There are no British officers now in the squadron; it is entirely officered by Indians and is at present, and has been for the last eight or nine months, commanded by an Indian officer

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I do not want to interrupt my Honourable friend, but in order to give him an opportunity to explain, may I ask whether the

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information given in this yellow paper which bears the date, 1st January, 1939, is so hopelessly inaccurate or have radical changes been since introduced in the English and Indian personnel of the Indian Air Force? The numbers given are that out of a total of 38 officers, 26 are British and 12 Indian.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: I beg the Honourable Member's pardon. I think he must be looking at the wrong column. I think he will find in the apposite column of that book that there was only one British officer at that time in the Indian Air Force: he no longer exists in it now. There were a considerable number of British non-commissioned officers employed as high-grade mechanicians to teach their Indian comrades the finer points of an air-craft mechanician's duties and there are still a few. But those are the only British personnel left in the squadron. I am able to say that it has been decided to form a second Indian Air Force Squadron as soon as it possibly can be done. On the question of mechanicians, another of the reasons for the necessarily slow growth of an Indian Air Force is the fact (a) that it takes some four years to train an air force mechanic in his highly specialised duties which entail working to a high degree of precision, and (b) that this country does not provide a large number of skilled workmen who can readily be drawn upon. It provides some but not a very great number. Highly industrialised countries can draw upon a large pool of skilled labour who, in a comparatively short time, can learn specialised tasks of an air force mechanic. India is not in that position. It takes, without exaggeration, 12 ground personnel to keep one fighting machine in the air; and the problem of finding and training sufficient mechanicians is, therefore, a very real one. Though India does produce very good mechanics when given the proper degree of training, there are not in existence in the country facilities for training large numbers of them

Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya: The Government has been discouraging the training of ground engineers and mechanics of this type.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Then Sir Syed Raza Ali was inclined to say that it was a pity that the Royal Air Force was posted here only for a short time, and when they went away they took away their valuable experience with them, and the position, therefore, was in his opinion, worse than in the case of Civil Servants and others who spent their 20 or 30 years in this country. There again I must join issue with him. Flying conditions in India are very different from flying conditions in practically any part of Europe. It is, and, in case of need, it would be, an immense advantage to India to receive as Imperial re-inforcements, not airmen and pilots who knew nothing of these peculiar conditions, but those who do, and owing to the short period which they spend here, the turn over is rapid, and there is a substantial part of the Royal Air Force who have had this invaluable experience. However, as I have said, we agree entirely with Sir Raza Ali when he says that the object should be to raise the strength of our Indian Air Forces first to two and then to three or four squadrons as it becomes possible to do so. As I said just now, we hope to start the second with the minimum of delay.

As regards the Auxiliary Air Force, a very great deal has been said. The various authorities and bodies connected with flying have co-operated in

the most admirable manner. The Air Force, Communications Department, Civil Aviation and the Flying Clubs have all collaborated in the most excellent manner, and we have been able to use all the resources we have in this country in the most efficient and economical way. The result has been that we have been able, not only to form an Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve but it has become ready for actual duty. For some years before the war, the formation of an Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve was being actively examined. We were held up by financial difficulties, and more particularly by the fact that we had no machines for it and no money to buy them with, and though there is no doubt that India can produce a large number of good and gallant pilots and observers, they are no use whatever without aeroplanes to put them in. We must have the aeroplanes. Then we had a windfall. His Majesty's Government agreed to rearm a portion of the Air Forces in India, and the aeroplanes in use become available for our volunteer reserve. In addition, His Majesty's Government have found a part of the other expenditure entailed by the formation of that force. Now these pilots and mechanics were to have been trained in the volunteer units, but owing to the necessity for auxiliary training as rapidly as possible, one of our regular Air Force Squadron was converted into a training squadron, and the pilots and observers are receiving their training there. At the same time a technical training school for mechanics was established at Ambala, and both are working to capacity, and from time to time there are fresh admissions. In addition, some Indian pilots have been sent to be trained at the nearest large Flying Training School. We have, therefore, done, I think, as well as we possibly could do with the means available to us. The Flying Clubs meanwhile are training both beginners and members who have had flying experience. Owing to a subsidy from Government, this flying training is carried out at an immensely lower cost to the trainee than would otherwise have been the case. Those who have had no flying experience at all are being taught flying very cheaply (for them). Those who have had some experience are being given a specialised course of instruction to bridge part at least of the gap between civil and military aviation and are being taught aerobatics and night flying. This course of training is given on condition that the persons undertaking it are eligible to enter the Air Force Reserve or the Royal Air Force or the Indian Air Force, that they are medically fit, and that they guarantee that they will enter the force if required to do so. We hope, therefore, to have, as these pilots are absorbed in the forces, a succession of batches undergoing this training who will be ready to take their places with the least possible delay.

