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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

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SEVENTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1943



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Monday, 8th March, 1943.

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.

MEMBERS SWORN:

Major General Ernest Wood, C.I.E., M.C., M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official);

Mr. Venilal Tribhovandas Dehejia, M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

PRIVATE HOUSES LEASED BY GOVERNMENT IN DELHI.

252. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member kindly state the number of private houses leased by Government in the different areas in Delhi, e.g., New Delhi, Notified area, Karol Bagh, Darya Gunj, etc., separately?

(b) When were the first and the last houses leased in each area?

(c) Is it a fact that all houses were leased before the winter season began? If not, how many were leased after the beginning of the winter season?

(d) On what basis is the rent paid by Government to the owners of these buildings, how were the houses classified for purposes of allotment and how were they allotted according to that classification?

(e) In how many cases were persons eligible for a lower type allotted a higher type, and why?

(f) How is the rent charged for these houses from the allottees?

(g) Is it a fact that it cannot be more than 10 per cent. of their pay?

(h) When were the first and the last houses occupied in each area, separately, during 1942-48?

(i) Is it a fact that several houses are still vacant?

(j) How much loss have Government incurred by the difference in payments to owners as a whole and the actual rents realized from the tenants?

(k) How much loss have Government incurred by the houses remaining vacant for months?

(l) Were Government not aware of the probable demands?

(m) Is it a fact that in certain cases rents paid to owners were more than the rents realized by them immediately prior to their leasing to Government? If so, why, and who is responsible for this loss and what action do Government propose to take against the officers responsible for this?

(n) What do Government propose to do for the next year?

(o) Will they still require more houses on lease or will they release some out of those already leased?

(p) Are Government prepared to have an Enquiry Committee to look into the leasing of houses in the past to allay any suspicion that Government were put to unnecessary loss due to the negligence of officers and want of proper estimate of news?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) and (b). A statement containing the information asked for is laid on the table of the House.

(c) No. Forty six houses were leased after the commencement of the winter season.

(d) Government have paid the "fair rent" as determined under the provisions of the New Delhi Rent Control Order, 1939.

Flats in houses suitable for allotment to officers were classified as those suitable for officers with wives and families, and those suitable for officers with

wives only and were allotted accordingly in accordance with the principle that the houses carrying higher rental were allotted to higher paid officers. Houses suitable for clerks were not classified and were allotted in accordance with the abovementioned principle.

(e) None. The houses were not divided into types but the principle "higher rented accommodation for higher paid officer" was always followed in allotting available houses.

(f) Rent is calculated in accordance with the rules and is recovered from the allottees at ten per cent. of the emoluments or the full rent whichever is less.

(g) Yes; ten per cent. of emoluments and not pay.

(h), (j) and (k). The information asked for is not readily available and its collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war-time. It is impossible that in a large housing estate all houses will be full all the time—some loss is bound to occur from occasional vacancies and from the operation of the ten per cent. rule.

(i) None of the leased houses in New Delhi and Darya Gunj are vacant and only four suites of accommodation suitable for officers and three suites of accommodation suitable for clerks are vacant in Karol Bagh.

(l) Government were fully aware.

(m) The rents paid were those fixed by the Rent Controller. So far as is known, in cases where houses had previously been leased, these did not exceed rents previously paid. The latter parts of the question do not arise.

(n) and (o). Government are not in a position to give a definite answer. It is probable that Government will want more houses.

(p) No. In view of my reply to other parts of this question, this does not seem to be necessary.

STATEMENT.

| | | |
|--------------------|--|----------------------|
| (a) New Delhi area | 122 bungalows and flats. | |
| Notified area | 8 bungalows. | |
| Karol Bagh | 143 flats (including accommodation suitable for clerks). | |
| Darya Gunj | 34 flats (suitable for clerks only). | |
| (b) | First house leased on | last house leased on |
| New Delhi | 1-4-41 | 2-2-43 |
| Notified area | 1-6-41 | 31-12-42 |
| Karol Bagh | 7-7-42 | 15-1-43 |
| Darya Gunj | 15-8-42 | 25-10-42 |

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know why some of the houses are lying vacant; are they not required by officers and clerks?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: There must be some temporary reason of which I am not at present aware.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is there a demand for more houses for clerks or officers, or not? Or have you got a full complement?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I must have notice of that question.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact that Government had to provide so many tents for the accommodation of officers and other people?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That is quite so.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: This shows that sufficient number of houses are not available.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Yes.

ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO KHALSA YOUNGMEN'S ASSOCIATION, SIMLA/DELHI.

253. *Sardar Sant Singh: With reference to the answer to starred question No. 809, of the 1st April, 1942, regarding the grant of land in New Delhi to institutions, will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state how long it would take to allot a piece of land asked for by the Khalsa Youngmen's Association, Simla/Delhi, in their application submitted to Government in December, 1940, and what is this delay due to?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Honourable Member is referred to the reply given to

part (b) of his starred question No. 309 on the 1st April, 1942. The question of policy to be adopted for allotting land in New Delhi to such institutions is still under consideration.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if it is a fact that Khalsa Young Men's Association, Delhi was given to understand in reply to my questions put on the 1st of April, 1942, that their case will be considered on the same ground as it was in the case of other communities?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: If there was any correspondence with the Khalsa Young Men's Association it must have been from the Chief Commissioner, not from the Government of India.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if the Honourable Member is prepared to send for that correspondence and take action accordingly?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I can tell the Honourable Member that we shall not decide the Khalsa Young Men's Association case until we have decided the general principles. There are some 26 applications from institutions and obviously we cannot decide one or two until we have settled the general principles.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if it is a fact that some communities have been allotted land by the Government of India?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: A good many sites have been allotted in the past but the time has come when with increased pressure on the land available we have to reconsider the principles on which we have been acting.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I ask if Hindus and Muslims have got sites allotted? If so, why not the Sikhs? The requirements of the same community under different institutions may be different, but as regards communities, the Sikh community is being ignored on that point.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I think one site has been allotted to the Sikhs within recent years and no sites have been allotted to any community recently.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I know if it is not a fact that the Sikh community owns more property in New Delhi than any other community?

Sardar Sant Singh: Excepting Dr. Sir Zia Uddin.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I have got none.

PAUCITY OF SIKH ASSISTANT SURGEONS IN DELHI.

254. ***Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) With reference to the reply to unstarred question No. 46, of the 7th March, 1942, regarding the avenue of promotion for Assistant Surgeons, will the Secretary, for Education, Health and Lands please state the reasons for the reduction in the number of Sikh Assistant Surgeons in Delhi and is he aware that out of the seven Assistant Surgeons and three Civil Surgeons, there is not a single Sikh?

(b) Is he aware that the long established practice to keep a Sikh Doctor in the Willingdon Hospital, New Delhi, has recently been done away with?

(c) Will he please state if he proposes to take steps to see that the old practice is maintained and that a whole-time Sikh Doctor is attached to the Willingdon Hospital? If not, why not?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) There has been no reduction in the number of Sikh Assistant Surgeons in Delhi. The first part of the question therefore does not arise. The statement in the second part of the question is not correct. There is one Sikh Assistant Surgeon.

(b) There has usually been a Sikh doctor on the staff of the Willingdon Hospital in the past, but the appointments there have not been reserved for members of any particular community.

(c) Government cannot undertake to provide at all times separate doctors for each community on the staffs of hospitals.

TOUR OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ARCHÆOLOGY TO RAMNAGAR DURING LAST WINTER.

255. ***Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt** (on behalf of **Sir Syed Raza Ali**): (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state how long the present Director General of Archæology has, since the 1st November,

1942, been at Simla, his official headquarters?

(b) For how many months, since the 1st November, 1942, has the Director General been at Ram Nagar and Bareilly District?

(c) Was there any occasion when the official headquarters of the Director General of Archaeology were in Delhi previous to the present cold weather when he spent more than twelve days at Ram Nagar? If so, when?

(d) Is it not a fact that the excavation work at Ram Nagar was in the charge of Mr. Ghose, who is still carrying it on?

(e) Was any complaint in writing received by the Honourable Member to the effect that Mr. Ghose was not doing the work in a satisfactory manner? If so, when, and what orders were passed by him thereon?

(f) Is there any other head of a department doing work unconnected with war who has been allowed to absent himself from Simla during the present cold weather for anything like the length of time for which the present Director General of Archaeology has prolonged his stay at Ram Nagar?

(g) Do heads of departments of the rank of the present Director General of Archaeology submit their tour programmes for the sanction or approval of the Honourable Member? Was such sanction or approval given to the Director General to stay indefinitely at Ram Nagar?

(h) What is the policy of the Government of India with regard to the heads of departments coming down from Simla during the cold weather to undertake work for months in the plains which was or is being done hitherto by other competent officials?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) For twenty three days up to the end of February, 1943.

(b) For one month and 18 days (up to the end of February, 1943).

(c) No. The second part of the question does not arise.

(d) The Director General of Archaeology personally supervises the excavation work at Ramnagar. Mr. Ghosh, Assistant Superintendent, directs the work under the supervision of the Director General.

(e) No. The second part of the question does not arise.

(f) Information regarding the period of absence from Simla of other heads of departments is not readily available.

(g) No. The second part of the question does not arise.

(h) The question does not arise in this case as no officer with the requisite training and experience was available for supervision of the excavation work.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member, if it is not the duty of the Director of Archaeology to inspect these works from time to time?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes, Sir. We consider it very definitely one of his most important duties.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is the time allowed to him at his discretion or is there any time fixed to look into any particular excavation?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: It must be a matter within his own discretion.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact, as it appears from the question, that he has chosen the winter for touring in order to avoid residing in Simla in winter?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: We regard it a suitable time for inspecting excavations when such work is going on.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Does not excavation work go on during summer?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I do not think so, Sir.

RISE IN COTTON YARN PRICES.

256. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Will the Honourable Member representing the Commerce Department be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India's attention has been drawn to the phenomenal increase in the market prices of cotton yarn manufactured by the mills in India since May 1942;

- (b) whether Government are aware that the rise in yarn prices bear no relation to the rise in the prices of cotton or the rise in the manufacturing costs; and
- (c) whether Government have under consideration any scheme for the control of yarn prices?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: (a) and (b). The answer is in the affirmative.

(c) Certain proposals for the control of yarn prices have been made to the Government of India. They are under examination.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if there has been any proposal to appoint a Yarn Controller sometime about January/February 1942, arising out of the two conferences held in Delhi?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: There was a proposal of that character.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if the *Indian Information*, a Government publication, published on the 15th May, 1942, said that a Yarn Controller was going to be appointed and that a scheme of licensing yarn dealers was contemplated by Government?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I think, Sir, as far as I am aware, that the sort of information which the Honourable Member has given to me is correct.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask that that particular journal gave the information that people who were not regular dealers in yarn and were casually carrying stocks, will not be licensed to deal in yarn and would do well to dispose of the stocks before control comes into operation.

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I do not know, Sir.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if the Government will find out whether any people have suffered as a result of the information given in the *Indian Information* on the 15th May, 1942.

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I do not see how the people could have suffered on account of the information published in this particular journal.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Here is a Government publication. It has warned people who are not regular dealers in yarn to dispose of their stock of yarn on account of the Government control orders which are to be issued. As a result of this many people who were stocking yarn sold out the yarn at prices much below the ruling rate. I want to know whether Government are aware of this fact, because the notice which issued in the *Indian Information* must necessarily be of Government origin.

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I do not know whether Government have authorised any information to be published that is likely to affect harshly the interests referred to.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: In view of the fact that import of foreign yarn has practically ceased, and also in view of the fact that the cottage industry depends entirely on the yarn produced in this country, will the Government now look after this particular business and control the yarn at moderate prices to the cottage industry?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: We have already appointed a Yarn Controller who is examining all the proposals in this connection.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will you please explain what is meant by "Controller"? Our meaning is that he stops almost all trade. What do you mean by "Controller"?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: The idea of a Controller is to regulate supplies to the most essential needs.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask whether a Yarn Commissioner was appointed in Madras more than a year back?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I do not know definitely, but I do believe that an officer has been employed, who is also a yarn controller.

REPORT OF THE HANDLOOM FACT FINDING COMMITTEE.

257. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Will the Honourable Member representing the Commerce Department be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Handloom Fact Finding Committee has submitted its report to Government; if so, when;
- (b) whether Government propose to publish the report; and
- (c) what action do Government propose to take on the recommendations?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: (a) Yes; the report was submitted to the Government on the 3rd February, 1943.

(b) and (c). These are under the consideration of Government.

MACHINERY FOR PRICE CONTROL IN DELHI.

258. *Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali: (a) Will the Honourable Member representing the Food Department please state the machinery set up in Delhi for controlling and regulating prices of foodstuffs, etc.?

(b) When was the above machinery set up?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware of any other agency that was set up, or is proposed to be set up, to check corruption and mal-practices on the part of the control staff?

Major-General E. Wood: (a) and (b). It is not clear what the Honourable Member means by "the machinery set up in Delhi for controlling and regulating the prices of foodstuffs, etc.". Presumably he desires to have information regarding the staff employed on control work. About a year ago, when it was first felt that special measures were necessary to control the supply and distribution of certain commodities in Delhi and their prices, the work was entrusted to the Superintendent of Industries, and he was gradually given a special staff to enable him to deal with it. Later on when it was found that the work was increasing, the services of a special Extra Assistant Commissioner were obtained, and he was put in charge of this subject under the Deputy Commissioner, Delhi from the 2nd February, 1943.

(c) No.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if any Advisory Committee or any persons are associated with the Assistant Commissioner for this work?

Major-General E. Wood: I regret I have no information.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Does the Honourable Member propose to answer part (a) of the question with reference to the "etc."? May I know whether he has any information regarding the position of coal supplies in Delhi?

Major-General E. Wood: I have no direct information. I am afraid I cannot say what "etc" means.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member whether he will consider the question of associating some committee or some persons, who are competent, with this Assistant Commissioner?

Major-General E. Wood: I will put the suggestion before the proper authority.

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali: Does the Honourable Member not know what is considered necessary like foodstuffs, such as coal, etc.?

Major-General E. Wood: If I am to give information on any particular point then definition of that point is necessary.

SUPERINTENDENT OF INDUSTRIES IN DELHI.

259. *Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali: (a) Will the Honourable Member representing the Commerce Department please state who was the Superintendent of Industries in Delhi in 1942?

(b) Is it a fact that this man was also entrusted with other work in addition to his official duties? If so, what other work, or works, were entrusted to him?

(c) Was he doing any work for the Delhi C. I. D. Police also?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: (a) Sardar Sahib Sardar Mehtab Singh.

(b) The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The answer to the second part is that, pending the appointment of other officers, he was entrusted with work in connection with supplies, fixation of prices and arrangements for the distribution of supplies of foodstuffs.

(c) No, Sir.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Am I to understand that this Superintendent of Industries is also Superintendent of other items, e.g., coal.

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I have already answered that question.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: I do not follow what my Honourable friend has said.

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I have already answered it. If the Honourable Member wants I will read it again.

(The Honourable Member read over the answer.)

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

FAILURE TO PROSECUTE THE EUROPEAN PASSENGER RESISTING OCCUPATION OF THE RESERVED SEAT BY DEWAN BAHADUR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have received notice of a motion for adjourning the business of the House, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Railway authorities to prosecute the European passenger resisting all attempts of Dr. Dewan Bahadur A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliyar, Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University, and the Station Superintendent and the Inspector of Railway Police to enable him to occupy the seat reserved for him in a first class compartment and thus detaining the train for nearly half an hour to the great inconvenience caused to the public and Dewan Bahadur Mudaliyar himself.

It seems to me that adjournment motions of this character are getting rather frequent. It is very unfortunate that such incidents should occur, but I should hardly think that every incident like that can be brought up here in order to adjourn the business of the Assembly. Anyhow, does the Honourable Member in charge wish to say anything?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): I have no information at all about this alleged incident, except the report in one newspaper this morning. There is no certainty that it is any more correct than the recent incident in connection with Mr. Aney which was raised by the same Honourable Member the other day. There is no information that suitable action is not being taken by the proper department against the gentleman referred to if the report is true; and in any case . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): When did this incident take place?

