

17th September 1942

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

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Volume III, 1942

(14th September to 24th September, 1942)

SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1942

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1942

Legislative Assembly

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

Deputy President :

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MR. GOVIND V. DESHMUKH, M.L.A.

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZHNAVI, M.L.A.

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

CONTENTS

VOLUME III.—14th September to 24th September, 1942.

	<i>Pages.</i>
MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Members Sworn	1
Starred Questions and Answers	2—26
Statements laid on the Table	26—54
Deaths of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao, Seth Haji Sir Abdoola Haroon and Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney	55—59
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> —Extradition of Pandit Lakhpat Ram Sharma, Editor of the <i>Deski Rajya</i> —Ruled out of Order	60-61
Railway accident at the Burdwan Railway Station—Disallowed	61
Restrictions on the export of Raw Hides—Not moved	61
Failure to take measures for saving the Building and Record of Railway Clearing Accounts Office, Delhi—Not moved	62
Certain remarks of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief—Disallowed by the Governor General	62
Government Policy in adopting the New Standard Time—Leave refused	62-63
H. E. the Governor General's assent to Bills	63-64
Statement laid on the Table <i>re</i> Net Earnings of recently constructed Railway Lines	64
Department of Education, Health and Lands Notification under the Destructive Insects and Pests Act	65
Indians Overseas Department Notification under the Indian Emigration Act	66
Statements laid on the Table	66-67

	<i>Pages.</i>
MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—<i>contd.</i>	
Amendments to certain Motor Vehicles Rules	67—76
Election of a Member to the Defence Consultative Committee	76
Election of a Member to the Advisory Committee for the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India	76—79
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Posts and Air Department	79
The Repealing and Amending Bill—Introduced	80
The Indian Rubber Control (Temporary Amendment) Bill—Introduced	80
The Indian Companies (Second Amendment) Bill—Introduced	80
The Indian Railways (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	81
The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	81
The Code of Civil Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Introduced	81
Resolution <i>re</i> Amendment of Rules governing the grant of Travelling and other Allowances to Members of the Indian Legislature—Amendment of Sir Henry Richardson adopted	81—85
TUESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	87—133
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Alleged insult by the Delhi Police to Lady Volunteers picketing the Legislative Assembly Chamber—Ruled out of Order	134—36
Statement of Business	137

	<i>Pages</i>
TUESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—<i>contd.</i>	
Home Department Declarations of Exemption under the Registration of Foreigners Act	137—40
Motion <i>re</i> the Situation in India—Discussion not concluded	140—61
WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Member Sworn	163
Starred Questions and Answers	163—94
Short Notice Questions and Answers	194—96
Election of a Member to the Defence Consultative Committee	196
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Posts and Air Department	196
Home Department Declarations of Exemption under the Registration of Foreigners Act	196-97
Amendments to the Insurance Rules	197—209
Motion <i>re</i> The Situation in India—Discussion not concluded	210—31
THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Member Sworn	233
Starred Questions and Answers	233
Nomination of the Panel of Chairmen	233
Committee on Petitions	234
Presentation of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee	234
Motion <i>re</i> The Situation in India—Discussion not concluded	234—71
FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	273
Unstarred Questions and Answers	273
Motion <i>re</i> The Situation in India—Talked out	273—310

	<i>Pages.</i>
MONDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Member Sworn	311
Starred Questions and Answers	311—24
Postponed Questions and Answers	325—30
Short Notice Questions and Answers	330—37
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> the Alleged Maltreatment to Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Jauhar by the Delhi Police—Ruled out of order	337—39
Election of a Member to the Advisory Committee for the Utilization Branch of the Geological Survey of India	339—50
The Indian Companies (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed	350—54
The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Passed	354-55
The Code of Civil Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed	355—59
The Repealing and Amending Bill—Passed	359—62
TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	363—72
Unstarred Questions and Answers	372—79
Short Notice Questions and Answers	379—87
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Unsatisfactory Reply of the Finance Member in regard to early Opportunity for Discussion of certain Financial Arrangements between the British Government and the Government of India—Negatived	387—89
The Indian Rubber Control (Temporary Amendment) Bill—Passed	389
The Indian Railways (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee	390—99

	<i>Pages.</i>		<i>Pages.</i>
TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1942—contd.		WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1942.—contd.	
The Reciprocity Bill— Referred to Select Committee	399—412	Motion for Adjournment re—contd.	
The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages (Amendment) Bill—Motion to continue adopted	413	Restrictions on Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Dr. K. N. Katju and Detenus in the United Provinces—Disallowed	458-59
The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill— Motion to continue adopted	413	Maltreatment of Political Prisoners and Detenus in the United Provinces —Disallowed	459
The Muslim Kazis Bill—Mo- tion to continue adopted	413	Appointment of Mr. E. L. C. Gwilt to the Committee on Travelling and other Allowances to Members of the Indian Legislature	459-60
The Indian Evidence (Amendment) Bill— Motion to continue adopted	413	Resolution re Ban on the Khaksar Movement— Adopted as amended	460—86
The Legislative Members' Exemption Bill—Intro- duced	414	THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1942—	
The Aligarh Muslim Univer- sity (Amendment) Bill— Introduced	414	Member Sworn	487
The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill—Intro- duced	414	Transferred Starred Ques- tions and Answers	487—506
Resolution re Ban on the Khaksar Movement—Dis- cussion not concluded	414—18	Transferred Unstarred Ques- tions and Answers	507—09
WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1942—		Short Notice Questions and Answers	510—17
Transferred Starred Ques- tions and Answers	435—53	Statement laid on the Table	517
Short Notice Questions and Answers	453—58	Report of the Committee on Travelling and other Allowances to Members of the Indian Legislature	517
Motion for Adjournment re—		Resolution re Committee for Enquiry into the alleged Military and Police Ex- cesses—Discussion not concluded	518—44
Durban City Council's Move for Expropriation of Indian-owned Lands —Not moved	458	Election of Members to the Advisory Committee for the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India	544
		Appendix	545

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 17th September, 1942.