Mr. M. S. Aney: What is the number undergoing that training?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: The exact number I cannot give in public. I am quite prepared to inform the Honourable Member in private. The result is, in brief, that within the limitations due to our limited resources, we have done and are doing a great deal, in fact I think we can say we are doing everything, to ensure, as far as in us lies, the air defence of India, and if need be, we can produce a reserve of well trained pilots and mechanics who would be able to man and maintain the service air craft in time of war. That, I think is no small achievement, all things considered.

[Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie.]

As regards the formation of a flying training school of large size in India, as Sir Raza Ali has said, that would be a very expensive proposition, and I think I have said enough to show what we have done to avoid having to spend the money on that. We have used the resources which we had already in hand. Whether it will become necessary to establish such a flying training school in India or not, I cannot at the moment say. It may well be necessary. For the present, we are getting on with what we have.

As regards joining the Empire training scheme of Canada, it must be realised that that is meant for trained pilots for service, mainly at least, in the war in Europe. And to send our young men over there and bring them back here would be, in the circumstances, extremely uneconomical, even though there were places for them. If, on the other hand, the Empire requires young men from India to go and join in the warfare which is now going on there—and which, I think I must contradict my Honourable friend, Mr. Krishna Kant Malaviya, is a war that is not merely economic—I have no doubt that they would be welcomed. It is true that Indians and Anglo-Indians in England are eligible for admission to the Royal Air Force but there is no Indian Air Force in England, and as far as I can see at present we want all that we are getting to meet the possible requirements of Indian defence. At present there does not seem to be a very large surplus. My Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali, said that in the Dominion Air Force an Englishman would not be admitted, he would have to be a subject of that Dominion. That I may say is also the case in India. No Englishman would be admitted to the Indian Air Force, he may be attached to it as an instructor but he will not be admitted as a member.

Mr. F. E. James (Madras: European): Not even the Scotchman?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Not even in the case of Scotchmen will an exception be made. I hope what I have been able to say in the way of explanation of what we are doing, can do and propose to do, will be satisfactory to the House. I should be glad if Sir Raza Ali could, in view of what I have been able to say, see his way to withdraw his Resolution, as, though I sympathise with him, there are practical difficulties for the moment in the way of its definite acceptance.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: May I know what the Honourable Member is doing with the assets of the A. T. C. which he has bought up?

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: That is a big question. I think I can give you information about it, but not at the moment.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I had thought that the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, Sir Syed Raza Ali, was one with which the Government would not simply show its sympathy, but would readily accept it or do something like that, considering the circumstances in which it was moved by my Honourable friend. As I had hoped like that, I must confess that the reply given by the Defence Secretary in sympathetic tones had ultimately left on my mind nothing but the impression of complete disappointment. What the Mover demanded in the Resolution