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): It is reported in today's paper.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I want to know when the incident took place.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Very recently. The date is given as the 4th of March in the paper; but with reference to the answer given by the Honourable Member about Mr. Aney.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: To a great extent the information regarding Mr. Aney's incident is true as far as I could gather from the information recently received . . .

Mr. President: (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. I rule that the motion is out of order: it is neither urgent nor of sufficient public importance to justify the adjournment of the business of the House.

AMENDMENT OF THE COORG MOTOR VEHICLES RULES.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor (Secretary, Posts and Air Department): Sir, I lay on the table a copy of Notification No. B-1-2858 (9)/42, dated the 9th January, 1943, issued by the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, amending the Coorg Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940.

The Chief Commissioner of Coorg Notification No. B-1-2858(9)/42, dated Mercara, the 9th January, 1943.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 68 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 (IV of 1939), the Chief Commissioner is pleased to make the following amendment in the Coorg Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, issued with his notification No. R. F. 43/121-39, dated the 26th March, 1940, the same having been previously published as required by sub-section (1) of section 133 of the said Act :

Amendment.

For clause (h) of rule 43 of the said rules the following shall be substituted :

"(h) A non-official member of the Provincial Transport Authority shall receive travelling allowance at the rates admissible, and subject to the conditions applicable, to a Government servant of the fifth grade under Annexure I to the Coorg Travelling Allowance Rules, and any such member performing any journey, other than to attend a meeting of the Authority, in connection with the business of the Authority shall with the sanction of the Chairman be entitled to receive travelling allowance likewise."

J. W. PRITCHARD,
Chief Commissioner.

THE GENERAL BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS.
SECOND STAGE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now deal with the Demands for Grants. Before doing so, I have to announce that the Parties have come to an agreement as regards the order in which these cut motions will be dealt with, except, I understand that the unattached Members do not agree to the order in which the cut motions which stands in their names are to be taken up. Is that so? I should like to hear from the Honourable Members. (To Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari). You do not agree, is it?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: (Tanjore cum Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I do not, Sir.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): In that case, the motions in their names will be taken up in the order in which they appear on the list. The arrangement is this: The Nationalists will move their cut motions today up to 3-15 P.M. the remainder of the sitting being taken up by motions standing in the name of Unattached Members; and those motions will be taken up in the order in which they appear on the list.

On Tuesday, the 9th March, the Independent Party will move their cut motions up to 3-15 P.M. After that the Muslim League Party will have the remainder of the meeting as well as the time on Wednesday, the 10th March, up to 1-15 P.M. to move their cut motions.

As regards the European Group, the arrangement originally was that after the Lunch interval, that is from 2-30 to 5 P.M. on Wednesday the 10th March, they will move their cut motions; but I understand on a representation being made by Mr. Joshi, who is now ill, they are ready to give up half an hour of their time for Mr. Joshi's motions; that is to say, from 2-30 to 3 P.M. Therefore the European Group will move their cut motions from 3 to 5 P.M.

As regards the time for speeches, -I suggest that, as usual, fifteen minutes be given for speeches other than those of the Mover and the Government Member; the Mover will have twenty minutes and the Government Member twenty minutes or even more, if necessary. I take it this will suit Honourable Members.

Sir Henry Richardson (Nominated Non-Official): May I say that in the event of Mr. Joshi not being well enough to come on Wednesday, we hope that the European Group will be able to have its original time from 2-30 P.M.?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): But they will be prepared to give up half an hour if he comes?

Sir Henry Richardson: Yes; we are willing to do that; but if he does not come, owing to illness, then we would be obliged if we can have the time from 2-30 P.M.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That being the arrangement, I call upon the Nationalist Party to move their first cut motion—No. 37. The demand will be moved first.

DEMAND No. 12—EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,36,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Executive Council'."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,36,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Executive Council'."

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, may I submit that the Nationalist Party is moving the cut on Demand No. 15—the first motion is about the Repressive Policy. It is cut motion No. 2 on Supplementary List, No. 1, standing in my name. We gave notice to the Secretary this morning. Notice of the cut motion was given on the 6th March.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): How is it that No. 37 appears on my list? Repressive Policy, is it?

Sardar Sant Singh: It is on Supplementary List I. The only difference is that it is to be moved by me. That is the only difference.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well. Has your Party agreed that it should be moved instead of No. 37 on the main list?

Sardar Sant Singh: My Party has agreed.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well: then demand No. 15, must be moved.

DEMAND No. 15—HOME DEPARTMENT.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,20,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Home Department'."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,20,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Home Department'."

Repressive Policy of the Government.

Sardar Sant Singh: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Home Department', be reduced by Rs. 100."

My object in moving this motion is to discuss the repressive policy of the Government. The Government of India has hideously cruel record in suppressing what it calls a rebellion in the country. That is the reason which has induced my Party to come back to the subject which we recently discussed in this Session. I have carefully read the speech of the Honourable the Home Member once again and I find that the speech is full of misrepresentation, untruths and what not.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell (Home Member): On a point of order, Sir. Is the Honourable Member in order in attributing untruths to me in this House?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is not in order. He must withdraw that expression.

Sardar Sant Singh: I will just withdraw that expression and call it inexactitude.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is not a proper way of withdrawing. He must withdraw it unconditionally.

Sardar Sant Singh: Very well, Sir. I withdraw it. The speech is so full of incorrect statements of facts that one has to come back to the question again in this House. In making his reply on the 12th February, 1943, the Honourable the Home Member denied that there was any policy of the Government which might be called a policy of frightfulness in the country. At the same time, at the end of his speech he stated:

"Effective measures cannot be taken against this kind of hooliganism if the immediate reaction of the House is to demand committees of enquiry. The idea that the police and public servants are the enemies of popular institutions and should be regarded with hostility by the House is entirely wrong."

[Sardar Sant Singh.]

I think the Honourable Member has been in India for a sufficiently long period to understand that the general public in the country places very little confidence in the police and much less in the executive and the bureaucracy. Unsympathetic, unacquainted with human principles, unaware of civilised methods, it is just as well that we tell him once more that this House, any House elected on a popular basis, will never put any confidence in a foreign bureaucracy. Let him understand that. And when we know that many an innocent person has been killed, women raped, and towns destroyed which happened to be in proximity of the railway lines which had been removed, he cannot claim that he belongs to that Government which can by any stretch of imagination be called a civilised Government. It is a barbarous Government. I asked him when he was talking on that day, whether he could say what was the difference between the Nazi method of suppressing things and British method of suppressing things in India. He declined to enter into a controversy with me. But he went on to tell us that the methods adopted were no more than were called for at the time. It is all very well to say that the methods adopted were no more, because it is India, because the lives involved were those of Indians. I ask him a straight question if he is prepared to answer in a straight manner. Will he have done the same thing in England? Will the Americans have done the same thing in America? The answer would be definitely No.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Because there are no Congress men there.

Sardar Sant Singh: I see. The Congressmen seem to haunt him, probably in his sleep too. The Congressmen will go on haunting him so long as he rules the country in the method in which he is doing it; they will haunt him even in his after life. Don't you think that you will be haunted only in India. Don't be carried away by this that your repressive policy will succeed in this country? The nemesis is working, it is preparing for you what you deserve and it is bound to follow if there is any divine law which rules over all. In this method of repression, they have gone to such an extent as to, as I said before, wipe out villages entirely, they took the male population outside the villages, females were separated, plundered and looted, and in some cases, women raped. The plunder was brought to the commander of the force, the military or police collected there and the commander distributed the booty amongst his own men. These are allegations which have not been made from one district but from various provinces and from various districts in this country. When he was asked to investigate, he says copies of the debates have been sent to the provinces for investigation. Investigation by whom? Investigation by those who are guilty themselves, who themselves committed these acts, and who are themselves liable to be punished in a court of law if there is a court of justice at all in this country left now. We are being ruled under a military law today. Everywhere we see the Defence of India Act and the rules governing, grinding the liberties of the people mercilessly without any regard to humanity or human principles. We cannot be content in this House to sit by and look on simply because the Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell says that it is simply in the maintenance of law and order. If you have succeeded—I am afraid you have not succeeded, it is the 7th month after the 8th August when you started this campaign of ruthlessness in this country, papers are still full of recrudescence of violence here, incendiarism there, shootings somewhere. These things are still going on and you cannot say you have succeeded in suppressing the spirit of young India. You have not. Therefore, it is time that you gave up these methods of barbarism and uncivilised Government. The Indian political deadlock still continues. Three Honourable Members of the Executive Council have resigned in protest against your methods. World opinion is going against you. You may try to fill the columns of the newspaper with pro-British feelings in America but there is the other side of the picture which you

refuse to allow to be published in this country but it will filter through. I know it will filter through and we know that civilised opinion is against you. Sir, the other day we gave him specific instances and asked him to investigate them. He said "Yes, they were investigated and some of them were found not to have occurred at all". There is one passage in his speech. Mr. Joshi gave him the instance of the Manager of the Gandhi Ashram in Meerut, who was shot and asked him whether it is a fact that he was shot. He said in reply that no such complaint has come to the notice of the Provincial Government. May I ask: is this what you call the Government which does not know its primary duty of knowing that such investigation does not mean that the investigation should start with a complaint to the Government? The complaint was made here. A definite name and position and place was given. It was definitely mentioned that a certain person was shot. They say, "No complaint has been made to us and therefore we refuse to investigate". Is this the method of a civilised government? Has the Government any reputation in the matter? I ask: did they go and inquire in the Gandhi Ashram whether there was any Manager there, who was that manager and where is he today? Then they would have come to know the facts. Government says that no complaint has been received by us and therefore they will not investigate. We know that no power on earth can make you investigate, if you refuse to investigate. We know that. Today your bayonets and swords are stronger than those of India. But why do you try to defend yourself? You say that your policy is not one of frightfulness. Your very speech is a policy of frightfulness in the country. The very speech of the Honourable the Home Member is an indication, if an indication is necessary, rather it is a positive proof, that the Government of India is determined to follow a policy of frightfulness in this country. I assure you, Sir, and through you the Government that so long as this House remains and so long as we have got a limited freedom of speech on the floor of this House we will not mince matters. We will tell the world, if your censor prevents us from reaching the outside world, that the Government is following a policy of barbarism, a policy of frightfulness in this country and that the people's liberties are being suppressed ruthlessly. That is our charge against you. It is no good multiplying instances. We will only say that we will not willingly grant supplies to you in this country if we can help it. You can carry on with the help of your nominated Members, the official Members and the pro-British Members. We don't mind that but the elected Members will not be a party to grant you a single penny till you change your methods and adopt civilised methods of Government. Only then will we co-operate with you. Be barbarous and we refuse to co-operate with you. With these words, I move my cut motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): (Cut motion moved: "That the demand under the head 'Home Department' be reduced by Rs. 100.")

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): One feels aggrieved at the way in which internal disturbances are going on in the country and also the repressive policy of the Government that is being enforced. I do not want to use any harsh words or to blame the Government more than is necessary but it cannot possibly be denied that both the repressive policy and the disturbances are disturbing the country too much. It is something like a tug of war that is going on between those who are bent on creating disturbance and the Government who are not adopting more reasonable and suitable measures but are depending upon brutal force for putting down the internal commotion that is going on. This is not the proper remedy for this evil. We have discussed this question many a time in this House and several suggestions have been made but they are not being adopted. The Government point of view is that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are responsible for these disturbances. On the other hand, the Congress denies that they have any hand in this and Mahatma Gandhi has declared that he is not responsible for what is going on outside, when he is inside the jail. And Mahatma Gandhi went

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on a fast as a penance for the internal disturbances that are going on but nobody is touching the real remedy. The Government is bent upon this, that the movement in the country must come to a stop first and then negotiations will go on with the responsible leaders in order to come to a conclusion. But when the Congress or Mahatma Gandhi is not taking that responsibility upon themselves, one can easily see that that is not the proper way of meeting the situation. First to blame one and then to tell him that unless you do a certain thing we will not help you is a wrong method. Now, Sir, as I said before, the Government wants this revolt, as it is called by the Government, should be called off first. Regarding this a statement has appeared in the *Hindustan Times* which has come from the United States of America in which it is said that the United States of America is willing to act as an intermediary. The actual words are:

"The New York World Telegram's columnist, Mr. William Philip Simms, said that there is hope in Washington that Mahatma Gandhi, would come to arrangements with the British for the duration. However, this does not mean that Washington intends to interfere. If invited by both parties (and this is important), the United States would gladly serve as intermediary. But much as many here sympathise with India's desire for independence,

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member cannot quote at such length. The Honourable Member is not allowed to quote from newspapers.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Sir, this may be taken as my own statement.

It is said that it is safe to say that the great majority disagree with the way Mahatma Gandhi and his followers have gone about it—at least since last August's ultimatum. Further that, according to reports current in Washington, the Viceroy is willing to release Mahatma Gandhi and his lieutenants if they call off the 'revolt'. My point was that when the United States' statement is to the above effect, I would like to know from the Honourable the Home Member what his own view is in the matter. How will he come to terms with the persons who, he thinks, are responsible for the present state of things? Will he see who is suffering from the present disturbances? It is the public who are suffering because so many murders have been committed and so many cases of sabotage have happened and on the side of the Government the repressive measures which are at their height are also doing greatest harm. Is it humane that if a procession is brought out by girls, they should be sent to jail? Is not that too much of the repressive policy? I find that three months rigorous imprisonment was given to 14 girls in Poona. It is stated that Mr. M. R. Masani and 20 others including 14 girls who were arrested on February 17th for taking out a procession in the city, were convicted and sentenced by the Additional City Magistrate of Poona today to three months' rigorous imprisonment each. This is only one instance. There are several other ways in which repressive measures are now at their height. It should be remembered that by repression no Government has succeeded to put down any revolt or to put down any disturbances merely by repressive measures. The spirit of negotiations and conciliation should be at work between those who are supposed to be on either side.

I have said in this House before that the martial law that has been introduced in Sind is too repressive to do havoc to the civil population. The civil population is being brutally flogged although they have no connection with the Hurs. The original object of the martial law was that the Hurs should be put down. They were really doing harm and so the martial law was introduced. But none in this House, not even the Local Government, was consulted that even other offences should also be treated under this martial law jurisdiction. That is too much. Martial law has also been enforced in other places when riots and other disturbances occur and are not being quelled by the ordinary law, but in Sind the martial law was actually introduced to keep down the Hur movement and subsequently it was applied to the civil population also.

The result is that people of my province have become very much dissatisfied with the Government because this martial law is doing them great harm.

Sir, at the present moment two things are going on. There is disturbance going on and there is also repression going on. How long will this go on? Is it advisable during the days of the war that this repressive policy should go on? Therefore, some method should be found out to put an end to it. During the last Session I suggested that the best course to adopt was to allow the members of the Congress Working Committee to meet Mahatma Gandhi in jail. There they would come to certain conclusions as Mahatma Gandhi had himself hinted that he may revise his own views. But nothing was done. Even now if the Government will allow the leaders to meet Mahatma Gandhi or release Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee, then they will be able to talk amongst themselves and come to some settlement. If there is no such settlement, Government would be doing harm to the people more and more and they cannot be called a good Government. Therefore, it is high time that some remedy should be found out to end the present tension.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I will not discuss the general question of repressive policy because some of my friends have already discussed it. I will refer only to two cases in which Members of this Assembly were very badly treated. The first case is that of Mr. Kailash Behari Lal, a Member of this Assembly. This gentleman was some years ago a member of the Congress organisation but about 15 months ago, he left the Congress and joined my Party,—the Nationalist Party. He co-operated with the Government and was appointed a Jail Visitor in the province of Bihar. Evidently, he was on very friendly terms with the local authorities; but just three or four days before the last September Session of this Assembly, he went to one of the high officers asking for a permit to travel by the military train. The train service had been dislocated and there were no regular trains running on the E. I. R. or any of the other railways connecting Bhagalpur with Delhi. So, he went for a permit to travel by a military train and he said that as his son and wife were ailing at Muzaffarpur he would like to stay at Muzaffarpur for a day and then go to Delhi to attend the September Session of the Assembly. Now, the Government thought that the object of this gentleman in coming to the Assembly was to relate the happenings in

12 Noon. Bihar between the 9th August and the first week of September. It was under this misapprehension that he was detained. Not only did he not get a permit to travel by a military train, but he received instead an order of arrest and detention. I brought this matter to the notice of the Honourable the Home Member, and he perhaps had communication with the Government of Bihar. He informed me after a time that the Provincial Government considered his release to be undesirable. There was no charge against him: he was not a member of the Congress organisation. As a matter of fact, the Congress had taken disciplinary action against him disentitling him from becoming member for a number of years. Now, what was the offence? It was thought that Mr. Kailash Behari Lal would come to attend the September Session of the Assembly and relate his experiences in Bihar. The Government apprehended that excesses that had been committed in Bihar perhaps would be brought to the notice of this Assembly, and that was the reason for keeping him in detention. I feel that was the only thing against him. He wanted to attend the Assembly Session that steps were taken against his coming; he was arrested and put in detention.