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.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. Aga Hilaly, M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official)

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I propose—and I have consulted all Party Leaders on the subject and they have all agreed—that the questions which have been put down for today and tomorrow may be postponed to the 23rd and 24th, so that more Members may get a chance of speaking on the motion, which is really the chief business of this Session. I have consulted all the Party Leaders and they are agreeable to this. If the Honourable the Leader of the House has no objection, I suggest that this course might be adopted.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Leader of the House): If that is the general wish of the Parties and the persons who are concerned in these questions, Government have no objection.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I suppose that the Government Members who have got to answer these questions will be ready to do so on the 23rd and 24th. Is that the general wish of the Members?

(Voices: "Yes".)

Very well. The questions will stand over.

†73*—91*.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What about the Short Notice Question?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I can drop it, if you like.

NOMINATION OF THE PANEL OF CHAIRMEN

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the House that under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I nominate Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta, Sir Henry Richardson and Sir Cowasji Jehangir on the Panel of Chairmen for the current Session.

†For these questions and answers see pages 435—53 of these Debates.

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to announce that under sub-order (1) of Standing Order 80 of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders the following Honourable Members will form the Committee on Petitions, namely:

- (1) Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang;
- (2) Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh;
- (3) Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi; and
- (4) Mr. N. M. Joshi.

According to the provision of the same Standing Order the Deputy President will be the Chairman of the Committee.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Sir, I present the Report* of the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts of 1940-41.

MOTION RE THE SITUATION IN INDIA—contd.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now proceed with the further discussion of the motion:

"That the situation in India be taken into consideration."

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): The issue in the present debate is not whether a difference of opinion exists in the demand for self-government. The Congress and the Muslim League do not differ on this issue. The difference lies in the connotation of the word 'self-government' and in the method adopted in achieving the object. The demand for national government is common but its connotation is different. We want equal partnership and right of self-determination. The Congress wants the rule of the majority and to maintain the domination of a particular class which from our experience of the Congress administration the Mussalmans cannot accept. Mr. Joshi rightly pressed the formation of a national government. He put the entire blame for not having it on the present Government. Suppose he becomes the Government himself. May I ask him if he will be prepared to frame a new Constitution for the interim period, which will satisfy both the Congress and the Muslim League.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): I shall do it when I become the Government.

*Not included in these Debates, but a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.—*Id.* of B.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: The plea which he will put forward will be that it might be pressed on the people in the same manner as the Communal Award.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Yes.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: But what is the use of a constitution for a national Government if it could not achieve national enthusiasm to win the war? There is also a difference in the manner of achieving self-government. I want to achieve it by constitutional methods. Some persons desire to have it by terrorism and by paralysing the Government. This method cannot achieve the object especially with the enemy at our doors. I put a simple question. Does the Congress want a national government? They cannot have it, much less can they run the Government without giving full satisfaction to the Muslim League and other minorities. Can any sane person believe that Japan will shed blood in this country only to instal a national government and then retire? If she ever comes, she will come with the intention of staying and ruling this country. However much a Congressman dislikes the present Government, he would not like to change it for the Japanese Government. We want a national government and not change of one foreign government for another.

The next issue that has been raised in the course of the debate is that the Government ought to have waited for another fortnight and given further chances of negotiations with the Congress. I request them to consider a few facts. They must have seen the leaflets and pamphlets issued by the violent non-co-operationists, describing their manner of action. It is not a sporadic outburst. These pamphlets show that a plan had been carefully drawn up and it could not have been done at a moment's notice. It must have been done in the interim period between the passing of the Working Committee's Resolution and the Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. It is very difficult to have negotiations with persons who believe that Japan will win the war and any negotiation with the British Government will prejudice their prospects with Japan.

Every supporter of violent non-co-operation clearly understands that violent action has always developed into terrorism or anarchism and general revolution and that ordered Government will be replaced by martial or dictatorial government, whether it be Indian or English or any other foreign government. If they believe that it will lead to the supremacy of the Congress, they are entirely mistaken. It may be just the reverse. These persons have only destroyed the properties of Indians valuing over two crores. Let the rich factory owners and businessmen understand that they do not expand their business by driving out their workmen and letting them do mischief in the cities. Finally, it will lead to mischief in their own factories and the rich men will soon realise their mistakes when they are asked to pay to the terrorists, at the risk of their lives. Some of the capitalists have already received such letters of extortion of money. I do not know what is the information of the Intelligence Department of the Government of India.

A philosopher classified wise men into different categories. He said a wise man is a person who foresees an incident and takes precautionary measure to avert the crisis. a semi-wise man waits till the incident has occurred and prepares himself to meet it; and a quasi-wise man first

[Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad.]

considers an incident to be an accident and does not get up till it is repeated; and a fool does not believe till he loses everything. Now, our Delhi Government is certainly not included in the first category of the wise Government and I am not sure under which of the remaining three categories I should put it. District administrations in many towns, especially in the United Provinces and the Punjab, can be put under the first category.