has been practically ruled by the Defence Secretary as something impossible for the Government to do for the time being; that is what his reply exactly comes to. The Defence Secretary has told us what the Government have done, and what they propose to do, but the very thing which the Resolution demanded, namely, to do something "to strengthen the air defence of India by providing suitable air training for Indian youths and establishing an auxiliary air force, commensurate with the size, population and requirements of the country, to be manned by Indians"—this, he thinks, is an achievement not possible for the Government to make at the time considering the resources at their disposal. Not only that, but he has further told us that so far as India's air defence is concerned, it will have to depend mainly, if not exclusively, upon the Royal Air Force.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: On a point of personal explanation. Might I point out that the Resolution moved by Sir Syed Raza Ali was very different from that set down; the question of auxiliary air force was given a different meaning by him. The Auxiliary Air Force has been started and is running and is adequate for its purposes.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I know that the Honourable Member has given us in his statement some idea of what is being done for the expansion of the Auxiliary Air Force, but the picture that he has left on my mind is not exactly the same which the Honourable the Mover has got in his mind, namely, that it should be commensurate with the size, population and requirements of the country. That is something different from the scale at which the admission is being made by the Government of India today even in the matter of the Auxiliary Force. The most disappointing part of the Defence Secretary's statement was when he said that, so far as India was concerned, she would have to rely mainly on the Imperial air force for her defence, and, of course, there was that further statement to soothe us that she would not rely in vain. It may be so, I hope it is so, but is it creditable for any country that it shall have to rely for its defence upon an alien force like that,—I use the word "alien" not in a bad sense, but in the sense that it is a non-national air force. But when that time comes, what is the guarantee that the Imperial Air Force will not be sufficiently engaged in defending the centre of the Empire itself? The need for India's air defence would arise at the time when the Imperial Air Force will find itself completely engaged and the whole country will be practically left without defence. That is a situation which my Honourable friend does not visualise. If a situation like that is not to arise at all, the question of India's defence will never arise also in my opinion. The question of India's defence will arise only when this country is invaded by some foreign power and we have to defend ourselves. That invasion during the course of the present war will be possible when the British Air Force and other forces which are in Europe will be so engaged that the British Government will not be able to divert any section of them for the defence of this country. Now, in a situation like that, what is the arrangement that the Government are making to help the Indian people? The question is being seriously put to the Government of India by responsible members of this House. We say that there is a danger like that and the country is wholly unprepared to meet a danger of that kind. The main difficulty which the Honourable Member has pointed out now, and it has been pointed out before also is the question of finance. In the debate on the adjournment motion moved by my friend, Sir Raza Ali, it was pointed out that the

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cost involved in providing an adequate air force was beyond the resources and capacity of this country to incur. Now, Sir, it means that it is never possible for India to be self-sufficient in the matter of defence at all and therefore India must for all time to come rely upon Great Britain for its defence and that it shall depend only on such financial support as Great Britain may be able to give to India. I am afraid this is not the way to prepare the country even for dominion status. If the Government of India is not in a position to husband its resources in such a way as to make it possible for this country to gradually build up its navy and air force, then it is certainly not preparing the country for dominion status or any kind of autonomous condition at all. Countries smaller than India have been able to build up their own air force. Countries with very much more limited resources have been able to make greater progress than we have been able to make. The real point is that the Government of India have not made any serious effort to tackle this problem and is at present at least not inclined to tackle this problem seriously at all. The other difficulty that has been pointed out is that this is not the proper time to take up this question. If this is not the proper time, then I ask when is the proper time to take it up. The present war as we see it is being fought mainly by aeroplanes, bombers and fighters and so on, as well as by the navy to some extent. The army, at least up to this time, does not seem to be active at all. What will be the case in any war if India might find herself actively engaged by the enemies' air force? The statement made by the Honourable the Defence Secretary has left only one impression on Members of this House, namely, that India is in that case entirely helpless and the Government of India is not in a position to render any help. They plead inadequate resources of this country as well as want of proper material, want of a state of industrialisation in which alone efficient and skilled workers are available. All these difficulties are pleaded by them. I ask—is Government prepared to make an earnest beginning at all in this direction. Do they think that with the slow progress they are making now it will be ever possible for India to play its proper part in any war in which she might find herself actively engaged? Suppose war is actively carried on both in India and in Europe simultaneously, does the Defence Secretary think that India will be able to take up her defence adequately and successfully without a proper development of the Indian Air Force? That is my question to him.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie: Yes.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I only wish that his "Yes" may come out to be true. The position, however, seems to be very difficult and dismal. You must try to use your ingenuity in such a way as to make the most of the resources available in this country. You have all the requisites for the building of aeroplanes in this country. You have got all the materials required for ship-building. You plead the cost of foreign factory owners. If you do all these things in India, you can do them much more cheaply. You have got cheap labour and all the raw materials required and if you get the proper mechanics and if you make these machines on a large scale, I am sure the thing will be done much more cheaply and the cost which frightens you now is not a serious factor at all. It is only a question of