I place before you an even more pathetic case, namely, that of Mr. Bhalchand Johuri. This gentleman was a congressman and when the decision of the Working Committee of the Congress was taken on the 7th or 8th August last, he was taken in custody and detained in the Benares Jail. He was suffering with a heart disease. All that he wanted was that he might consult an Ayurvedic physician, as such a physician might give proper remedy for his

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disease. But nothing was done. His health became poorer and poorer and ultimately he was brought to the Lucknow Jail. There his condition became much worse and then after repeated representations he was sent to one of the Lucknow hospitals. His relatives and friends wanted to take him out in order that proper treatment might be given. But his relatives and friends were told that he was keeping good health. This information was given even a week before his death. Only four days before his death,—when he was becoming unconscious,—he was allowed to be taken out of the hospital by his relatives and soon after that he died. These are the two cases in which Members of this Assembly have been very badly treated by the Government. I could quote many other instances of ill-treatment, but I hope the Assembly will make its protest against the policy which has been adopted by the Government of India in regard to repression.

Sir, if this policy goes on, will the Government have any friends left in this country? That is the simple question I ask. The cases I mentioned are such as could easily have been settled without any detriment to the prestige or honour of either the British Government or the Government of India. But nothing was done, with the result that one gentleman had been prevented from attending the Session of the Assembly for no fault of his own and the other gentleman died practically in detention.

Sir, I support the motion moved by my Honourable friend Sardar Sant Singh.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang (East Punjab; Muhammadan): Sir, I had no intention of taking up any portion of the time allotted to my Honourable friends of the Nationalist Party for discussion of their cut motions, but the remarks which fell from my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, have led me to offer just a few remarks and I will not be long on this matter. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai referred to martial law in Sind. If I am not mistaken and remember the facts correctly, the beginning of the reign of this martial law was the action which Government took against the Hurs. Certain questions were also put in this House about the Hurs by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai himself. Anyhow, Government's action in the beginning was against the Hurs alone. It was a very unedifying spectacle to see our Hindu friends in Sind and outside exulting over what was being done to exterminate and wipe out the Hurs. The point of view which appealed to our Hindu friends at the time was that all this was being done against a section of the population in Sind who were Mussalmans and that if anybody had any interest in objecting to what was being done by the Government it was the Mussalmans. In fact leading articles were written in the Hindu press in Sind expressing a good deal of jubilation over what was being done against the Hurs.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Question.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Later on developments occurred which led to the proclamation of martial law in Sind and the present administration of martial law has given cause for complaint both to the Hindus and the Muslims. My Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, talked of nemesis in the course of this very debate. I do not know what he means by nemesis and what form the operation of nemesis may take in the larger matter of what he calls the repressive policy of Government. But in this smaller matter of proclamation of martial law and the actual administration of martial law in Sind, nemesis has certainly overtaken the Hindu population of Sind. They were very glad that Muslims were being persecuted and practically exterminated, and now when the thing has developed into such proportions that it is affecting them also, they cry over it. This is nemesis indeed. These are the only remarks I want to offer.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I think it was more the Muslims than the Hindus who wanted martial law.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support this motion, but for different reasons, not for the reasons, some of which have been given by the Honourable the Mover of the cut motion. In war time, certain restrictions on the activities of the public are inevitable. These must be voluntarily and willingly suffered. If that is called repression, I do not agree with that description. It is the duty of every honest citizen during war to reconcile himself to certain restrictions which are inevitable. Therefore, in my opinion, anything that has been done to prevent gossip mongering, or spreading false rumours or to make the public mind uncertain or unstable, that cannot be called repression in war time. Every country at war willingly and voluntarily undergoes it.

The second thing which has been described as repression is I suppose those who are undergoing imprisonment or trials for sabotage movement. I cannot conceive that when the security of this country was threatened by the Japanese any patriotic Indian can for a moment do anything which will make the path of the aggressor easier. All action taken against such misguided youths or others must be considered legitimate so long as it is for the purpose of suppressing sabotage activity.

The third thing is that certain kinds of speeches or journalistic publications are not allowed during war time and the last complaint is that political deadlock is not being ended. I assure my Honourable friends who are anxious to end the political deadlock that that political deadlock is not going to end. It is the creation of the British Government and we are all playing into the hands of the British Government. Therefore, it will never end. It will be ended only by the workers and the peasants and not by the middle classes. The middle classes will never be able to end this deadlock and therefore all these political demonstrations against the deadlock are mere idle waste of time. These middle classes and the bourgeoisie are as much Fascists as the Government are. Therefore I am not hoping for a settlement of the political deadlock from the middle class people. It will be the masses of this country who feel the pinch of Fascist domination both at home and abroad and whose economic conditions today are worse than those of any serfs who will end, in due course, the political deadlock. It is as I said purely and primarily a creation of the foreign Government. They have done it far too cleverly and the middle class political parties are playing into their hands continuously by all that they do in the name of political reforms. Therefore, Sir, this political deadlock cannot be made the excuse for anti-war activity.

I think my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, was rather much too optimistic about the difference between the Nazis and the British Government. I have no love for British imperialism. I hate it from the bottom of my heart and I will exterminate it tomorrow if I can. But when he talks of Nazi methods and the British methods in the same breath, I think he had better go to Poland. He will find there that the conditions there are not so congenial to him as he finds it here in India.

Sardar Sant Singh: What is the difference?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If he were in Poland, his head will be chopped off without a moment's notice.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I interrupt my Honourable friend? Is it not the same principle underlying the action of the British here in wiping out whole villages for alleged sabotage? Is there any difference between the two?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: My Honourable friend is speaking here with that freedom which enables him to call this a barbarous Government. They are barbarous to some extent. I do not deny that. But the fact that he is able to call them barbarous, while in Poland his head chopped off, that makes all the difference. I have no doubt in my mind.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: There is only a difference in degree.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It is pure rubbish to talk of Nazi methods and British methods in the same breath.

Sardar Sant Singh: Oh! I see.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I do say that the liberty of speech and writing which we enjoy today

Sardar Sant Singh: Only in this House.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Even outside.

Sardar Sant Singh: Question.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: He can question. He cannot deny that he can talk whatever rubbish he wants outside or more rubbish outside than here. Don't tell me all this. The Britishers have given us such a long rope to hang ourselves and that liberty you cannot have in Nazi Germany or Poland or even in Russia. But I do say that there is one sense in which the repressive policy is really condemnable. That is why I support this motion. In the name of suppressing sabotage, they have gone for innocent people who have done no wrong, and in spite of the promise of my Honourable friend, Sir Sultan Ahmed, that the military and the police are very jealous of their honour, their honour is challenged on the floor of the House and the Government are not undertaking to vindicate it. I say that the blood of the innocent boys and girls who were shot in Nandurbar will be on the head of the Government if they do not enquire. There was no procession of a thousand people as my Honourable friend, Sir Reginald Maxwell said the other day, there was only a procession of boys and girls returning from their schools. I say this. Why does he depend upon police officials, who shot these children, than upon me. Why does he not depend upon me more because I have gone there and looked into the things myself? I saw the two girls who were shot, but who happily are still alive, and heard the wailings of the parents who have lost their young boys. Therefore Sir, the Government cannot escape the censure that in suppressing sabotage, in which I am entirely at one with them, they have let loose forces either of private revenge or frightfulness which they are afraid of examining today. I say again that before the bar of public opinion they cannot defend their policy in not going into those complaints. Five of my supporters in Thana District were arrested because of Brahman-Non-Brahman feelings. A drunken non-Brahman sub-inspector of police arrested these people because they were Brahmans, and the fact of their innocence can be vouchsafed from the fact that the Government of Bombay had to release them unconditionally. But nothing is done to that drunken police sub-inspector, who had out of mere communal spite arrested five of the most honourable people in that district. I ask whether the Government will go or will not go into the Nandurbar incidents where mostly children were affected. The very fact that the men were shot not in procession but at scattered places in lanes and by-lanes is proof positive that the police ran amuck in Nandurbar on 9th September and the blood of the innocent children is and will remain on the head of the Government unless they implement their promise that whenever a case is submitted to them, they will examine it. My Honourable friend, Sir Reginald Maxwell, has refused to examine it because he places implicit faith in the report of the police and he would not give even *prima facie* hearing to the report which I can make to him, and which I made on the floor of the House after first hand examination of the case.

Therefore, I entirely disapprove to this extent, the repressive policy of the Government. I entirely endorse the remarks made by Dr. Banerjea about an Honourable Member of this House, Dr. Kailash Behari Lal who has been kept away from his legislative duties and from discharging his obligations to his electorate. What is the justification? In this matter, Sir, the position is most amazing. When you ask my Honourable friend, Sir Reginald Maxwell, that somebody is wrongly detained in the Punjab or in Bihar, he rightly says: "Mr. Jamnadas, I will enquire, but it will be better if you directly write to the

Provincial Authorities." It sounds reasonable. So I wrote to the Provincial authorities, and the Provincial authorities have disdained to acknowledge my letter for so long. Such is their sense of responsibility. One Mr. Shroff, a lawyer, who belongs to the Indian Federation of Labour and therefore cent per cent, in support of the war, he is being detained in the Punjab, and even enquiries made from the Government of the Punjab remained unacknowledged. Sir, that there is a lot of repressive policy in the name of law and order cannot be denied. I am prepared to give a *prima facie* evidence about the shooting of boys and girls which is a disgrace to any civilized Government; if they do not enquire even after these allegations are categorically made, supported by statements of the most responsible people Government will never escape responsibility for this Naudurbar happening unless they enquire into this case, and to that extent the repressive policy of the Government must be condemned from the floor of the House.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam (Surma Valley *cum* Shillong: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, we have time and again impressed upon the Government the necessity of creating an atmosphere of goodwill in this country. We have placed before them the popular view-point, but the Government have gone their own way without doing anything. Instances have been cited by my Honourable friends in this House time and again regarding the repressive policy of the Government, but the happenings have not been enquired into and due relief has not been afforded. It is a matter of great regret that whenever any instance is given and any description of repression is offered to the Government, they say that they cannot find any specific instances. Whose duty is it to give specific instances? It is the duty of the Government to enquire and find out the specific instances where the police and military have done the wrong. If the Government sees everything with their eyes open, they will be overwhelmed with the details of repression which the police and military have committed on the innocent people of this country. I say, therefore, Sir, that the time has come when Government should enquire into these incidents and usher in a new era of peace and goodwill. An important chapter of the Congress politics has been closed with the last fast of Mahatma Gandhi. Now it befits the Government to usher in a new era of peace and goodwill. All the Congress leaders are in jail; there is not a single man who can lead the movement on behalf of the Congress, and if the Government would release all the political prisoners of the rank and file who are behind the prison bars, I do not think any mischief will be done to the country or any mischief will be done to the Government. Rather the Government will gain and those young men—the flower of the nation—who are now rotting in jail, will help us out of the difficult situation. When good sense will prevail, these young men will be of the greatest strength to the Government. I, therefore, earnestly ask the Government to release those young men who are rotting in jail without, in many cases, any fault of their own. They are young men of impressionable age and they have been led by the sentiments of the popular will and popular agitation. So if they are let loose, I think, they will find an opportunity to come round to the activities of citizenship and will come round to such activities that will do good to the country and the Government. It is really a good opportunity for the Government to see that these things are done. We are reading statements from Washington, statements of President Roosevelt wishing good to this country, we are reading of the Atlantic Charter giving us freedom and giving freedom to all the dominated peoples. Now is the time for the British Government and the Government of India to turn a new page in the history of their administration, and if they do so, I think, the whole Government will be broad-based on the goodwill of the people, and the Government will be free from all the calumny of faults and shortcomings of which Members of this House are accusing the Government. With these few words, I support the motion of Sardar Sant Singh.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Sir, before turning to the main subject under discussion, there are one or two points which have been raised in the debate which I might usefully cover now.

There has been some allusion to the subject of Martial Law in Sind. Now, had this motion been moved under the Demand originally proposed for it, *i.e.*, Demand No. 12, discussion on that

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: A motion under that demand is going to be moved.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: might conceivably have been relevant, but to a motion for a cut against the grant for Home Department the subject of Martial Law in Sind is not relevant, because the Home Department have nothing whatever to do with Martial Law in Sind.

My Honourable friend, Dr. Banerjea, has given one or two instances of individual cases in which he alleged that the action taken was wrong. It is impossible within the space available for reply to a cut motion to go into individual cases, but I would remind the House of the fact that most of the action taken in regard to the recent disturbances has been taken and must necessarily have been taken by the Provincial Governments under their own authority and, therefore, the details of such action, as apart from the policy, are not a matter with which the Home Department of this Government can fairly be charged. That, to some extent, is an answer to the observations made by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta about the Nandurbar case. I did refer to that case in the last debate on this subject at this Session, and I showed that the information at the disposal of this Government was very considerably different from that relied on by the Honourable Member, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. But I never said even on that occasion that no innocent person ever suffered in the course of action taken to put down disturbances of the kind which took place. I said, and I admitted with regret, that innocent persons do very often suffer and that is one of the responsibilities that lies on the heads of the persons who promote these disorders that they must and do cause so much suffering to innocent people.

I also gave the House many other instances in which the action taken by persons engaged in these disturbances has caused loss of life or injury to innocent women and children and other members of the public engaged in their lawful occupations. I admit that innocent persons must occasionally suffer even from otherwise legitimate action taken by Govt. authorities in putting down disturbances. There again Government cannot be censured for such incidents on a cut motion of this kind unless it is also shown that those things were part of the policy of Government. This motion, if the House will refer to the wording of it, is to discuss the repressive policy of Government, and the mere fact that certain individuals have suffered from the action taken by the Government forces does not mean, and cannot possibly be interpreted to mean, that such things are part and parcel of the policy followed by Government.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If you screen the offenders it must mean that.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Yes, you are right.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Certainly not. We are now talking of the policy of Government, and the policy of Government has been made clear on many occasions. I shall refer to these occasions later. I fully admit that innocent persons do suffer from the action taken by Government forces just as they suffer from action taken by persons promoting disorders, and I say that the responsibility for that lies on the persons who are the aggressors and who have created these situations. That is my reply.

Now, Sir, to come back to the main subject of the motion. It is now almost exactly a year since this hardy annual cut motion blossomed on the floor of this House. On the last occasion on the 6th March 1942, the Mover was the Honourable Mr. Kazmi and in replying on that occasion I did my best to persuade the House to make a right use of the word "repression". I even quoted its dictionary meaning and I showed the House that there is no opprobrium attaching to the word "repression" as such. There can be right repression and wrong

repression, but whether it is right or wrong depends, or should depend, entirely on the things repressed. On the other hand, the word is used in this House or very frequently used, only to indicate the sympathies of the person condemning the repression. In fact, the attitude taken up towards the word "repression" is very like that taken up by Mr. Gandhi in regard to non-violence. In one of his writings quoted in the recently published booklet on Congress Responsibility it will be found that he says: "Supposing a mouse fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp teeth, would you call that mouse violent?" The answer is no. Well in many cases of the kind with which we are dealing, what has been happening is that a small force of perhaps half a dozen or 10 policemen find themselves confronted by an armed and violent mob of say 10,000 persons. Now, in such a situation I should like to know which of these is comparable to the cat and which to the mouse. (Interruption by *Sardar Sant Singh*.) If we assume that the small force of Government police resisting this mob is in the position of the mouse, then they are the non-violent party according to Mr. Gandhi, and if they are accused of repression, we get the anomalous position that the non-violent party is the repressor and the violent party is not the repressor.