The next glaring instance of the proof of wise statesmanship is the burning of the Clearing Accounts Office where about a thousand clerks and peons were working. Their Deputy Chief was an A. R. P. officer who had two warnings before the actual burning. The officer watched calmly the burning of the office by a handful outside spectators and tamely came out and noticed that some of the clerks helped in the burning, which I cannot express in detail. The Muslim Sub-Inspector who intervened was beaten to death. In the absence of the Accounts Office, the Railway Board in their inquiry overlooked the fact that the burning of files helps the dishonest clerks to commit fraud in conspiracy with the station staff. The burning of the records helps the fraudulent clerks to achieve their objects.

I very much deplore that some political organisations are using the students for their party propaganda. Students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and it is in the interests of the country that they should be well-trained and well-equipped to fight the battle of life. Parents have entrusted their sons to the care of the teachers, but they do not lend the support to enable them to discharge their duties. In some cases, teachers are themselves drifted by the political current. Instead of stopping the students from leaving the classes, they themselves enjoy the holidays on full pay by asking them to leave the classes. They do not do their duties properly. If teachers face the public opinion and if the interests of the students are safeguarded, they will no doubt be temporarily unpopular but their work will be appreciated in the end about which I have got plenty of experience from 1920 to 1924 when we had this non-co-operation movement. I was exceedingly unpopular at that time but after the lapse of four years the people appreciated that I acted correctly.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): And now you are quite popular.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Lawlessness and indiscipline of students are resented by every Government. The Congress Government of the United Provinces fined the Aligarh Muslim University Rs. 2,000 for the burning of an old tent of police, the price of which was not more than Rs. 50. What the Congress Government would have done on the present occasion had the Muslim University been aggressive like sister University can be well imagined. With these words, I resume my seat.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, it is with considerable trembling of the heart that I stand up before this House to speak today. India is going through one of the greatest crisis in her very long and varied history. I would not be far wrong when I say that the crisis we are facing and to the solution of which all of us are striving hard to make some contribution is one of the

greatest crises in the history of the world, and it would need all the wisdom, political sagacity and statesmanship both of India and of England. I was born and brought up in the tradition of the union of these two great countries. I have lived 65 years of my life in that same tradition and now when I am nearing the end (*Voices of No, no.*) I am horrified to find that these two great countries are at the parting of the ways. I would proclaim with all the force at my command that no Government worth the name can abdicate to terrorism or subjugate itself to lawlessness. When the rule of law is supplanted by the rule of mob violence, the harm that is done to the population is incalculable; and if once mob rule can get some hold in a vast continent like India, it will take a long time before proper administration can be restored.

Sir, I was one of the first to publicly condemn the attitude of the Congress which drove it to declare lawlessness in the country in the name of a freedom movement. I was one of the first to publicly deprecate the attitude of the Congress, which exhibited a deplorable lack of appreciation of the grave danger of invasion to which India stands exposed today with the Japanese on the borders of Assam and Bengal. Congress is one party and it has no business, without the approval of and agreement with the rest of the people, to plunge the whole country into a revolution, at a time when her fate is hanging in the balance.

We have read the amazing statements made by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery and on Tuesday we listened to the statement of the Honourable the Home Member. In these statements, if I may say so, one would search in vain to find some constructive suggestion, some note of sympathy with the national aspirations of India. On the other hand, the whole burden of the statements is that the Congress is a nonentity. There is only an attempt to discredit and criticise the Congress. This, to my mind, is in sharp variance with the British Government's earlier attitude towards the Congress.

Sir, when Sir Stafford Cripps came to India as an ambassador of Mr. Churchill and his Cabinet, what did he do? Let me remind the House that he went straight to the Congress and thereafter to the Muslim League. What he said was this: "I have come to settle this with the Congress and settlement with the Congress alone matters." At a Press Conference he indicated that the Congress acceptance of the proposal is what primarily matters. If the Congress is a party with only a very small following in the country, why this anxiety then to appease the Congress only? Sir Stafford Cripps, when he visited India, ignored all parties excepting the Congress and the Muslim League. There the British Government was prone to make the same mistake as Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah make. Mr. Gandhi claims that the Congress represents the whole of India. I remember, Sir, that in 1932 at the Second Round Table Conference when Mr. Gandhi and others were striving to bring about a communal settlement, Mr. Gandhi said that he represented 95 per cent. of India. To that my Honourable friend, Dr. Ambedkar retorted with the question as to who were the other persons who represented that five per cent. which Mr. Gandhi did not represent. Well, Sir, Mr. Gandhi now puts up the claim that the Congress represents the whole of India, and Mr. Jinnah claims that the Muslim League represents the Muslim India. Both are egregiously wrong. Mr. Churchill recognises the claims of these two gentlemen whenever it suits him and discredits them whenever he deems fit. This time he has conceded that the 90 millions of Muslims are

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

behind the Muslim League and opposed to the Congress. This is absolutely incorrect. The paradoxical ignorance regarding Indian matters of this wise British Premier shocks me as it has shocked many who have read his speech. Is he not aware of the existence of important parties with very large following among the Muslims of India, like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Momins, the Ahrars, the Azad Muslims who do not owe allegiance to the Muslim League? Then what of the Muslims within the ranks of the Congress, however insignificant their number might be?