the necessary will to do it. Nations are not built by being afraid of difficulties but by making a serious effort to overcome them. I thought that the British Government and the Government of India particularly will see the need for making a supreme effort to overcome these difficulties and equip this country with a strong navy and a strong air force. In fact, that was the object with which the Resolution was moved by my Honourable friend, Sir Raza Ali. I am afraid the reply of the Government of India is not re-assuring. I support the Resolution and I hope that my friend will press it to a division if the Government oppose it.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: My position is an extremely difficult one. I find myself, to use a colloquial expression, between the devil and the deep sea. My friends on this side tell me that I am hopelessly optimistic in believing that I can persuade the Government to do anything reasonable. If this motion is opposed by the Government Benches, my friends will say and very rightly "didn't we tell you so before?" That is the position so far as my own friends are concerned.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Who is the devil and which is the deep sea?

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I leave it to Mr. Aney to decide which is the devil and which is the deep sea. Coming to the Government Benches, I must say that the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ogilvie, has been conciliatory. That is the sort of speech that I used to listen to about the year 1913-14 when we, the elected Members of Legislatures, used to be helpless on-lookers of the activities of the Government Benches. We ourselves had no power, at that time.

An Honourable Member: Have we got any power?

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Not much in this House, it is true. In those days, if a word of sympathy fell from the lips of any official Member, we prized it as something which should be treasured up for years to come. Sir, things have changed entirely now. Sympathy does not now count. I do not mean to examine a gift horse too closely in the mouth, but let me tell my Honourable friend, Mr. Ogilvie, that the sympathy from the Official Benches has ceased to have any fascination now. What people want now is action, deeds, results and achievement: these are the things that count now. I am sure Mr. Ogilvie means what he says, *viz.*, he has, while speaking on behalf of Government, offered to me his greatest possible sympathy in the effort that I am making through this Resolution to transfer the air control to Indians. But that sympathy, as I pointed out, does not come to much.

And now before I deal with my Honourable friend, Mr. Ogilvie, once more, let me say a few words in passing about the various remarks that were made by Honourable Members more or less on this side of the House in the course of the debate. My Honourable friend, Mr. Ramsay Scott, had a fling at me when he said, "well, so far as India is concerned"—these are not his words, but what he said comes to this, "India is a huge country, a big country; your numbers are overwhelming, but what about your quality? Twelve hundred young men were interviewed by a certain selection committee and not more than one hundred of them were found fit to take air training". Indeed, my Honourable friend says—"I do not

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attach"—practically this is what he says—"I do not attach importance to quantity, what I want is quality." Well, all I can say is that if Mr. Ramsay Scott will persuade the Government Benches to accept the spirit of my Resolution, not the very letter, I can undertake to give him any amount of suitable young Indians who will be found very fit to take air training. I told him this before and I repeat the offer now. Now, my friend, Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya, gave a harrowing account of his sad experience with the powers that be. He thinks that it is hoping beyond hope to expect this Government to do anything definite and tangible in the interests of the country. Now, Sir, I am an optimist.

An Honourable Member: What about voting?

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Yes, I am an optimist, and not only do I want my Resolution to be voted upon, but I want the Government Benches to accept my Resolution. No doubt I would like this Resolution to be voted upon today. I do not know whether I am required to finish my speech before 5 o'clock

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has five minutes more to go on.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I will finish within five minutes, Sir. I am afraid I ought to have taken up the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ogilvie, earlier. All I want to say is this that, so far as the suggestion for the withdrawal of my Resolution is concerned, I cannot accept that. May I make a sporting suggestion to the Government Benches? If they are in real sympathy with my Resolution but see a number of difficulties that cannot be overcome at present, let them abstain from voting and let the rest of the House divide on it.

Mr. O. M. G. Ogilvie: I quite agree.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Sir, my Honourable friend is willing, I thank him for that, and I resume my seat.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to take early steps to strengthen the air defence of India by providing suitable air training for the Indian youth and establishing an auxiliary air force, commensurate with the size, population and requirements of the country, to be manned by Indians."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 8th February, 1940.