Now, Sir, I do not disclaim that Government do and must use repression at times. It is an unfortunate and unpleasant duty forced upon them by certain situations that occasionally arise. I have never denied, I have always maintained in this House that force must be met by force and that crime, stark, brutal, murderous crime, such as has been going on in this country, must also be met by force. That has to be repressed and Government cannot be condemned for any measures that they take to repress it.

Now I should like to remind the House briefly of what the experience of Government has been during this war in regard to the movements that they have had to meet.

First of all, there was the civil disobedience movement, launched in October 1940 at a time when England in Europe stood alone at the most critical moment of the war. That was the moment chosen to send 26,000 Congressmen to prison and for many others to court imprisonment by preaching that it was wrong to help the war with men or money. Well, that movement went on for more than a year and the civil disobedience prisoners, the great bulk of them, were released in December 1941. What was the response of the Congress? I quote from the resolution of the Working Committee dated 30th December 1941, in which they said: "The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance". That was the response that was met by Government trying to take the advice of this House in regard to withdrawing measures against that movement. The movement, it is true, was nearly dead at that time, but a very large number of Congressmen were released and it was hoped, or it might have been hoped, that that would meet with some response. The response it met with was not such as to encourage Government to repeat measures of the same kind. Actually in that same resolution all that the Working Committee did was to reaffirm their resolution of the 16th September 1940, in which they declared the civil disobedience movement, and to refuse all help from the Congress in the defence of India. That was the first movement.

Then we come to the Congress open rebellion, as they called it, of August 1942. This again was launched at a moment when a Japanese attack on this country seemed imminent. Not a good record, as I think the House will agree when Government is accused of a black record in the course of this war in its handling of the Congress. I think it would be a good thing if the House and the public would remember what the Congress has been responsible for in regard to the war effort in the defence of this country.

(Interruption by *Sardar Sant Singh*.)

Now, with regard to the character of this movement, I have many times given the House information showing the serious and violent character of the disturbances with which Government had to deal. I need only refer to my

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speech of the 15th September 1942, or again to the speech of my Honourable colleague, the Law Member, made on the 24th September, 1942 in regard to Mr. Neogy's motion, and to my speech of the 12th February last on the same motion. If the House was not convinced of the character of this movement from the information then placed before them, nothing more than I can say can add to their knowledge on that subject. But if more is wanted, I would refer the House again to the booklet recently published, and I would draw their attention especially to the numerous appendices published in that booklet showing the nature of the instructions which have been issued and are still being issued by the Congress underground organization. If more is wanted, as apparently it is wanted, I intend to publish very shortly a further booklet giving some facts about the disturbances. This has been compiled by an independent writer from materials supplied by Government and he has put it in his own words. There is nothing in it that the public did not already know or should not know, or that has not been published in the papers; but when the whole story has been put together in a simple manner in this way, the public will be in a still better position to judge for themselves the kind of disturbances which have been thrust upon the country by a party anxious to gain power for itself.

Sardar Sant Singh: Will you permit us to publish a reply?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I would ask, do the public really want such things? Or is it not rather the duty of the Government to repress such things with all the powers at their command? The actions against which this repression was directed were crimes—crimes of the worst kind, punishable under the law of this land, punishable under the laws of any land. I need only remind the House of the figures of convictions arising out of the present movement. These are convictions by courts on evidence laid before them—not executive action but judicial decisions. The progressive total of convictions up to the 15th January was 29,681. Does this figure indicate that there was no movement which Government were right to suppress?

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Nobody denies that there was.

Sardar Sant Singh: The Honourable Member is putting his case in an entirely

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I am not giving way.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I must ask the Honourable Member not to go on interrupting the proceedings.

Sardar Sant Singh: But the Honourable Member asked a question; we have a right to reply to the Honourable Member.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Somebody else can reply. But the Honourable Member should not go on interrupting.

Sardar Sant Singh: These are not interruptions.

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

Sardar Sant Singh: May I submit with due respect to the Chair that it is not interruption. When the Honourable Member asked a question, it must be replied to.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): He has not asked any question of the Honourable Member at all.

Sardar Sant Singh: He has asked a question of the House—a general question.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member who has already spoken is not the only person who can give a reply.

Major Nawab Sir Ahmad Nawaz Khan (Nominated: Non-Official): The Honourable the Home Member does not question any Member to answer it but he likes to explain some facts in this form.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: If I may resume, I was going to inform the House that actually on the 1st January of this year, the number of persons still undergoing imprisonment for offences committed during this

movement was only 18,800, out of the total that I have mentioned. That is not a very large figure. Now, I would ask the House to compare the figures of persons convicted in connection with the previous civil disobedience movements. In the last civil disobedience movement, that is in the one of 1940-41, the number of persons, congressmen, convicted was 26,000. In the civil disobedience movement of 1930-31 the number of congressmen convicted by courts was 60,500—more than twice the number convicted in this movement. In the civil disobedience movement of 1932-34 the number of congressmen convicted was approximately 70,000. I would ask the House to reflect on those figures when I show that a movement of a character which the country has seldom had to face in the past, a movement of the utmost gravity and seriousness, has been put down by Government with a total number of convictions of only about 80,000 people. No one can say that the action taken has been excessively repressive.

I have only a moment or two more; but I would remind the House that the policy of this Government has been repeatedly made clear in regard to disturbances of this kind. I would refer the House to my speech of the 18th November 1941 on Mr. Joshi's Resolution about the release of prisoners, also to my speech on Mr. Dutta's Resolution of the 19th February 1942 and again to my speech of the 15th September 1942 on the present movement. It has been made clear to this House more than once that Government with its immense responsibility not only to India but to the whole of the Allied Cause cannot and will not permit activities designed to interfere with the successful prosecution of the war and thus to assist His Majesty's enemies nor, as I already explained on the 18th November 1941, can political or any other motives be regarded as an extenuation of offences deliberately calculated to impair the war resistance of the country or to undermine the war effort. But as everybody knows and as every Honourable Member of this House knows, the policy of the Government is always and has always been to take only such action as is necessary to safeguard its vital obligations. If anybody wishes to see how far Government will go as soon as the situation appears to be safe, I would draw their attention to the removal of the ban on the Communist Party of India during the currency of the present war; I would remind them again of the removal of the ban on the Khaksars. Surely these instances show that Government is ready enough to withdraw any repressive measures as soon as they think that there is a reasonable prospect of their being withdrawn with safety. The policy of Government, where they take action, is never vindictive. I need only refer the House to the impressive Government Resolution of 8th August, 1942 with regard to the launching of the present movement of the Congress, where they explained their policy and told the country that they had no desire to be vindictive in the action taken. Their policy is entirely defensive, in the sense that it is in the highest interests of public safety. I would entirely deny to this House that there is any repression in this country of ordinary or reasonable political and social activity or the expression of opinion provided always that peaceful methods are employed and that nothing is said or done to promote disorder or obstruction to the war measures of Government and the defence of India. Activities of the kind which have been repressed would not have been allowed in any country engaged in a long and dangerous war. If anything, too much latitude has been allowed, and it is with the utmost regret that Government have had to take this action. I can only say now that Government sincerely hope that the improvement of the situation will be such that further action of the same kind may not be necessary again, while the war is still in progress. Sir, I oppose.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: What about the two cases to which I referred?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I referred to those while the Honourable Member was absent.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Home Department', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,20,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Home Department'."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next cut motion of the Nationalist Party is No. 90—demand No. 21.

DEMAND No. 21—FINANCE DEPARTMENT.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,46,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Finance Department'."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,46,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1944, in respect of 'Finance Department'."

Utilization of the Sterling Balances.

Mr. K. O. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Finance Department' be reduced by Rs. 100."

By this motion I desire to raise a debate on the question of the utilisation of the sterling balances. My justification in seeking to revive a discussion on this subject is the vital importance of it, which deserves, in my opinion, to be dealt with as a specific issue.

These accumulated sterling reserves, have been acquired as a result of great sacrifices on the part of India, as was so readily acknowledged by the Honourable the Finance Member. They represent a restriction of purchasing power of the people and also to a certain extent account for the prevailing high prices of commodities in the country. The gradually increasing figure of these sterling balances has been a source of great anxiety to the people at large, and I take it that it has also caused no less anxiety to the Reserve Bank of India and to the Government. Due to a fortuitous combination of circumstances, India finds herself today in the position of a creditor country; but due to her political subjection she is not in a position to impose her will on the debtor as regards the method of payment. The balances have so far been utilised for the purposes of repatriation of sterling loans to the extent of about £300 millions, the funding of railway annuities to the extent of £80 millions, and the funding of certain railway debenture stocks of the face value of £20 millions. The next scheme which the Government have in active contemplation relates to the funding of the sterling pension and provident fund obligations of this country. My Honourable friend, the Finance Member, has assured the House that this particular scheme is the result of a very shrewd bargain which he succeeded in driving, and which has resulted in a very profitable investment for the tax-payers of India. My Honourable friend deprecated on the last occasion the importation of suspicion and prejudice into the consideration of an economic proposition. I should very much like to draw his attention to the volume which I hold in my hand, which contains the minutes of evidence given before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms in the year 1938. You, Sir, if I may remind you, will recollect the suspicion that was raised on that occasion before the Joint Parliamentary Committee regarding the safety of these pension and provident fund payments which the retired British officials were entitled to get from the Indian revenues. These pages are full of suggestions that these obligations should be funded. I have no time to give extracts from the evidence, but apart from the representatives of certain services associations, associations of retired British members of the Indian Civil Service, to which perhaps my Honourable friend will lend his adherence in the near future—apart from these associations which were directly interested in safeguarding

their financial interests, the Secretary of State for India himself talked about funding of these obligations and one gathers the impression that the only thing that stood in the way of a concession being made then and there in favour of funding these obligations was that it might act as too great a strain on the finances of India. Now that that problem has been solved by the accumulation of these sterling balances, my Honourable friend was naturally faced with the demand voiced on that occasion—a demand which perhaps was repeated on the occasion of his last visit to England.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Certainly not. That is quite inaccurate.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Well, I have no means of knowing what transpired in England. I am bound to accept my Honourable friend's statement about it, but on similar occasions in the past, officials representing the Government of India had to give in, and I have only to refer to a similar occasion which happened in 1923 when Sir Charles Innes represented India at the Imperial Economic Conference and gave an assurance to the representatives of the Government in England that the bulk of the orders regarding railway stock particularly would have no difficulty in finding their way to England. When I confronted Sir Charles Innes with that statement, in the year 1927, this is what he said :

"I wonder if Mr. Neogy realises the atmosphere of a conference of that kind and the difficulties that one has when one is in a conference of that kind. After all, we officers who serve India, are anxious for nothing as much as that the name of India should stand high in the councils of the Empire and I hope that the House will realise that in a conference like that, when you have the Premiers of the Dominions or Dominion Ministers agreeing to a thing of this kind, it is very difficult for the representative of India at once to say, 'I will not do it'."

I do not know whether my Honourable friend had a feeling of that kind. As I said, the proceedings of these discussions in England will never see the light of day, and I must accept my Honourable friend's statement that such a consideration had nothing to do with the particular proposal to which I made reference.

No, Sir, Indian opinion would like to know more about the future of these sterling balances apart from the question of creation of the Reconstruction reserve to which he has referred. I do not know what he expects to be the ultimate figure of the reserve fund that he contemplates. I do not also know the extent of India's needs in the way of capital goods for reconstruction and what amount will be needed to be met out of the reserve fund for the purpose of financing purchases of these capital goods. But the Honourable Member is perfectly aware of the demand that has been made by Indian public opinion that, apart from the repatriation of debts and other things that have taken place, the sterling debentures of semi-Government bodies like Port Trusts and Improvement Trusts which in all amount to about £10 millions, as also sterling debentures outstanding of public utility companies in India, sterling shares outstanding, ordinary and preference shares, of public utility concerns like tramway companies and electric supply companies, power companies and so on, which also stand in the neighbourhood of about £10 millions—all these obligations should also be repatriated in due course. Then, Sir, the Honourable Member knows perfectly well that Indian opinion demands that the British

and other foreign investments in India, particularly in sterling, should be acquired with the help of the sterling balances now in London. I should like my Honourable friend to give an estimate of the amount involved in these items and what he proposes to do for the purpose of giving effect to this unanimous demand of Indian public opinion. It goes without saying that we should like to get rid of the incubus of foreign capital sitting on the chest of India in a perpetual tenure.

I do not think I shall have time to deal at length with the other points that rise to my mind; but I should like to know from the Finance Member whether any action is proposed to be taken on behalf of the Government of India for the

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purpose of maintenance of the value of the sterling reserves, that is to say, whether any guarantees are expected to be obtained from His Majesty's Government against depreciation of the sterling's value and whether the convertibility of sterling into foreign currency in future will also be insured. My Honourable friend, Sir Henry Richardson, has undoubtedly a great faith in the sterling character of sterling; but I would just remind him that after all the other countries in the world may not have as great a faith in the future of sterling as he has. In a press communique published from London, dated March 3rd, this is what I find: "Sterling's post-war dollar value remains problematic". That is the first line of the Press message.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: That is obvious.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: There are people who "expect severe depreciation of sterling and some recent buying of international securities at rates equivalent only to two dollars per sterling seem based on this assumption".

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Will the Honourable Member read some of the earlier sentences which suggest that it might be worth six or ten dollars?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is why sterling's post-war dollar value remains problematic.

I will now come to a more definite instance in which a smaller country than India has refused to act on that hypothesis, that sterling value will remain unaltered, and that is the case of Argentine. I hold in my hand an extract from the *Economist*, dated the 4th July, 1942, and I will give a very short quotation from this article:

"In its annual report for 1941, the Argentine Central Bank expresses anxiety that Great Britain may be unwilling to abandon the system of blocked pounds and clearing agreements after the war, (*This is exactly the apprehension which we have in mind*) which would compel the Argentine to return to the bilateral system in its trade as a whole. It is in the light of these doubts that one must read the statement that the increase in sterling balances remains a cause of concern to the Argentine Government, since the report itself shows that Argentine has been relieved of all exchange risk by a gold guarantee which now covers the whole spot and forward sterling position in Argentine's favour."

I should like to know whether, apart from a general assurance that sterling can never deteriorate in value, the Government is going to take any action for the purpose of getting a guarantee which could be enforced against His Majesty's Government that in the event of sterling depreciating this country shall not stand to lose.

In that connection, I should also like to know whether this matter has engaged the attention of the authorities of the Reserve Bank, because primarily this is a concern of the Reserve Bank and it is the function and duty of the Reserve Bank to see that the sterling balances, which form the foundation of the currency system to a certain extent of this country, remain unaffected by any fluctuations that may take place in the monetary conditions of the post-war world. I should like to know from the Honourable Member whether the Government of India has had any consultation with the Reserve Bank authorities in this respect, and if so what opinion the Reserve Bank authorities have expressed and what action Government propose to take on that opinion.

My Honourable friend, the Finance Member, the other day was asked a few leading questions by my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, who was very anxious to help him out of what he considered to be a rather uncomfortable position in which the Finance Member had put himself. My Honourable friend, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir asked as to whether the sterling balances will be available, for instance, for making purchases in America. Repeated questions were asked but no satisfactory reply was given, and the Honourable the Finance Member only said that he could not give any categorical answer to such a question and that everything would be regulated by the relation which would prevail between sterling and dollar, which would be a post-war problem. That is exactly the reason why we should want to safeguard our

position. But then, Sir, if there was at any time any doubt in the mind of any Honourable Member of this House as regards the exact object with which the proposed reserve fund is to be set up, that doubt should have been dispelled by this time by reason of the comments that have appeared in the British Press, in which they have taken for granted that this reserve fund will be available for supplying India with goods from Great Britain. This is what I find in the *Times*:

"India would be the first large post-war market visible for Britain's heavy industry."

Then I come to the *Economist*, which says:

"As an important consolation, Britain's magnanimous financial arrangements with India have created a volume of sterling which must ultimately be used for British exports, thus aiding employment in certain export industries after the war."

That is definitely the object with which this reserve fund has been created, and it is no use my Honourable friend taking umbrage when we make this statement, on the ground that suspicion should not be imported into the consideration of purely economic questions.