On that fateful day, the 9th April last, the Congress had decided to accept the Cripps proposals and, if they had not changed their mind overnight on the telephonic advice of Mr. Gandhi, there would today have been a national government for India, predominantly composed of Congress members. At that time the British Government were not so enthusiastic about championing the name and cause of the minorities like Muslims, Depressed Classes and the non-Congress Hindus and the States. Even Mr. Jinnah, who is not at all likely to err on the side of the Congress, admits that the Congress is the largest single party in India. I must, however say, that the largest parties are not the only parties that count. All parties, to my mind, are important especially at a time like this and must be considered. Among all such parties, among all men and women in India, there is unanimity as regards the ultimate goal. All want freedom. The difference among the various parties lies only in the path each elects to follow for the attainment of that freedom. If we must win this war—and we must—we cannot afford to let the lessons of the setback in Malaya and Burma be lost on us. We must profit by those lessons. This total war can be won only by rallying the people round the fight. No military, however strong, can fight effectively if the people are divorced from it. I owe allegiance only to my beloved country and the progressive features of mankind. The demand for transfer of power is the national demand. It is also in conformity with the ideals for which the United Nations stand and fight this war. I admit there are difficulties in making wide constitutional changes during these abnormal times. But they are not impossible of overcoming. Larger constitutional changes have been undertaken in the past during similar trying conditions and the Cripps offer itself disproves the myth of constitutional impossibility. In any case, viewed objectively, these difficulties must be overcome. It is no use harping on the existing differences among sections of the people. They are only apparent and on sight of the goal, which is common, must disappear as mist before the rising sun. Mere promise of freedom at a future date will not achieve this unity among the people and enthuse them. There is much deplorable distrust of Britain's intentions. For this, if I may say so, Britain has only herself to blame. With and since the Queen Victoria Proclamation on 1st November, 1858, the history of British connections in India has been a long line of broken pledges and promises solemnly given. This is no time, however, to harp on past sins of omission and commission on both sides. The enormity of the danger confronting this country overwhelms me, as surely it must overwhelm any one who has the country's cause at heart. To ensure the whole-hearted co-operation of India's 400 million people and her vast resources on the side of the United Nations, it is most essential that Britain should forthwith transfer real power into the hands of the Indian people and make this, the people's war.

The Honourable the Home Member gave us an estimate of the loss of property and material as a result of the present turmoil in the country. He condemned the actions of the people who caused such destruction. He painted lurid pictures of horrible and fatal attacks made by infuriated mobster civil servants and military personnel. I am not satisfied, however, that the brutality with which the people attacked Government offices and officers has not been retaliated with unusual and excessive force by the forces of law and order. I am informed that in various places, and Bengal, in particular, the military patrols indulged in indiscriminate shooting on crowds dispersing frantically but peacefully on their approach, and in doing so, did not at all observe the humane principle of shooting the unarmed beneath the waist. This, it is said, was done in order to strike terror in the minds of mischief makers, but it was inhumanly cruel.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths (Assam: European): No. Where was this?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: This was done in Cornwallis street, Central Avenue and College street and some other places.

Mr. K. O. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): My Honourable friend will have proof of it if he waits.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: This happened in Cornwallis street, and Central Avenue and I myself witnessed one of these incidents.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: I have got written statements from people affected and I will read them out on Tuesday.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: The time at my disposal is short, otherwise I would have given a complete answer to my Honourable friend with full details.

I agree with the Honourable the Home Member that "all ranks of Government servants, even the humblest, had as a whole stood firm and done their duty in face of all attempts to subvert or terrorise them". Their exemplary bravery and loyalty should be an inspiration to all Government servants for all times.

I must draw the attention of the Government of India to what Mr. Churchill, in the course of his recent statement, said on Congress. He stated that the Congress is a political organisation "sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests". This statement presumably is based on information supplied by the Government of India. I must most emphatically protest against such generalised insinuations against a section of the people as wholly unwarranted and uncalled for. This is only calculated to produce very unwholesome results and wean away even those who are sympathetic and co-operative in spirit. Both the Indian and the European commercial communities in this country are co-operating fully with the war effort. But the two fundamentally differ in their views as to how the present effort could be enhanced. Even eminent British and American experts have challenged the policy which the Government of India now pursues and which the European commercial and industrial interests here support. I need only name here Sir Alexander Roger and Dr. Henry Grady. The Indian commercial and industrial interests do

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

want political freedom because it is the pre-requisite to economic freedom, without which they will only remain Cinderellas of world commerce and industry. They want freedom also to enthuse the masses to work more and produce more towards the war effort.

Sir, Britain has so long professed to act in the role of a "Trustee". She must realise that her period of Trusteeship is over and India is getting impatient to have power in her own hands now and at once. As I see, no agency on earth can prevent the transfer of this power. Unfortunately every English official in this country, from the highest to the lowest, is grudging at every step the Indian getting or trying to get some of his responsibilities, and I am disclosing no secret when I say that the entire Government of India is open to this charge. Every British officer tries to keep as much control in his hands as he can and will not, on plea of efficiency, part with it till he is compelled to do so. That is what is making the position worse, and the reaction to that is this mass movement in the country.

I earnestly appeal, in conclusion, to Britain to show magnanimity, to part with the control of administration gracefully to the Indians, because the time has now come when India is determined to have that control, with the co-operation and goodwill of Britain if possible, without it if necessary.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, when I received the intimation about this Assembly being held now, I was very glad indeed because I thought that the House will be given an opportunity to find a solution of the present situation. But, Sir, when I came here I must say that not only I but many of my other Honourable friends have been disappointed. What I thought, and what the people thought, was that Government had changed its mood, and was in a mood now to make constructive suggestions to remove the present deadlock and ease the political situation. But we find that there is nothing doing here. What we have gone through so far is only an academic discussion without finding any solution for the removal of real difficulties.

What has been placed before the House by Government is only a bald motion of one line without any recommendation at all. No suggestion has come forward from the Government side. It seems Government only wanted to hear lectures from the Members of this House without suggesting anything themselves and without even saying that they were in a mood to do something which is very necessary at present. After I came here I found that Mr. Churchill had made a statement which was most deplorable, and also a statement made by Mr. Amery saying that there was no room for any further negotiations, which was also contemptible. In that state I thought that the Government of India had made up their mind to advise the British Government that they should not stand adamant like that, because that will not improve the situation. On the contrary, I should think, that it is simply suicidal to the very interest of the British Government. The British Government cannot rule here with repression as its policy. No repression has ever been able to put down the legitimate demands of people. The situation may be suppressed but it will be something underground, and the statesmanship requires that some early conciliatory steps should be taken.

Up to this time we have heard only the Home Member from the Treasury Benches and what he has said comes to this. He has simply wept over spilt milk and he is ready, by his policy of repression, to see other milk also spilt. He is ready to see bloodshed, he is ready to see that the situation should not be eased. He is throwing the burden on the people, he is throwing the burden on the Congress and he is throwing the burden on all parties, and he says that they are responsible. He has simply come here to reproach us. He has not said a word to the effect that his repression is excessive and that his repression was not called for and it was too hasty.

Now, Sir, one hope remains, and that gives us some solace. It is that the other Members of the Government—Executive Members—have not yet spoken or opened their minds. I would like to hear from them, especially from the Indian Members of the Cabinet, who profess at this time that they are for the country. Though in those chairs they say that their suggestions are not being rejected—they have even gone so far as to say that not even one suggestion has been rejected—let us now see what help they are giving, what advice they are giving to the Viceroy, and what help they are giving to the other parties including the Congress to come together and solve this problem.

Sir, I find that the motion before the House is to consider the situation in India. I think it is very vague. The motion itself is very vague, apart from its being incorrect. Always when motions are moved some recommendation is made in them, that means that something is suggested as to what should be done or what the Government want us to do. Here they say nothing. We are confronted with internal disturbances which were apprehended and which the Government said they were strong enough to put down. They have not been able to put them down at all.

The other questions are the internal disturbances and the Satyagraha movement and the launching of extreme repression by the Government. I must say that that there is one other situation also which is special to Sind, which is very distressing and depressing, not with regard to the present movement but with regard to the depredations that are being committed by an element called Hurs who are doing all sorts of mischief, sabotage, derailment of trains, murders, and so forth. Of course, the Government have introduced Martial Law there but you can understand what Martial Law is. It should not pass regulations which would affect the civil population.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): What do you mean by the civil population?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I mean the people who are innocent. Persons who have nothing to do with the Hur movement. At the present moment even an ordinary person committing an ordinary offence can be tried under Martial Law, whereas only ordinary law should apply to the ordinary people. But what I am submitting is that this is one of the phases in Sind which is disturbing. Then there is the question of floods. We are more or less bottled up at certain places. The lines have been breached. There is no passage to go one way or the other. The whole of Upper Sind is under water, and my own town of Larkana, which is a district town, and Dadu, are blocked on all sides. There is no route to go one way or the other. You can only move within those barricaded limits and no

[Mr. Lalohand Navalrai.]

more. Then, Sir, there is also the question of this movement. I am coming to this movement because, so far as the movement is concerned, we have heard from the Honourable the Home Member that it is very less there. He calls it remarkably so. And yet the atrocities that have been done by the police and the harm that is being done to the people is beyond imagination. It is a matter which should be put down. I shall say a few words upon that hereafter.

Then coming, Sir, to what the Honourable the Home Member had to say at length with regard to the internal disturbances—showing great sabotage having been done, fires having occurred, rail, road and telegraphs having been tampered with—and also he has tried to justify the intense repression that has been launched but has not suggested in the least the remedy to overcome the present position. Until the root cause is removed there will be no peace in the country. There are complaints all round in India that there has been excessive repression and harm done even to the innocent civil population. Even in a place like Sind, where the Honourable the Home Member admitted that the movement was much less, I say he went so far to admit that the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Sind continue to be remarkably free. Yet in Sind a responsible body of the Indian Merchants Chamber have given their own report, a portion of which was read by the Honourable Sardar Sant Singh yesterday and I would throw more light on it.

Sir, after this movement started and atrocities were being committed, the responsible and respectable Indian Merchants Chamber and Buyers and Shippers Chamber sat together to consider the situation. Sir, they appointed a committee from amongst themselves, in which there were Muhammadans also the name of one of them is Faridu Allah Lukhman Allahji. They were asked to get evidence of what was seen. This is what they said:

"From the depositions made before us by the various witnesses who are alleged to have been belaboured by the police, we have come to the conclusion that the police in dealing with the public, particularly on Tuesday the 12th August, 1942, has acted in a very high-handed manner and used more force than was actually necessary in suppressing the alleged agitators, and that it also indulged in indiscriminately assaulting innocent persons who were not taking any part in any demonstrations."