It is really an irony of fate that in such matters India has to play with loaded dice, loaded against herself.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Finance Department' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, this question is rightly engaging the attention of not merely Honourable Members in this House but the entire country outside. And its importance cannot be too much emphasised. There are various points of view from which this question can be considered. First of all, whether we have a proper backing for our currency. I have in my hand the statement of the Reserve Bank of India, dated the 5th February, 1943, published in the Gazette on the 20th February. On that date the currency notes issued are stated to be 614 crores as against 180 crores at the beginning of the war. It means that the increase in the paper currency of this country has been 320 per cent. in the course of this war, since September, 1939. I am not today going into the facts of that unprecedented expansion of paper currency. On the Finance Bill we shall have sufficient opportunity for doing that, but I am more anxious that the security of the currency notes should be placed above all reproach or above all danger. Now, what is the matter with our currency, these 614 crores of currency notes? I am sorry to say that more than 614 crores which are supposed to be the security for this are not available in case of emergency. First of all, the sterling reserves are 367 crores and then we have the Government of India rupee securities which are 189 crores and add to it 82 crores of balances held abroad. If you add these, you have not merely the whole of the paper currency of this country unsecured or of any security except one I. O. U. of 614 crores backed by as many as 442 crores of money abroad and 199 crores of the Government of India's own security.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I trust the Honourable Member who understands these things is not counting balances held abroad as part of the backing for the currency.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am not, but I must count that there are other moneys not available in this country. I quite agree that so far as the currency reserves are concerned, these balances held abroad are in a different category. This is elementary but I cannot ignore the fact that in addition to 367 crores of sterling reserves the sterling held abroad is 83 crores, and the worst of it is that these are held at $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. or $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: 1 per cent.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Let him give me the average and I will accept it.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I think the Honourable Member would be nearer accuracy if he said 1 per cent; if he is approximating.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am quite willing to say that it is approximating 1 per cent, but will anybody give willingly a loan at 1 per cent. of 445 crores of

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 rupees? I assure the Honourable Member that I am not here to create any racial prejudice or to indulge in exaggeration. But facts must be faced. . .

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.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I was pointing out that against the 614 crores of currency notes issued we have reserves to the extent of 450 crores outside India and 189 crores Government of India's own 'I owe you'. Sir, there is no greater well wisher of the Government in this war than myself, and, therefore, I must not give expression to any evil forebodings. But God forbid, supposing the war entirely went against us, Great Britain and India were separated, what would happen to the Indian currency. That thought should have occurred to my Honourable friend, Sir Jeremy Raisman, as our Chancellor of the Exchequer. I tell him that he should think it from the point of view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of India and ask him as an honest and conscientious man, I ask him as such whether any Finance Member or the Chancellor of the Exchequer of any country in the world will be justified in keeping outside the country the currency reserves of the nation on which the entire economic mechanism of the country is built and leave that country high and dry in case of an accident like this. I think it is impossible, it is inconceivable and it is only possible in this country. Does it show any confidence or trust imposed in India that our entire currency reserves are either outside India or of no value in case of a crisis? It is not a small sum, but the entire amount of Rs. 367 crores and more. I know the reason why the Honourable the Finance Member, during the course of general discussion, was so feeble and half-hearted, being conscientious, he knew that he was backing up a very weak case. Sir, this is the position about the currency reserve allocation and possibly of loss in case of a crisis.

Now, take the value of the sterling after the war. My Honourable friend knows that after the last war sterling went down so much that here in this country people could get one pound for paying Rs. 7/10/-. A pound which was worth more than Rs. 15 could be had if you paid Rs. 7/10/-. That happened after the last war. About 70 crores or more of Indian gold was lost in the mad speculation, because everybody could get a pound for Rs. 7/10/-. If the pound was so depreciated in the last war, the danger of its depreciation after this war is much greater when England is spending about 13 million a day in this war. I ask him, does he want to put this country into that great trouble? Something should be done to bring our reserves to this country so that they will satisfy eventually the needs of any situation that might arise. What do we find. The point which I wish to make is this. That not only has the sterling reserve been raised and kept in London but England's very urgent needs have been met to the extent of several hundred crores in repatriation of this country's debt. If I had been asked, we want money, pay back your debts, I would have gladly given them. But what is actually being done? There is a clear intention to keep our reserves outside this country without consulting the public opinion. Things are happening outside behind our back and it is taken as a high water mark financial statesmanship. These are the things which I do not like. I like a straight request to me. But what do we find? Our money is being spent behind our back and still we are asked to be grateful that crores and crores of our money are being spent in that way. I cannot understand that. But I do understand every move that is being made since the accumulated reserve. I ask the Honourable the Finance Member to take me into confidence. It is my country's money, it is the money belonging to these 40 crores people

of this country: they have a right to say something in this matter. Do not decide anything behind their back. Don't treat us like children as if we do not understand these things. I thought the Honourable the Finance Member will have consultation with Members of both the Houses and put his cards on the table. But what do we find? The Honourable Sir Henry Richardson, Leader of the European Group, comes and expresses his disagreement about getting the money back. He says "use it in England and keep it there". Then take the proposed Reconstruction fund. God knows what this reconstruction fund is. The *London Times*, The *Economist* all join in the same chorus. Do you think we do not understand? We know what you decide behind our back. Be square. If you want any help, it is our duty to do so, if we can. But you should not arrange things in your own way, i.e., behind our back. Therefore, I do beg of the Honourable the Finance Member as the custodian of this country's interests that first of all the accumulation of these great reserves in England is wrong. Secondly, when you propose to spend them without our consent it is wrong. Therefore I beg of my Honourable friend the Finance Member in all earnestness, do not be under the thumb of foreign interests. I have every consideration for British interests in this war and am willing to come to any reasonable arrangement if you want me to, after consulting me. But that you should do everything behind my back and then have an inspired agitation from Sir Henry Richardson here to the *London Times* in U. K. does not at all impress me. I become very suspicious. I emphasise that this is my country, my country's reconstruction should be in the light of my country's requirements. I demand I shall be consulted. I shall not be met with a *fait accompli*. Above all these huge millions will be disposed of, adjusted, spent and invested only in the interest of the country, after consulting the people of this country. This is not an extravagant demand, this is a demand which I can make from a servant of the people of India. After all the Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman is a servant of the people. Ask him whether any servant would have placed 639 crores of rupees belonging to this country on which the economic foundation of the country, the country's economic life depends, whether any servant would have placed that in that state of jeopardy without regard to our interests and without consulting us. I only beg that we should be taken into confidence, we shall do our best for England consistently with our safety only if we are consulted.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa; Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the motion before the House. The purpose of this cut motion is well known and I do not propose to go into great details. The Honourable the Mover from Bengal has explained the real purpose behind this cut motion. We only want to get a guarantee that we will have a free hand in the utilisation of the sterling balance which is piled up in England. I do not propose to discuss at length on this occasion because I made elaborate comments when I was speaking on the general discussion of the Budget. If I remember correctly, the Honourable the Finance Member in reply to the Budget debate said that Canada also has agreed to lease and lend arrangements. I should like to ask the Honourable the Finance Member whether he realises the difference in position between Canada and India. Canada agreed to join the war out of her own free will, whereas we, at any rate, in the beginning of the war, were dragged into it without any consultation. That is what the Honourable the Finance Member should remember before he tries to give the analogy of Canada in that matter. Besides that, speaking financially, Canada had no alternative, after practically exhausting her sterling balances in England by the method of "Dis-investments" except to pursue the course which she did. She could only refuse to trade with England, because there was no capacity for her to do so on gold basis and she ultimately agreed to lease and lend arrangements, after English credit has been exhausted to a great extent. This is the position which I have been able to understand. Again about Argentine, she

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

also has some sterling balance, but for all her purchases which she wants to make in India she wants that sterling balance to be utilized. This only means that she also is anxious not to have any sterling balance in England for post-war conditions. Certainly it means that there is a suspicion in the minds of the Dominions and other countries that the sterling will not be able to maintain its position as a stable currency in the future world. It has already depreciated to some extent. As I said when discussing the General Budget, India can make no forecast to what extent it will depreciate in future. Of course, I know that it will be the effort of His Majesty's Government to maintain its position, but how far they will succeed in that is a matter of opinion. So, naturally our anxiety is that we should not take the risk and for that purpose we want a guarantee from His Majesty's Government to the Government of India that the sterling balances will be available to us for conversion into dollar exchange without any loss to us and without any depreciated value. Therefore, we will be able to get back that sterling balance in the form of gold. It will not be for England to dump the goods they manufacture into India just to liquidate that sterling balance. That is the only position about which we are anxious and the country is nervous. Our main object in discussing this cut motion is to bring home to the Honourable the Finance Member the gravity of the position and we urge that he should convey to His Majesty's Government the feelings of this country and he should give us a guarantee that he will see there is no possibility of any risk that the huge sterling balances we have at the moment will be frittered away. We only hope that the Government of India would realise the gravity and importance and magnitude of this issue and we, on this side of the House, are trying our level best to persuade the Government to do what best they can and to give us a guarantee that what they are doing is in the best interest of this country and that we will be consulted in the utilisation of these balances to the best interest of the country. Of course, the Government of India will be able to place all information before us and we will be able to devise the best manner in which the balances should be spent.

With these words, I support the motion.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, I must confess to a certain amount of embarrassment in attempting to discuss matters of this kind on the floor of the House, when the financial relations of countries, not merely ourselves and Britain, but the relations of Britain with other countries are also involved. I cannot repeat too often that this matter cannot be viewed or dealt with on the simple lines which certain Honourable Members seem to think. It would hardly be possible for a matter of this kind to be discussed with complete freedom in almost any legislature. There are many aspects of such a question which Governments can only deal with in consultation with each other and they cannot do more than take account of the interest of their own countries and the views expressed by their citizens. But it is quite impossible that every stage of the relation of countries in matters of this kind should be fully explored and explained in public discussion. It is from no desire to do anything behind the back of this House that I shall have to refrain from going into this subject in the detail which Honourable Members seem to expect. But I also feel that the whole question is capable of being presented from a somewhat different angle from that which has been adopted by the Mover and his supporters.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, said that he was fully in support of Britain and the war effort of the United Nations and I believe him so to be. But I find it difficult again to reconcile that with some of the things he has said. Now, he asked the crucial question "what would happen if Britain suffered defeat: if the United Nations were defeated". I agree that is a crucial question, but my answer to him would be that in that event India and the world

would lose a great deal more than the three or four hundred crores of the sterling balances which we are discussing today.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I agree with you there.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: If my Honourable friend wishes that I should make some arrangements which will guarantee him against a world cataclysm of that kind, then I must admit that I have no answer. India has a stake in victory—you cannot get away from that. All the countries, the United Nations, stand or fall by victory in this war, and it is impossible to conceive what the consequences would be to the major part of humanity if victory were not achieved. Now, I do not understand what, in those circumstances, my Honourable friend expects. He says: "What has Britain been giving; what has she given?" Well, I ask him how are the sterling balances arising? On the one hand India is providing certain goods and services for the war effort, yet she has a very favourable balance of trade with Britain and with the United Nations. Why is that? Is it because the United Nations and Britain are not providing in return the goods which India needs? No. The point is that at the present time the goods which she needs are the goods necessary to ensure her safety. The whole productive capacity of Britain is at present concentrated on the production of the weapons of victory. It is because Britain is producing these goods not only for herself but for India and all the United Nations that she is not left with any margin of productive capacity wherewith to balance the goods and services which she is receiving from India. So, on the one hand, India to the extent that it is judged that her financial capacity is inadequate to enable her to accept the final liability for the contribution which she is making to the war, to that extent she receives sterling credits and those sterling credits cannot be wiped out because the trade in the other direction is one for which no credits are given. It is because the supplies to India take the form of guns, planes, tanks and all the massive paraphernalia of modern war which are either supplied free by His Majesty's Government or supplied on Lease-Lend terms by the United States of America. I think, Sir, that these are very relevant considerations and particularly my friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, who subscribes wholeheartedly to the war effort must recognize that they are relevant. Does he, in the present circumstances, expect that Britain, in addition to sending the only goods she can produce, should send other goods in order to extinguish the sterling balances.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Consult us.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Well, he is being consulted in a sense at this moment. Nothing is being done behind his back. The effect of these arrangements is patent for everybody to see. These are matters which are being discussed not only in India, but in all countries of the world. It is a common problem. It has been solved in different ways in different countries.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Nauman, objected to my citing the instance of Canada, because he said that the cases were not on all fours. But I would remind him that it was he who asked me what the Dominions were doing. Now, Sir, this type of problem, as I said, arises all over the world. It arises wherever contributions are made to the common effort of the United Nations. Well, what should be the model for India's attitude to a problem of this kind? Honourable Members have mentioned the Argentine. I would remind them that that particular country happens to be, as far as I am aware, the most pro-Nazi of the South-American States. Is that the model which my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, particularly would choose as an example for India's conduct? Again, models have been drawn from the conduct of the United States of America when she was at the stage not only before she entered the war but before Lease-Lend, at the stage when it was an entirely open question in America whether anything should be done on behalf of the Allied cause, at the stage when Britain alone faced the Axis menace and when America

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

had not yet realized that if Britain went down in that struggle America's turn would come next. Why should attention be concentrated on the kind of adjustments which had to be made at that stage in America's history and not on any later stage when America had realized how much she had at stake, and had to come to the conclusion that whether there was payment or not the weapons of war ought to be provided? Now, the Mover of this motion in the first place made some observations on the matter of the proposal mentioned in my Budget

speech in regard to pensions, and he referred to certain discussions 3 P. M. which took place before the Joint Parliamentary Committee, when, in connection with the suggested safeguarding of pensions, a funding scheme was proposed. There is all the difference in the world between that proposal and the proposal mentioned in my Budget speech. There is no question here of safeguards, and there is no question of funding. The proposition here is that you have a certain amount of sterling about which, on your own showing, you are uneasy. Now, to the extent that you can utilise those funds to meet liabilities which you have, and which you know will be coming along, in what way is it imprudent or undesirable for you to utilise the assets about which you say you entertain misgivings in order to clear your account? It is not as if you were handing over the money to anybody else. The results of your investment come back into your hands and you have the same discretion as you ever had in regard to the application of those funds.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): Why do you call it an investment?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Because the position is comparable to that of a man who finds himself in possession of a capital sum with which he does not know precisely what to do at the moment: in fact, in the position of a man whose opportunities of employing his capital are exceedingly limited. He casts the probabilities of the years that lie in front of him and he sees that there are certain liabilities which he will definitely have to meet, and if he has a problem about his capital he may invest it in a way which will enable him to meet those liabilities as they fall due. That is an investment surely. It is an investment because he puts aside for a time being that capital on which he receives a definite interest.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: What is the rate of interest?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: He receives a rate of interest appropriate to the length of time for which the money is invested.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: You did not mention it before.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I did not mention it because, although Mr. Neogy spoke about it as though it was a *fait accompli*, that is not the case. It is still a proposal and a matter under the consideration of the Government of India, and it has not yet been actually formally put to His Majesty's Government. But it is essentially in the nature of an investment because the rate of interest appropriate to the employment of money for so long a period would naturally be considerably higher than the rate of interest which can be obtained on the balances while they are invested in short term Treasury Bills. That brings me to the point which my honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, made. He said would anyone ever invest such large sums at such a rate, at the rate of one per cent.? Well, I am glad to say that we ourselves are able to borrow comparable sums at the rate of one per cent. or even less. Our own Treasury Bills are on a similar basis, and there is nothing unusual in that rate of interest for sums which are only invested for such a short period. It is true that you may not know how better to invest your money when that short period elapses, and, therefore, until you can devise a better use you remain on the short term one per cent. basis. And that is the relevance of the higher yield which could be obtained by a scheme such as that which I have mentioned.