Then further on they say:

"The police used lathis not only for dispersing crowds, but they belaboured respectful persons going about their lawful business, either on foot or on bicycles. They also entered reading rooms, restaurants and clubs and indiscriminately assaulted persons sitting therein and also arrested a number of them. They chased the young boys, knocked them down with lathis and trespassed into the private residences of these people."

Then, Sir, further on it, said that some of the respectable citizens have stated before the Committee that at the police station, after severe beating by slaps, fisticuffs, kicks, etc., they were taken into a room and made to lie down on their beds with plain clothes men sitting on their chests: their feet were lifted up by another man and they were beaten and so forth. It was also stated that one Mackrani (the peculiar system of the Government to employ mackranis, hooligans) actually dragged a boy into a room, forcibly removed his pyjama and underwear with a view to committing sodomy. I say, Sir, if this is the deplorable state in Sind, what justification has the Honourable the Home Member to say that repression is not very tense?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell (Home Member): Is the Honourable Member aware that the Sind Government held an enquiry into the allegations and published the results?

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: I know. But in regard to this I was just going to say that while this enquiry was going on the Government, very openly and with an intention of white-washing the police, appointed one of their own Secretaries to make enquiries into a few instances.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: A Ministerial Government servant.

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: Yes, yes, whatever it is. They still get inspiration from the British Government. It is a deplorable way of saying that we have made investigations . . .

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Who is responsible? Sir Reginald Maxwell or Allah Bakhsh?

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: I think I will say both together. What I mean to say is this: If the Honourable the Home Member thinks that these allegations are false, the only course is to appoint a judicial inquiry, a public inquiry, take evidence and then come forward and say that not only in Sind but elsewhere also the severity is not so much. The Home Member suggested that the complaints should be made to the Provincial Governments . . .

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

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: But what is the use? They appoint one of their own officers with certain instructions and with certain terms of reference. The Honourable the Home Member says that the use of excessive force does not matter much. I was very grieved to hear when he said that it does not matter as force is used against force. That is a clear incitement to the police to do what they like. It is absolutely an incitement; it is an encouragement to them to say that even after this Assembly met here the Honourable the Home Member was in a mood to say: "Go on; commit all these atrocities, and you will be immune."

In his long speech the Honourable the Home Member has not told us any remedy to solve the question of the present situation. I say the remedy lies in removing the root cause. It is the political problem that should be solved. On this issue the views of all the political parties and recognised leaders have been more than once declared. All want independence for India. When it should come—now or after the war—is also not very much in dispute. If it is guaranteed after the war, the political parties have no objection to that; on the part of the Government also, the British Government stands committed to the declaration of Sir Stafford Cripps, as to the recognition of independence of India after the war; and also as to the formation of a constitution by the Indians themselves. But the question over which the negotiations between the British Government and the Indians broke is with regard to the establishment of a National Government in India now. All parties in India, not merely the Congress, are united and unanimous in demanding the transfer of power here and

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

now. The reason for it is that such steps will bring confidence and faith in the *bona fides* of the British Government. We have tried their promises several times

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

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Then I will say only one word

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Raihm): No. The Honourable Member cannot say anything more.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: In the end, I say that the Viceroy should invite all the parties, even the Congress party, and sit together to solve this difficulty.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, at such dangerous and anxious times as those through which we are passing, I most respectfully suggest that we should consider all our difficult problems most impartially, without prejudice, without sentiment, and if possible, without excitement. Sentiment plays a most important part in human affairs; but let it not blur our judgment, let it not lead us to conclusions which might be untenable and illogical. I specially plead for allowing sentiment not to run away with us, because I feel that a great deal of harm and damage is done to our country by all, the Government and ourselves, by pre-conceived ideas based on sentiment that has ruled through the last hundred years. I desire to speak on the problem as it faces us immediately, and I do not, with your permission, desire to divert on topics that have no connection with the present political movement, because I have no time.

The main reason for the Working Committee's resolution was in their own words: "mainly due to their hopes being dashed to pieces failing transference of real power to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its full contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world". I am quoting from the resolution itself. Never before has the Congress passed a resolution which has been so un-animously opposed by all schools of thought, by all political parties. It is not as if warning was wanting. As that resolution saw the light of the day, public man after public man either from the platform or through the press warned the Congress of the serious consequences of their decision and I think I can say correctly that no resolution of the Congress received less support from non-congressmen of all classes and of all creeds and of all schools of thought than the resolution passed by the Congress in August, 1942

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): Question.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: If my Honourable friend desires to question facts, I would only plead with him seriously and earnestly to have a little patience, and what is more, not to import excitement into the debate. I have uttered a correct statement of fact. I cannot remember any occasion in the past—and my memory goes back far longer than the memory of my Honourable friend, the Sardar

An Honourable Member: Question.

Sir Gomasji Jehangir . . . notwithstanding his grey beard I can tell you I am an older man than the Sardar—on no occasion was so unanimous a warning given to desist from the dangerous and disastrous path it had chalked out for itself; and what is more, we know that there are many men of influence, many men of wealth in this country, who have strong Congress sympathies, who perhaps have not declared themselves as Congressmen. Such men, to my knowledge, expressed apprehension and fears at the Congress programme, and I believe that the apprehensions and fears of such men who had assisted Congress financially in the past, were conveyed to the highest authorities of Congress.

Now, again in the words of the Congress resolution which throw some light on the reason which led Congress to pass that resolution, let me just quote a few lines:

"The abortive Cripps proposals which show in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed."

It was therefore the rejection by the Congress of the Cripps offer that was the foundation for the Working Committee's resolution.
 12 NOON. I am sure that many of my friends here are aware of the fact that there were many congressmen and there were many others as patriotic and as sincere as any congressman, who believed that the offer was as good as, and better than, any other offer that England had ever made to India . . .

Sardar Sant Singh: So far.

Sir Gomasji Jehangir: . . . and that the student of history may have to record that during these hundreds of years of world's history there have been few offers made, by a governing country to another country under its direction and control, of the character made by Sir Stafford Cripps. If you only throw your minds back to a few months ago when the Cripps offer was before the Congress and the Muslim League for their consideration, you will remember that there were numbers of men in this country, well known in political life, well known for their honesty, sincerity and patriotism, who were more than anxious that the Congress should accept the offer. And let me remind the House that the offer that was rejected by the Congress was not the original offer which was brought out by Sir Stafford Cripps. It was an offer vastly amended by Sir Stafford Cripps and the British Government during the two weeks of discussion that took place in this city. Therefore, let us not be led away in thinking that the Congress rejected the offer as we know it and as was brought out by Sir Stafford Cripps. It was the offer that was amended, and some inkling of that amendment has been given to the public by the press—it was that offer that was rejected.

I have no time to go into the reasons for that rejection, but it is a well-known fact that on the 8th April that offer was practically accepted. It was only on the 9th, the very next day, that something occurred and its rejection was announced to India and the world. But may I point out another fact which some of us are inclined to forget—that the demand made by the Congress on the morning of the 9th April did not have the complete support of the Muslim League, and if it had been accepted by the British Government as suggested by the Congress, I am afraid that it

[Sir Cowasji Jehangir.]

might have been strongly opposed by a political party worthy of the same consideration as the Congress itself. It is not much use our decrying either the strength, the influence or the power of either the Congress or of the Muslim League. We have to admit willy-nilly that the Congress is the most powerful political party in India. We have to admit that, although it does not represent the whole of India by any means, it is the most powerfully organised party in India. We have to admit willy-nilly that the Muslim League largely represents the Muhammadans as a whole. There can be no political party that represents every person, but as a whole it must be understood that the Muslim League does represent Muhammadan opinion. The very fact that there is one block in this House of my Muslim friends representing the Muslim League—I see very few outside that block except my friend on my left . . . (Interruption.) I see there is one behind me. But the fact remains that the Muslim League does represent the Muhammadans if any political party does. Therefore, I desire to point out that the demands made on the 9th April by the Congress did not appear to have the complete and absolute support of the Muslim League. That was perhaps one of the reasons why it was rejected. But it is deplorable, it is most unfortunate for this country that the offer was rejected. It has led to the Congress resolution, it has brought about, for the time being I hope only, a state of affairs in this country which cannot but be described as most deplorable.

Now I would ask myself, what is it that the Congress desired to attain by the decisions that it arrived at? It, for the first time, called the civil disobedience movement "open rebellion." We have had many civil disobedience movements in this country, but never have the Congress or any of its important leaders called them "open rebellion." On this occasion they called it "open rebellion." Naturally by the consequences that they would bring about in this country they hoped to attain their object of making the British Government quit India. They must have been over-confident is all that I can say, but suppose they did or will attain their object of forcing the British Government to their knees and making them quit this country, do the Congress leaders believe that once they themselves are in the saddle after the British Government have quitted, they will get the willing, cordial co-operation of the other parties and specially of the Muslim League? If they had that belief, may I ask, why did they not make an attempt to get that co-operation before landing the country into "open rebellion"? If they were confident of attaining their goal by "open rebellion," why did they not get that co-operation before they attempted an "open rebellion," and thus attain their object, most probably, peacefully? They failed to get that co-operation . . .

Sardar Sant Singh: Because of the British people here.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I have heard it on hundreds of occasions. May I tell my Honourable friend, the Sardar, that I have never known of two men who desire to be friends and who know that a third person is an enemy and desires to keep them apart, to fall an easy prey to that third person the enemy, if they have any commonsense. I cannot think much of any parties which can be made to quarrel by a third party even though they are aware of the fact that the third party is deliberately out for mischief. It must be due to weakness, mental, physical, and moral.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I interrupt my Honourable friend?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I do not wish to be interrupted. I do not give way. You get it back because you interrupted me. I did not interrupt you. The fact remains that they did not get that co-operation and they will not get it if they attain their object of getting into the saddle. They will only get a worse revolution than they have created if they believe that they can get that co-operation by coercion or by methods other than those of willing and friendly negotiations. Therefore, what is it that they desire to obtain? If they succeed, they must seek the co-operation of the Muslims and other parties. If they could do that, after the revolution, why didn't they do it before the revolution. If they believe that by revolution they can force the hands of the third party, then I confidently say that they are much mistaken. Then what is it that they were out to attain? I am not going to take up the time of this Honourable House by giving my own personal views which are of no importance. All I can say is that it is very difficult to conjecture what they desire to attain.