Mr. Neogy repeated the criticisms of the proposal for a Reconstruction Fund. He again talked about it being a fund for the reconstruction of Britain. Well, Sir, I find it difficult to understand the attitude of my Honourable friend. If a man owes you a debt he can pay you by goods or services. It is a common place that in the international field you must ultimately be paid in goods or services. You start off by saying that any scheme which keeps him employed in services to you or in making goods for you must be barred. That is for his advantage, not for yours. I do not understand the position of my Honourable friend, or why he finds it difficult to appreciate my reference to importing suspicions or political prejudice into the matter. It must be remembered that after this war the position will be very different from what it was a few years ago. It will not be the case that a world producing vast quantities of goods is looking eagerly about for customers. The position for a very long time will be the exact reverse. We have to remember that there are the devastated countries of Europe. There is China: there is Russia: and there is the enormous material damage which Britain herself has suffered. Now, in those circumstances does my Honourable friend think that it is absurd to suppose that you may have some difficulty in getting your goods from any part of the world? Does he think that you are in the position of a man walking about in the bazaar and shaking the money in his pocket and wondering what he would like to buy? The essential fact which must be faced up to is that there is scarcity, and that there will be scarcity not only during the war but for many a long year thereafter, and our proposition was that we should set to work now and see to what extent we could prepare now and put ourselves in a position to take advantage of the circumstances as they will exist after the war, and be in a position to indicate our claims and the order in which we desired them to be satisfied. If my Honourable friend sees a sinister motive in that, I am afraid I cannot understand him. It may well be that consolation is seen in England, which after all finds itself, as a result of a common war effort, incurring an enormous debt to India, it may well be that there is relief at seeing a possibility, at any rate, of dealing with this problem; but does that mean that it is not to the advantage of India?

My friend, Mr. Neogy, emphasised the fact of my embarrassment and my easiveness in my reply to a question by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. I can see nothing evasive in the statement of that simple position. Sir Cowasjee Jehangir's question was in effect "Can an obligation which Britain is incurring to India be capable of being transferred to other countries, or part of it, so that India will receive the goods which she requires from other sources?" My answer to that is quite simple. It depends on the relations which will obtain in the post-war world between Britain and those other countries. Surely, there is nothing evasive about that. It is a simple statement of fact. The sterling assets represent a debt from Britain to you. You say, will it be possible to transfer part of these for use in other parts of the world? That immediately brings in the question of the relations of Britain with those other parts of the world. In order that you may be able to draw goods on this account from other parts of the world, Britain must be able to transfer goods or services to the sources from which you would wish to draw your goods and services. In other words, that is a multi-lateral arrangement, whereas at the present moment what is being incurred is a bilateral obligation; and before a bilateral obligation can be converted into a multi-lateral one, there must be international arrangements, some international recognition, some international system which will enable the necessary economic processes to take place. . . .

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: May I clear up one doubtful point? The Honourable Member calls it a debt from England to India. I do not know whether that is the right expression to use. At any rate what I believe it to be is a certain amount of money in sterling belonging to India in England. The debt

[Sir Cowasjee Jehangir.]

has been paid. It is there in sterling with the Reserve Bank; it is no longer a debt; it is money there. The question was, if exchange is available between England and America, will there be anything in the way to stop India buying from America, provided the exchange is there, provided the sterling can buy the dollar?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am afraid I have not really got time to explain that point. The point is that in so far as the sterling credits are not at present convertible into goods, they are in the nature of a debt, and that is the correct way of looking at them. They are not actually money immediately available for conversion into goods or services.

I wanted before I sat down—I have only a minute left—to say that surely the proper approach to this question is this: India is making a certain contribution to the war effort of the United Nations. If, as we all hope, those efforts result in victory, then India will have certain claims to make on the post-war world. She will have claims to make on the basis of the contribution which she has made to the common victory and on the basis of the needs of her people. In my opinion, nothing that India can do can put her claim on a higher level than that. The questions will be, what has India contributed to victory, and what are the needs of her people? I believe that when those questions come to be dealt with, India herself will have a place at those international discussions and will be able to argue her own case and to explain her own needs; and in the light of that case and of those needs India will be able to receive her due share of what the productive resources of the post-war world can afford. I do not think that anything you can do can put your case higher than that, and I do not believe it would be to the advantage of India to try and put her case in any other way.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Division: Muhammadan Rural): May I ask one question?

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The time is up. The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Finance Department' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Now, it is the turn of the unattached Members.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Item 52?

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Motion No. 42.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am surprised. The note which I received from the Government Whip mentions me as the first Mover.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Demand for Grant has already been moved. Now, cut motion No. 42 is to be moved.

DEMAND No. 12—EXECUTIVE COUNCIL—*contd.*

Grievances of the Personnel and Students of the I. M. D.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

I move this cut motion in order to draw the attention of the authorities to the substantial grievances of the personnel and students of the I.M.D. (British Cadre). The educational standards required for qualifying for this department have been raised progressively from year to year, till today only the best qualified young men, men who have the highest mental, physical and moral equipment can hope to pass into this department. They are required first of all to complete the I. Sc. examination; then they have to cover a course extending over a period of five and a half years as military medical students. In addition to that they invariably also qualify and pass their M.B. and B.S. degrees. In spite of this rigorous and protracted nature of their education, in spite of the highly-trained and specialised knowledge which they have acquired, the authorities today are discriminating and continue to discriminate against the men in this particular department. They hold warrant

officer rank, and yet these men holding warrant officer rank in what is characterised as a British cadre are the only men in the British army to be denied the allowances which are granted to warrant officers of all the other British cadres. An I.M.D. warrant officer does not get separation allowance, he does not get any marriage allowance, he does not get fuel or electricity allowances. I say without any qualification, and the authorities are not in a position to deny it that these I.M.D. men, from the point of view of education, training, ability and specialised knowledge, tower above their contemporaries and equals in the other British cadres. Compared with them the British warrant officer who has risen from the ranks by dint of long living in the services like the Royal Indian Army Service Corps or the Indian Army Ordnance Corps—the British warrant officer is a semi-illiterate and half educated person. Yet you deny to Anglo-Indians in the I.M.D. the allowances which are given to these other British warrant officers. The least that one can say of it is that it is an indefensible and unjustifiable policy of discrimination, a policy of discrimination which has been practised against one of the finest body of men in this country. A finer, a more reliable, a more highly qualified or more devoted body of medical men you possibly could not find in any other part of the world. And yet, as I have said, these are the only people qualified as members of the British cadre, who are denied the allowances which are granted to warrant officers of all the other British cadres. They are also discriminated against in the matter of promotion. Promotions and accelerated promotions to officer ranks are given to warrant officers in the other Corps, like the Royal Indian Army Service Corps and the Indian Army Ordnance Corps. While they are getting accelerated promotions to officer ranks, the warrant officer in the I.M.D. is precluded from these accelerated promotions. He has to wait for 20 or 22 years before he can expect to get a commission in his own particular department. With regard to the condition of those who are qualifying to-day as entrants into this department, I can only say that the most unnecessary restrictions are being placed upon these from men offering their services in an officer capacity. The Government to-day is subsidising the civil medical students in the last year of their course,—subsidising them to the extent of Rs. 100 a month as an inducement, I won't say as a bribe, but as an inducement to secure their services on the completion of their medical course. These civil medical students, whether they qualify as graduates or merely qualify as licentiates, immediately on the completion of their medical course, are given commissions. But the I.M.D. student, the military medical student, who, after doing his I. Sc., after doing 5½ years as a military medical student, and in addition, has also qualified as a graduate in medicine and surgery—he is not only not offered a commission, but precluded from applying for a commission. He has to wait in his department for a period of 3 to 4 years before he can even so much as apply for a commission. In college, not infrequently, these medical students who pursue a course which is co-terminous or co-equal with their civil medical contemporaries, not infrequently sweep the board of all academic awards and prizes. And yet they have to wait owing to the restrictions imposed on them—they have to wait 4 or 5 years before they can apply for a commission which is given to licentiates. To-day the Government is crying out for qualified medical men, they are using all kinds of inducements to bribe people, so to speak, into accepting commissions. Here you have men of the finest type, with good social, mental and moral antecedents, with the highest possible educational qualifications—not only are they not allowed to offer their services, which they are eager to do, but they are prevented by Government from offering their services. I can only make an appeal to the authorities concerned, first, to remove the grievances of the personnel holding warrant officer rank. They are absolutely the best qualified warrant officers in the British army, and yet you withhold from them the allowances which are given to warrant officers in every other section of the British army. You are not even giving them to-day the separation allowance

[Mr. Frank R. Anthony.]

which was given to them in the last war. To-day the I.M.D. men who goes overseas has to maintain two homes on exactly the same pay as he was drawing before the war. Finally, I would ask Government to consider seriously the withdrawal of the restrictions imposed on the military medical students. They are among the best qualified, and the most competent medical men in this country. They are not only willing, but they are eager to offer their services for commissions in the I.M.S. I would ask the Government to withdraw the unnecessary restrictions against their offering their services. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I wanted to ask one question but could not do so while the last speaker was on his legs. One thing is, is he not confusing the two classes of Commissions, the permanent Commissions and temporary Commissions? I could not make out from the speech of my Honourable friend this particular point, because those persons who are in permanent service, when they are promoted, naturally get a kind of permanent Commission, but those who are being recruited now from the colleges and who are given Rs. 100 a month get what you call a temporary Commission. I hope that my friend or the Honourable Member in charge will explain this point so that we may come to a considered judgment. This distinction exists not only in the army service but also in the services connected with educational institutions, because we are recruiting some persons now for war service. We prepare students in the engineering college and we give them higher salaries than those which the permanent staff are entitled to get.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: On a point of explanation, Sir. The restriction I referred to is a restriction imposed on those men offering themselves for temporary Commissions in the I.M.S. Now,

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member cannot make another speech.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: I have to explain it sufficiently.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): No. The Honourable Member cannot do that.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi (Secretary, War Department): Sir, I have listened with the very closest attention to the remarks of my Honourable friend, Mr. Anthony. He first referred to the question of promotions in the I. M. D. The position is that the British cadre of the I. M. D. consists of 414 officers, of whom 100 have been granted Emergency Commissions in the I.M.S., that is to say, 25 per cent. In this connection, I may bring to the notice of the House the fact that it is only since 1925 that I.M.D. officers of the British cadre possess qualifications like the M.B.B.S. Previous to that, their qualifications were not as high as they are now. As regards permanent promotions, promotions to commissioned ranks in the Department are made by selection up to 10 per cent. of the strength of the cadre.

The next point that my Honourable friend raised was that those who have joined the I.M.D. were precluded from applying for Emergency Commissions until after four years of their service. That is not a fact. It used to be four years, and now the period has been reduced to one year. That was done four months ago. There is really no analogy between the students in the Civil Medical colleges to whose cases he referred and the case of these military students in the medical colleges, because the House is probably aware that the whole of the education of these military medical students is financed by the State. Government pays a capitation fee to the medical colleges concerned to cover the cost of the medical education of military medical students who subsequently join the I.M.D., British cadre. In addition, the State pays a stipend of Rs. 60 per month to each military medical student. Surely, it is not unreasonable that particularly in view of the shortage of warrant officers that

they should be permitted to apply for Emergency Commissions, one year after they join service.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): May I put a question? Did I understand the Honourable Member to say that the period of four years which used to be the rule before an I.M.D. officer could apply for Emergency Commissions in the I.M.S. has been reduced to one year?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: Yes, Sir. That was done quite recently, in November 1942.

The next point my Honourable friend raised was as regards various allowances admissible to warrant officers on the Unattached List and not admissible to the I.M.D. of the British cadre. This raises a very wide question and all I can say is that I will have it examined.

There is one matter I would like to mention and it is this—that the present position is that the non-commissioned Assistant Surgeons of the I.M.D., both Indian and British cadres, are not employed as medical officers in military hospitals. The whole question of utilising them in the capacity of medical officers in those hospitals and raising the status and emoluments of those so employed is under the most active consideration of the Government of India from the broadest possible point of view, and I hope that it may be possible to announce the decisions of Government in the very near future. This announcement when made will, I trust—I was almost going to say I feel confident—be found to meet all the legitimate demands and aspirations of the I.M.D. I hope that, in view of what I have said, my Honourable friend will see his way to withdraw this motion.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: In view of the Honourable Member's explanation, I beg to withdraw my cut motion.

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

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The next motion to be taken up is in the name of Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, No. 50.

Government attitude towards the Press in India and the working of Press Censorship.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The object of this cut motion is not in any sense to make the position of the Press in India more difficult than what it is. Sir, the Press in this country has come to such a stage that its utility to the people of the country is getting progressively more and more limited and the people are vitally interested in having a Press which enjoys a large measure of freedom in the matter of giving news and in keeping the public informed. The House is aware that in India, in six provinces, there is now no popular Government functioning. The House is also aware that by reason of circumstances that have developed since last August ban on public meetings is fairly extensive. It exists in practice in every province and so far as my province is concerned there is no place where public meetings can be held in order to ventilate the people's grievances which are largely of a political character. Under these circumstances one naturally feels that a further restriction in the shape of press restrictions drives the people as it were to a sense of frustration. That is certainly not good for India, not good for its rulers. Nor is it good for the war effort. I shall, before I finish, make some suggestions with regard to how this matter can be tackled but I do believe that as the subject is one which is not very well known to the House and as the House is perhaps not conversant with the various situations which developed since November, 1940, in the matter of the relations between the Press and the Government, that the whole position has got to be reviewed in this House. The beginning of the relationship between the Press and the Government arose from an organisation set up in November, 1940, when the Conference of Editors of all India newspapers met in Delhi. As a result of that, an agreement was arrived at between the Government and the newspapers

[Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari.]
called the Delhi agreement. There are two specific points in regard to the Delhi agreement which I believe the House should know. One was that the Editors of newspapers on their part offered support for the war effort, qualified perhaps in the sense that they promised to do nothing to impede it and on the part of Government a categorical assurance was furnished to the Editors that the Government will do nothing to stifle normal political activity. But since the date of the agreement, there has been continuous trouble. The Delhi agreement received the blessings of the highest authority in this country and I believe that letters were sent to every Provincial Government to the effect that they must do their best to respect this agreement, so that the atmosphere in which it started was good but later on in the process of working the agreement, there was systematic and deliberate violation of the agreement in every instance on the Government side. The real trouble about the agreement seems to have been the unwillingness of the Provincial Governments to observe it and act upon it. So far as the Central Government was concerned, its views then were apparently completely in accord with the views of the Editors' Conference. It was the Provincial Governments that were not willing to give their support to the Delhi agreement. One of the provinces that set the ball rolling in this respect happens to be the United Provinces where the persecution of the *National Herald* and the *Sainik* was started. It was felt even by the Editors of papers which could not be said to profess extreme political views, by Editors of Anglo-Indian papers that the U. P. Government never concealed their dislike of the Delhi agreement and were not willing to accept the agreement.

I would like the House to remember at the same time that November, 1940, was the time when the first civil disobedience campaign was in operation. The Honourable the Home Member in another connection drew the attention of the House to the first civil disobedience campaign and the Delhi agreement was inaugurated and carried on successfully at a time when normal political activity was in a state of suspended animation and consequently there was a certain amount of strain in the matter of relationship between the Government and the public. But there is one factor which the House should not lose sight of. It was that though there had been an agreement between the Editors and the Government the Government by reason of the fact that it had a scheme of Press control through a Chief Press Adviser in Delhi and Special Press Advisers in the provinces was able effectively to control the news that passed through the news agencies. So, except such papers as had their own particular service organisation, the news agencies furnished only such news that the Government of India wanted them to furnish. That is a point that has to be noted because the question of censorship, the Government doling out the news which the people have got to believe in, was started from November, 1940, when the system of press censorship was introduced. There is another point which I would like the House to note. The advice of the Special Press Advisers has always been voluntary and no paper was really compelled to accept it. But in the provinces trouble was caused because of the fact that a particular Editor did not accept the advice of the Press Adviser and executive action was taken against him. Legally, no action was taken because such instances have not questions of the violation of any law. But Editors who chose to brush aside the advice of the Press Adviser were always subjected to harassment by the executive. That was how the system broke down in the provinces. The system continued through various vicissitudes until May, 1942, and after the break-down of the Cripps Mission I think the Government of India first set the ball rolling in openly discarding the Delhi agreement. I want the House to mark this that a revision in the working of the Delhi agreement did not synchronise with the so-called inauguration of the civil disobedience movement in August, 1942. A revision was really attempted much earlier; it was some time in May, 1942. And the All-India Newspapers Editors Conference, I am told, had been definitely told

that there has come a time when the original understanding has got to be revised because the time at which that understanding was arrived at was less pressing. The Government were good enough to say that in the main the Editors observed the agreement and only a few of them really did not co-operate to the same extent. After paying lip sympathy to the co-operation received from the Editors Conference, what the Government of India did want was that the arrangement should be set aside and that Provincial Governments should be given power to overrule the usual method of consulting the Advisory Committees before taking action. That, Sir, was the beginning of the trouble, the trouble that has been systematically continued since May, 1942.

The House is well aware that further restrictions were imposed on the press subsequent to August, 1942. In the press note issued on the 10th August, 1942, the Government made it clear that they had no desire to suppress news and they were not unmindful of the Delhi agreement and the atmosphere in which it worked. But, then, Sir, came the question of registration of correspondents by newspapers and this question was dealt with in various ways by various provinces. At the same time, on the 11th August the then Member in charge of Information and Broadcasting, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, expressed on behalf of the Government that arising out of the situation that was in existence on August 11, 1942, the Government did not feel that they should stifle papers which were supporting normal political activity. It is very difficult to describe now or in August, 1942, what is normal political activity and what is not unless it be that the making of speeches in this House is the only normal political activity in which we can indulge. From that day started the trouble and various restrictions were imposed by the Provincial Governments and there has been a systematic harassment of papers in various provinces. I would like the House to mark this. The restrictions imposed are of this nature. The Special Press Advisers in various provinces had sent circulars detailing the restrictions imposed. I would like to tell the House what the Bombay Press Adviser did because he behaved in quite a different manner from other Press Advisers. The Bombay Press Adviser in a circular dated the 18th August said that no registration of correspondents was required so far as the city of Bombay was concerned but the newspapers should not publish anything about conditions in jails, details of trials and allegations of police severity. That is the crux of the whole problem. We have been pleading in this House at any rate ever since I came here, about the police excesses and about severity in jails. Questions were asked and various other devices were adopted to bring these facts to the notice of the Government. How are we to tell the Government what our grievances are? You cannot have public meetings. You know there are no popular Governments in six provinces and there these Governments think that whatever they do is right. Needless to say, the sense of frustration amongst the people grows with the growth in number of reports of harassment in jails and acts of police aggression since no authentic report about the occurrences was forthcoming in the Press. The newspapers are prohibited from publishing these news even to a limited extent.

The position that came into being was followed by a regular crusade against newspapers. Bihar is one of the worst instances. So far as the United Provinces is concerned, the *National Herald* had already stopped its publication. In Bihar the *Search Light* was asked to stop publication and no reason was given. The other English paper—the *Indian Nation*—owned by the Maharajahdiraja of Darbhanga, who, I have no doubt, gives much of his time and money, to war effort, stopped publication because the publication of the paper could not be pursued under these conditions. Two Hindi dailies stopped and one Hindi weekly also stopped publication. The Government has now started their own paper. They have started an English and a Vernacular paper. So far as the Punjab is concerned, although it enjoys provincial autonomy, in a way there has been trouble there

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too. So far as Bengal is concerned, the publication of the *Star of India* was suspended for one week and the latest victim is the Vernacular paper in Bombay *Janam Bhumi*. In Bombay that press was confiscated merely because some news in addition to what the Press Adviser allowed was published with regard to Mahatma Gandhi. Whether the news was of a character which was inaccurate or which tended to excite people, nobody has been told but it seems that by some queer act, whether by an apology or otherwise, the order has since been rescinded. So far as Delhi is concerned, we all know here the history of the *Hindustan Times*. The *Hindustan Times* has been in trouble since August last. The House knows that in August last the Editor of the *Hindustan Times* was arrested merely because he did not follow the order of the Special Press Adviser to confine the news of the Congress civil disobedience movement, as they called it, to two columns. But when the Editor was released, further orders were issued by the Press Adviser and that paper suspended publication. Sir, the paper revived again after what was called the Bombay Conference's resolution was accepted by Government. The Honourable the Home Member made it quite clear when an adjournment motion was moved in this House that this particular paper did not really keep within the terms of the resolution of the Bombay Conference. Sir, the Bombay Conference's resolution is nothing but a reiteration of the Delhi resolution. At the Bombay Conference the Editors agreed that they should avoid the publication of anything which may incite the public to subversive activity; or convey suggestions or instructions for illegal acts, or is an exaggerated report or unfounded allegation with regard to the excessive use or misuse of their powers by the police. In fact, the Bombay Conference did not materially alter the purport of the Delhi resolution. Nothing seemed to have happened so far as the various instructions issued to the press to stop publication after the Provincial Governments accepted the Bombay resolution. The *Search Light* of Bihar is still banned. As regards the *Hindustan Times* after it has announced its intention to resume publication, after the Bombay Conference resolution was accepted by the Government, the trouble started again over the publication of news in connection with Bansali's fast and precensorship over certain type of news and comments thereon was imposed. Further restrictions were imposed as a result of the banner headlines that appeared in the paper about Mahatma Gandhi's fast. The first day's headlines were, it was said, excusable. The second day's headlines were considered to be an offence. On the top of it the allegation was the omission in the correspondence between Gandhiji and Government of a sentence which was considered absolutely important. Sir, one does not feel that there was anything in the paper against which action could be taken by the Government. Restrictions are still there, nothing has been done to remove them though the circumstances to meet which they were imposed have ceased to exist. That is the whole position. I would like to ask the Government to consider how and whether that relationship with the Press is going to be changed. I believe the Government can do it. It is true Government has opportunities of dealing with Editors themselves and they can, therefore, come to some agreement whenever there is a dispute. Then comes another important question and here I would like to add one more instance and it is this: Telephone orders were sent to the *Hindustan Times* just after the resignation of three gentlemen who were Honourable Members of this House and used to sit on the Treasury Benches not to publish their photographs in the paper by the Assistant Press Adviser. I would like the Honourable the Home Member to tell us if that was a fact.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: I would in conclusion try to impress on the Government need to realise the difficulties of the press acting under such

restrictions. In part the situation could be improved by making the Press a Central subject during the period of the war. I say this not because of the excessive confidence that we have in the Central Government but because the whole scheme has been put into operation because of war and in the name of war effort. During the duration of that war it is only right that the Central Government should take up the handling of all questions relating to the press, so that there may be some standardisation and some settled place to which every Editor could go to represent his grievances. I hope I would receive an answer from the Honourable the Home Member which would be satisfactory to the Press and the public. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Sir, the Honourable the Mover has dealt with this motion in what I may venture to call extremely reasonable terms and there is very little in the speech, almost from the first to the last, with which I or Government can reasonably disagree. The only thing that surprises me is that he should have thought it necessary to move a motion of this kind to censure the attitude of the Government towards the Press.

(Here the Mover made some observations about the purpose of the cut.)

I understood that it was a token cut. But the token was intended to be a token of displeasure at the attitude of Government towards the Press. But still it is difficult for me to understand it, because, if there is one thing for which I have worked hard ever since the Delhi agreement of 1940, it was to improve the relations between Government and the Press, to make their consultative arrangements more adequate and to give the Press opportunities of putting their difficulties before Government personally rather than carrying on a long distance barrage.

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

And I was under the impression that I had been to a large extent successful. I do not myself think that there has been any period during my association with this matter at which on the whole the relations between Government and the Press have been more promising than they are now. I admit there are occasional tiffs, but the House must remember that in tackling this matter we have had to face rather unfamiliar ground. There are very strong influences urging the Press in certain directions: Government at the same time have very difficult and very important objects to watch. According to the terms of the Delhi Agreement, whenever there was occasion for disagreement on some matter or other I can honestly say that I have always done my best to hear the newspaper Editors, to consult with them and consider their point of view and to put it to the Provincial Governments; and to a very large extent we in the Home Department have been successful in obtaining recognition of that point of view. It must be remembered and I hope the House will always remember in discussing this subject that newspapers and the Press are a subject in the concurrent legislative list. That means that although both the

Central and the Provincial Governments have power to legislate on matters concerning the Press, the whole administrative authority in dealing with the Press rests with the Provincial Governments and it is impossible to expect the Central Government to take a matter of that kind entirely out of the hands of the Provinces. The Provinces have their own problems to consider and in many of them circumstances differ entirely from those in others. Some Provinces have a Press which is predominantly friendly or open to suggestion. Other Provinces have not. Some Provinces again have Ministries, others have not. Where you have a Province governed by its own representative Ministers elected by the people of the Province, it is extremely difficult to impose a particular point of view on them from the Centre. Therefore, I hope the House will remember that the Home Department in dealing with a subject like this

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has only a qualified part to play. We ourselves have tried to adopt this policy, namely, that in matters of all India concern, we endeavour to place certain objectives before the Provinces, certain objects which it is desirable to secure in their dealings with the Press, but we leave it to the Provinces to decide for themselves in the light of their own relations with the Press, how those objects can best be achieved. But one thing on which we have always insisted so far as it was in our power to do so and that was that the objects in view should be attained wherever possible by voluntary agreement with the Press. I am glad to tell the House that that has actually been the case to a very large extent, ever since the Delhi Agreement of 1940. The restrictions which have been complained of have related mainly to factual news about particular sorts of events in regard to which the Government of India were directly interested from an all-India point of view, or occasionally the Provinces were interested from a purely Provincial point of view. But editorial comment has from the first been, I think, entirely without restriction. I am not quite sure what partial restrictions, may exist in a few Provinces, chiefly the Ministerial ones, but generally speaking, ever since the Delhi Agreement the principle adopted in regard to Editorial comment was that it was quite free, but that if any individual newspaper published something in its editorial columns which was considered to be definitely improper or dangerous from the all India point of view, then action was taken against that paper alone.

The Honourable Member has quoted the case of the *Hindustan Times* in particular. That, I am afraid was one of the newspapers as I explained to the House earlier in this Session, from which we failed to obtain the desired co-operation.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): May I bring to the notice of the Honourable Member that some items of news published in English newspapers is not permissible so far as Urdu papers are concerned.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I was not aware of that. If the Honourable Member will give me instances, I will look into them.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I will collect information later on and submit it to the Government.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have already explained the whole history of the *Hindustan Times* at some length to this House earlier in this Session and I do not think it is necessary to go into the whole matter again. But I would say that I should be extremely surprised to learn that there was any truth in this alleged telephone message about the publication of photographs of my erstwhile Honourable colleague, and considering the fact that almost day by day, the *Hindustan Times* cartoonist reproduces our lineaments with more or less recognisability, I should have said that that was a complete reply to the Honourable Member's suggestion.

Sir F. E. James: Is it not possible that on this occasion at least it was the *Hindustan Times* whose leg was pulled. I believe the telephone message was a hoax.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have heard of such things happening sometimes to other members of the public. I should not be at all surprised if someone conceived the idea of hoaxing the *Hindustan Times*, though I should have thought that a responsible paper of that kind would have been proof against such a thing.

The present position in regard to newspaper editors is this. In their plenary session of the all India Newspaper Editors' conference at Bombay they passed a resolution dated 5th October, 1942. The Editors, while protesting against certain measures of precensorship or measures equivalent to precensorship which were enforced before, agreed that the Press should voluntarily exercise restraint in regard to the publication of accounts of incidents relating to mass disturbances and that they should also avoid the publication of anything which

offended against certain principles, a, b, c, d and e, which they stated in their resolution and which were the very principles of which the Government wished to secure observance. That resolution was a definite step on the part of the all-India Editors to meet the Government point of view and the Government of India responded to it at once. They put that resolution to the Provinces and suggested that the Provinces should consider it favourably. As a result practically all the Provinces, I think all except one, accepted the resolution in the spirit in which it was offered and from that day onwards there have been no statutory restrictions imposed on the Press except in certain individual cases or relating to particular incidents. I think the House will agree with me that that on the whole is a very satisfactory situation and that it does not indicate any real breach between the Government and the Editors, and so long as that kind of co-operation is forthcoming, we shall do our best to welcome it and to meet it. That is all I have to say in regard to this motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is, "That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100." The motion was negatived.

Dearness Allowance.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, as most Departments are not paying dearness allowance to their employees, this cut motion is moved against the Executive Council Demand. Sir, the question of dearness allowance is very simple and very serious. So far as I can recollect, having read the 1931 census figures, I can say that the number of people dependent on public services, like the Central and the Provincial Governments, Municipalities, Local Boards, Improvement Trusts and Port Trusts and other statutory bodies, the number of people dependent on their livelihood on these bodies including their families was one crore and fifty lakhs. How much that number has increased during the last ten years, I have not yet been able to ascertain from the figures of last census. But I can. If the figures that I have quoted from the 1931 Census' perusal are reliable then today the number of people who depend for their livelihood on Government or semi-Government services must be somewhere near two crores. And when it is remembered that the local bodies take their cues from the Central Government and the Provincial Government, it comes ultimately to the test whether it is the Central Government which lays down broad and generous principles or whether it does not. We have, therefore, to test whether the Central Government in this country—whether in regard to Railways, whether in regard to the Posts and Telegraphs, whether in regard to other Departments of Government—are just and reasonable to their employees in the matter of dearness allowance. Sir, I want it to be clearly understood that in making this demand for adequate dearness allowance, I am asking for no improvement in the condition of the Government employees since the 3rd of September, 1939. No improvement is urged although the standard as it existed in September, 1939, was very low. I have accepted that as a starting point and only demand that to the extent that the rise in the cost of living has deteriorated and lowered the standard it should be rectified and made good. Therefore, I am asking for no improvement, no minimum wage. Only take the standard that existed on the 3rd of September, 1939, and in the words of the Rao Committee "wherever the poorest are concerned, the compensation should be full"—that is what I am asking also.

Now, Sir, let us see what is the cost of living and what is the rise in the dearness allowance or wages which the Government has given. The pre-war wheat prices were somewhere between Rs. 2/10/- and Rs. 2/12/- per maund. Today they are anywhere between Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 per maund. So the prices of wheat have gone up by 400 to 500 per cent. The price of rice, the next staple food article, is not even quoted even in the general index number of the cost of living but it has risen anywhere to 300 per cent, or a little more. So much as regards the staple articles of food. Others have risen more or less to the same extent.

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What is it that the worker next wants? Clothing. About clothing, Sir, what was costing Rs. 2/8/- to manufacture is now sold at nearly Rs. 7 wholesale, and how much the retail price of it is only the last consumer can say. There also the prices have risen from nearly 275 per cent. to 325 per cent.

About housing, Sir,—because food, clothing and shelter for the worker are all the things that I am asking for; I am asking for no luxury; I am asking for no amenities excepting barest necessities—what is the cost of housing? The cost of housing is that where it used to cost annas eight per month, it is now costing somewhere near Rs. 6, 7 or even more. Therefore, if you take the average of the cost of food, clothing and shelter, the cost of living has risen on the whole to 600 to 700 per cent.

As against that what is the dearness allowance which the Government have given? In this respect I must say that some of the private employers are, at any rate, more alive to the needs of the situation. In the Labour Conferences, which the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar has been holding, the minutes will show that one employers' representative admitted that the workers should get the pre-war standard. And, at any rate, so far as the Bombay Millowners, the Tatas and some of the Delhi employers are concerned, it must be said that they are trying to live up to the ideal of pre-war standards. But what is it that the Government have done? As against that rise from 600 to 700 per cent., or the all-round rise which is given at 225 per cent., what is the rise in the dearness allowance which Government have given? May I say, Sir, that the rise nowhere exceeds 60 per cent. and falls short of even 10 per cent. in many cases. So the average rise which the Government have given to their employees is not more than 30 per cent, at the best, as against a rise up to 225 per cent. in the general standard or a rise of 600 per cent. in the price of food, clothing and shelter alone.

Now, I ask the Government, is there any relation between the two: namely, that the cost of living should rise to 225 per cent. and the dearness allowance to be given would be not more than 30 per cent. on an average. I ask the House to lay their hands on their hearts and find out whether what I am asking is fair or not—only four annas in the rupee. I am asking for no luxury; I am asking for no cinema; I am asking for no kind of amenities. What I am asking for is the barest necessity. Is Government justified in their attitude of refusal? On the one hand the Essential Services Ordinance and other war-time legislation pins down the worker to the job in which he is engaged. He cannot leave it, he cannot change it, he cannot remain absent, he cannot resign, he is to continue there on the pain of being very seriously dealt with in a penal manner even to the extent of losing his entire Provident Fund that he might have to his credit and exposing himself to other penalties, while on the other hand the Government are not bound to compensate him to the extent of even four annas in the rupee in the cost of living.

I find, Sir, that many officers are attending races in Bombay, Delhi and Poona—almost everywhere whenever there is a race. Their wives are moving in motor cars with two lap-dogs; they go to dances and dinners, while these wastages, these luxuries, this open extravagant living is going on in Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere, workers are expected to starve and let remain pinned down to their jobs. The Honourable the War Transport Member paid heaps of compliments to the Railways workers during his Budget speech, but when it came to giving them food, shelter and clothing, he has very cleverly retired. The same is the case of Posts and Telegraphs employees, the same is the case of sepoys and chaprasis whether in this city or elsewhere.

Now, Sir, the question, therefore, that arises is this: I think in the last two years the Railways have poured into general revenues, railway reserves and so called depreciation fund something like 120 crores of rupees. The Postal Department has done the same on a smaller scale. The public utility concerns are made to pay crores into the general revenues of the country while the poor

worker, who makes the huge incomes possible, who makes your war machine go on, who works long hours day and night, is not being allowed even to make both ends meet. I ask, Sir, in the name of humanity, in the name of fairness and commonsense, in the name of the war effort, that a Government which deny to their workers, who are making the war machine go on, the elementaries of human existence, are the biggest fifth columnists. It is not that there are fifth columnists outside the Government but in the departments of Government which deny to their employees the barest necessities of life. When I see these gentlemen in dance rooms and at dinners and their wives with their lap dogs the sight presented to me is so atrocious that my blood boils at the neglect of the humble man who works for the war machine and these people enjoy without any regard for the worker's families and children. The cost of fuel has gone up so many times that even if they get food how are they to cook it. Humanity seems to have left the Treasury Benches. Otherwise I cannot understand this sight of waste, extravagance, inefficiency, corruption and incapability in a thousand forms on the one hand going on in Government and the honest, loyal, hard-working employees of the Government starving. I ask the conscience of the Government to awaken. The Honourable the Railway Member has announced with a flourish of trumpets that he is feeding five lakhs of people. I challenge him to prove that on the floor of the House. There are six lakhs of railway workers. They have got families say each of three or four. The railway population in this country is 25 lakhs of people. I respectfully invite him to say on the floor of the House that he is feeding even five lakhs. What is he doing? He is offering wheat in some places, rice in other places. In some places there are empty shops, or shops without commodities. He does not supply everything. What is the need of publishing and informing an ignorant House and publishing in the papers that the Railway Board is feeding five lakhs. It is an absolute mis-statement. It is incorrect. It is most misleading, and it is, therefore, heartbreaking. He might be giving wheat in one place and rice in another but it is entirely wrong to say that he is feeding the population of the railways. There are shops without foodgrains. He does not send cloth. He cannot give shelter. Not 10 per cent. of the railway workers have got homes where they can live. What is the use of misleading the public? What is the use of publishing a statement which cannot bear the light of day? And what is he prepared to offer against a rise of 125 per cent.? What is he offering to the poor man? It is not more than an average of 30 per cent. Let him not boast of this. It is an entirely unjustified and unwarranted statement which will not be swallowed by the public. Even when he gave a dearness allowances, the availability of the food is so scarce and the price so heavy that the worker cannot get anything. If the workers take the law into their own hands, if the hungry millions revolt, if they rob so as to get some food, the fault will not be theirs but that of the Treasury Benches who are living in a world of their own. They think like the philosopher of Dickens. That gentleman wanted to see how long a horse could live on nothing. So he gave it a sheaf of hay one day; the next day three-quarters; the next day half; on the last day he gave one blade. And the horse was alive and he was going to announce to an astonished world how a horse could live on nothing. But to his great horror the horse died the next day. This worker is being placed by the Treasury Benches in the same position and there are these experimental philosophers who want to see how little the worker can live on in a day. They are living. They are alive. They are existing. They are existing miserably. I get telegrams about starving miserably. Poor fellows, not knowing proper English, they think a man can starve gloriously. Only a Mahatma can do that! Everybody must starve miserably. Of such telegrams, I can show you scores upon scores of them to Government. So from all points of view the situation is very disheartening. The workers are being exploited. The Government have become the biggest sweating machine for the purpose of talking

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of humanity, peace and international goodwill, and in actual fact starving the men who are loyal to them, who have stood with them. Now they are starving them with their eyes open with the full knowledge that they are starving them and misleading an ignorant world. The workers are in their helplessness daily whispering their prayers to God, and their requests to Government, but I find that up to now no relief has been forthcoming. The Honourable the Railway Member's figures are most misleading. What is true of railways is true of Posts and Telegraphs, of the chaprassis in the Customs, the Salt, Income-Tax and others. Altogether there are two crores of such workers and their dependents who are living a miserable existence while governmental officers are living a life of pre-war luxury and laughing and enjoying at the cost of these poor men. I say, Sir, the House should not tolerate this inhumanity, this injustice, this rank ingratitude to the people who are making your war machine go on.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I could go on *ad infinitum*, but I have to observe the time-limit. I will not occupy the time of the House any more except to say that the House owes it to these two crores of people that they should get at least a bare subsistence, bread, if not butter and jam, and clothing. A chaprassi met me the other day and showed me that his coat had nearly ten patches. So I beg the House to carry this motion and teach the Government a lesson.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): I thought that the Honourable Member had been advocating the cause of those who were entirely or almost unemployed. But he has taken up the cause of those who have at least some support. I do not like to stand in his way, but he should have given the amount of dearness allowance as provided under the different heads. Speaking subject to correction, I gathered that in the general revenues about 167 lakhs of rupees had been provided for dearness allowance excepting the Posts and Telegraphs and the Railways; and that arrangements had been made to provide foodstuffs for railway employees by running trains. . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Will the Honourable Member speak up? If the Honourable Member wishes to come down nearer, he can do so; it will be better.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: I shall speak from here. I am submitting that some sort of relief has been provided for those employees whose cause my Honourable friend has taken up. Arrangements have been made to supply them with foodstuffs at cheaper rates than those at which the outside poor public can get them. The Honourable Railway Member said the other day that they were running shops for the railway employees. I do not stand in the way of giving more dearness allowances to the poor employees, but the Government should have come forward with a certain amount at least for those who are starving, who have got no means of employment and for whom there is no facility to get any foodstuffs or necessities of life at all: no arrangement is being made for them; and the control system is also standing in their way. I urge their case: if not at present, at least by some supplementary demand the Government should provide some amount to help the poor starving public. . . .

Pandit Nilakantha Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Is this in order, Sir? It is unemployment he is dealing with.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think the Honourable Member is really straying from the motion.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Sir, I just want to draw the Honourable Member's attention to one or two points. In one of the documents supplied to us, it was published as a footnote—they have worked out certain formulae by means of

which they calculate the quantum of the dearness allowance applicable to different towns. I wish these formulæ may be supplied to us—at least to those who are interested in it—because we should like to know the basis of calculation; and it will help other employers to calculate in a similar manner.

I should like also to point out that though dearness allowance is a great relief, it is not sufficient compared with the prevailing prices. I pointed out the other day that the price of a rupee according to the official documents has been reduced to 6 1/4 annas. . . .

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: The purchasing power of the rupee.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I say the purchasing power of the rupee is reduced to 6 1/4 annas; and though relief is given to employees who are drawing salaries up to Rs. 60, the persons who are really in great difficulty are the middle class people whose income is between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200. They also suffer a good deal on account of the reduction in the purchasing power of the rupee; and if we can see and examine the formulæ on the basis of which the Government have fixed these limits I think it will be a very great help to us to discuss this matter; they may be applied to all servants whose salaries may be more than Rs. 60 and also to determine whether the present rates of dearness allowance is enough for those drawing Rs. 60 or less.

I also pointed out on the previous occasion that the Government of India have entirely ignored the very large numbers who are employed not directly by the Government but by institutions which are supported partially or mainly by the Government, like educational institutions who receive grants from the Government of India and on the basis of those grants they prepare their budget. As soon as the Government gives a dearness allowance, there is also a demand in those institutions, and no institution can refuse to give a dearness allowance to their own employees when it has been sanctioned by the Government of India. The Provincial Governments no doubt have also followed the example of the Government of India; but they have given dearness allowance only to those who are directly in their service, disregarding entirely those employed by institutions partially maintained by Government. I would, therefore, request the Honourable Member to set aside in his budget in a supplementary grant some amount of money for this purpose also. Institutions supported by the Government should receive special grants of dearness allowance. Rules may be framed by the Finance Department on certain principles; if the Government is giving 50 per cent. of the total expenditure, then the grant to these institutions should also be 50 per cent. of what the Government of India allow to their own servants. Therefore, some formula may be found and worked out by the Finance Department; but I request the Honourable the Finance Member to accept the principle that the institutions now supported by and receiving grants from the Government should receive some benefit and should not be debarred from the benefit which the Government of India is graciously giving to their own servants.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, with regard to the remarks made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, regarding the supply of foodstuffs to railway workers, I feel that I should say something. I do not remember whether my Honourable friend was in the House at the time when I answered the question to which he referred but I then stated so far as I remember the phraseology, that 5,00,000 railway workers were within the scope of the railway shops. These figures were based on returns secured from the railways, and I believe them to be correct. It does not necessarily follow that all those workers are at present taking food supplies from these shops, one of the reasons being, as every industrial employer knows, that it is very difficult for the railway worker or any other worker to get himself out of the clutches of the dealer who supplies him with credit for his purchases. Nor do I pretend for a moment that the arrangements regarding the supply of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life are at all satisfactory yet. I never have pretended that. I made that perfectly clear in my Budget speech and that is the position today. But if you examine the conditions on the N. W. R.

[Sir Edward Benthall.]
for one moment, I think it is correct to say that on the N. W. R. all workers can get wheat at Rs. 6-10 against a market price which has been as high as Rs. 12-8.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Three times the pre-war price.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It has been more than three times the pre-war price. The price of wheat pre-war was, I believe, Rs. 2-10-0, and Government has paid, I think I am right in saying, up to Rs. 12-8-0. But the railway fixed the price of wheat at Rs. 6-10-0 and it is still selling wheat at Rs. 6-10-0.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: May I know if they are allowed to purchase for their family and dependants out of this stock at this rate?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I cannot remember without notice exactly what the conditions are on the N. W. R., but they vary throughout the railway. Each of them started their own scheme independently, and they allow different quantities on different railways. That is one of the difficulties we are up against. We have to get some uniformity so far as we can throughout the different railways, and we are trying to see that an equal measure of justice is done throughout the different railways.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Is it a fact that on the N. W. R. the price of wheat is three times the pre-war price of wheat?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That railway is selling at Rs. 6-10-0 against a pre-war price of . . .

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Rs. 2-10-0.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: And the increase in dearness allowance is 30 per cent. against a rise of 300 per cent. That is all I wanted to know.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The price on the N. W. R. is Rs. 6-10-0, and that price is fixed at Rs. 6-10-0 so that the railway will have to pay Government some price up to Rs. 12-8-0, an average perhaps of Rs. 10 or 11, and on each maund of wheat the railway will be subsidising the railway worker to the extent of Rs. 3-8-0 or Rs. 4-8-0. That is a very substantial benefit to the railway worker and that is a policy which we propose to continue—to stabilise the cost of living to the worker in order to alleviate his hardships in the future. A point that was made again was about travelling vans. I do not want to pretend that travelling vans are running on all the railways or that men living in gang huts are at present everywhere getting the benefits of stabilised food prices. That is not so. That again takes considerable time to organise, but I have seen these travelling vans operating on the railways, and I think it is the only way in which an equitable distribution can be provided to workers in outlying places. It is the intention, it is the policy of the railways to extend the use of the travelling vans, and to bring. . .

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Are all the members of the Indian Railway Employees' Federation, including its President, entitled to this concession?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am not entitled.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Any lap dogs?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Not even an ordinary dog.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Well, it is the intention to bring these benefits to the door of every employee on the railway regardless of what salary he is getting. It is the intention also to extend it to cloth. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta referred to the fact that certain employers are giving extensive benefits to their employees. That is true, and the result of it is the enormous price of cloth to which he referred. It seems to me that that was a very good illustration of what we should not do. We should enable our workers to be clothed at reasonable prices. It is to the best interests of the worker in the country that we should endeavour to stabilise their prices. This policy to which I am referring has the support of a great number of wise employers in the country and I

am perfectly certain, as I said in my Budget speech, that in the long run this policy of stabilising cost of living is in the best interests of the worker. I do not pretend, as I have said twice already, that what we are doing on the railways is yet satisfactory. We are more or less at the beginning of implementing a policy. I am equally aware of the feeling of the railway people about the present position. I get a large number of telegrams in just the same way as Mr. Jamnadas Mehta gets them. Very often the telegrams are duplicated to both of us. I am perfectly conscious of what the railwaymen feel at the present time. But, believing as I do that stabilisation of prices of their foodstuffs and other necessaries of life is in the best interests of the railwaymen, I feel that having formed that policy we should continue it as being the policy in the best interests of the workers.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: My Honourable Colleague has dealt with a good deal of what Mr. Jamnadas Mehta said in the course of his speech on this motion. I believe that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta was primarily interested in the cause of the railway employees. I think that, although Maulvi Abdul Ghani's remarks appeared to many not to be strictly relevant to the motion, they were from my point of view exceedingly relevant indeed. Maulvi Abdul Ghani talked about dearness allowance for the general population, and that is exactly the point. In other words, I would put it this way. What about a dearness allowance for the taxpayer?—that is what it amounts to, and in that case we shall all be trying to hitch ourselves up by means of our boots. It seems to me that a good deal of the logic of what he said about dearness allowance moves in that direction.

Sir F. E. James: Better join the Federation!

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: There is one little matter about which I feel that I cannot allow Mr. Jamnadas Mehta to go entirely unscathed and that is, his use of figures. Fortunately I caught his eye at one moment when I thought he was getting away with it, when he was talking of 225 per cent., rise on the one hand and 80 per cent. dearness allowance on the other. He also bandied about a good few more percentages in that way. He is very skilful at presenting a somewhat harrowing picture. In my opinion, the hardships to which all those of limited means including Government servants are subjected at the present moment are sufficiently serious without being made the subject of the type of eloquence in which my Honourable friend indulged. Government are fully and deeply conscious of the difficulties to which not only their own servants but other members of the general population are subject. Now, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta mentioned food, shelter and clothing and he talked of a chaprasi with a patched coat. Speaking of Government servants and particularly those of the lowest class on whose behalf Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, I trust, was particularly concerned, I would like to point out that Government does provide a good deal of shelter and that it also provides a good deal of clothing and when he talks of dearness allowance as being

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: What percentage?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: 30 per cent. as against an increase of 125 per cent., he ought not in fairness, in presenting his case, to exclude those elements which Government already provide. For instance, in this town of Delhi, we are involved in very heavy expenditure in providing housing for our own menials. Very large sums are being spent on them. Does that have nothing whatever to do with the question of dearness allowance? As a matter of fact, the attitude and policy of Government is, as far as possible, to try and deal with this matter, not by handing out more and more money but by trying to tackle the thing in some more fundamental way. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta handed a medal to private employees who generously paid dearness allowances and bonuses. As he very well knows, they are doing it very largely at the expense of the general revenues and to that extent they indulge in a form of economic sabotage. They make the problem more difficult for us, while they remove some of the means whereby we might tackle it. I am entirely opposed to that lighthearted

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

method of dealing with a problem which is fundamental to the whole economic situation.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You want to starve them?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I do not think the alternative is to starve them. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta is as well aware as I am that there are many degrees of difference between a completely uncontrolled dealing with the problem and an attempt to check undesirable tendencies and, whilst doing what is necessary, we must avoid it rebounding with several times multiplied force on the unfortunate community. That is the essence of the matter. Government are fully aware of the seriousness of this problem. They are aware of the seriousness of it not merely from the point of view of the individual Government employee but they are constantly conscious of the seriousness of it for the whole economy of the country and we are bound to have all aspects of the matter in mind in dealing with the question. That is why we cannot lightly adopt any automatic formula which might completely run away with us. We cannot exclude certain factors which may mitigate the hardships of individuals and in particular we must always concentrate as far as possible on alternative methods of action—alternative to the additional supply of purchasing power. We must concentrate on alternatives which will have a less unfavourable effect on the community at large and on the economic position.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is: ...
"That the demand under the head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100."
The motion was negatived.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not think there is time now for any other motion to be moved.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 9th March, 1948.