Now, time is slipping by. I will just touch on one aspect which has been debated in this House—who was responsible for these disturbances? The Honourable the Home Member mentioned the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee circular which has received publicity in the vernacular press already. I understand that the whole of that circular has been printed in the vernacular press of Madras. At any rate, he has given us an idea of that circular. May I be allowed to read out the speech of Mr. Vallabhai Patel made on the 2nd August on the Chowpatti sands, where according to the Congress Press a hundred thousand people were present. Giving an indication about the nature of the coming struggle, Mr. Vallabhai Patel said:

"That it could be described in one word—hartal; hartal not of the ordinary variety. The hartal should be spontaneous and such as will make Government sit up and think but also yield to the wishes of the people. The Government should be made to realise that it cannot function without the co-operation of the people. For instance, railways, posts and telegraphs, war industries and things like these cannot function usefully without the co-operation of the people. Render these inactive, let the railway men stay away from work, let workers make it impossible for the war industries to be carried on. The Government cannot but yield."

Now, there can be no doubt in my mind as to what was in the minds of the leaders of the Congress movement, when they referred to the civil disobedience movement. I will give the Congress leaders greater credit for ability and commonsense than to agree with the protestations of some people that the Congress believed that they could carry out this programme with non-violence. I cannot give them credit for such stupidity. I give them credit for great ability and great commonsense. I must come to the conclusion that they knew that this programme cannot be carried out with non-violence. It may be that others have assisted them; others of whom they may not have been aware have come in to assist them but from what I have heard it does appear that a good deal of the damage was premeditated, especially when they came to strategical points and, therefore, I cannot believe that the Congress continues to believe in non-violence—at least many of their leaders.

Mr. President, I had some more to say, but my time is exhausted. I specially wanted to say a word or two about repression. I want to ask my Honourable friends what a Swarajist Government would have done

[Sir Cowasji Jehangir.]

if they had been in a similar position to the present one. I desire to point out to this House what the Congress Governments did in the provinces, to put down violence—how they ordered shooting and how rapidly they came to the decision that shooting was necessary. I would like to point out to this Honourable House how the Congress Government in Bombay put down the Press, suppressed the Press and it was the High Court of Bombay which came to the rescue of the public. I would also point out that the greatest credit was due to the Prime Ministers of Bombay and Madras and of the Home Members in those two provinces, with what rapidity and with what ability they put down violence and what threats they sent out. I remember the Home Member, through the Police Commissioner, giving a warning to the rioters that if they did not desist from rioting and violence within two hours he would order out the Military to shoot indiscriminately. That warning stopped that violence, because it came from an Indian Home Member. I would ask my Honourable friends, especially the one who is the ex-Dewan of an Indian State, and the other who is a would-be member of the Executive Council, what they would have done in a similar position. Being responsible men, I maintain that they would have acted like those distinguished Home Members of the Provinces of Bombay and Madras.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Mr. President, although the Resolution before us does not, by its terms, direct our attention to any specific points it does, in fact by its intention, ask us to consider two separate subjects. We are asked in the first place to approve of the action taken by Government to put down the civil disobedience movement and, secondly, we are invited to examine the causes of those disturbances and if possible to suggest how those causes can be removed.

I do not propose to dwell at great length on the first of those two subjects, partly because it seems to me of less practical use than the consideration of the second subject and partly because it seems clear to me that the very catalogue of incidents, and the barbarous nature of the outrages themselves, make it quite clear to any thinking man that strong action had to be employed and that any Government which had failed to take that strong action would not have been worthy of the name of Government. We have had civil disobedience movements in this country in the past, we have had terrorism in the past, but never before have we had such deliberate, coldly calculated attempts to inflame public opinion with such dire results. If each one of these incidents had been an isolated occurrence, it would still have been necessary that the utmost rigour of the law should be employed in putting them down. But when we see, as we do see beyond doubt, that they conform to a single type, that in general they proceed according to a uniform plan, that they were part of a concerted and, fortunately, abortive attempt at open rebellion, there is no room for doubt in our minds that had this Government or the Provincial Governments, been guilty of weakness we should have been entitled to charge them with criminal neglect of their duties. They acted strongly at a time when weakness might well have been fatal, fatal not only to internal security but to the external safety of the country. Think what a temptation it would have been to Japan if, thanks to weakness on the part of the Government, all the main lines of communication in this country had been destroyed for many months ahead. Think what rejoicing there

must be in Japan even now at the measure of dislocation and disorder that was achieved. Let us be thankful that for once at least—and I say 'for once' advisedly—Government acted strongly and did what was required to put down these disturbances. We, in this Group, stand fully behind the Government in the action that was taken and, speaking for myself, if I have any criticism at all to level at Government, it is that in some respects they should have acted more strongly and more promptly. I charge them particularly with weakness in dealing with certain sections of the press. Even after the passing of the so-called restrictive orders, certain of the great newspapers of this country, including one paper published in this particular town, came out day by day with flaring headlines which were likely and I believe, deliberately calculated to stir up public opinion and to give the people of India the impression that the whole country from end to end was up in arms. I believe myself that if Government had shown more resolution in controlling the press during those few days, much of what followed might have been avoided. But apart from that criticism, in so far as they took strong action, Government have the fullest support of the European Group.

I am, however, much more concerned with the causes of the disturbances than I am with the action taken to put them down. It seems to me that there are three main factors which have been at work. Of these three main factors, there are two towards the removal of which the European Group can make some contribution, while the third factor must be in the hands of Indians themselves. I emphasise this point because we in the European community are anxious to take our full share of responsibility for the welfare of this country. As my Honourable friend, Mr. Lawson, told you yesterday, whatever may have been the case in the past, we now seek no privileged position. We seek nothing but the right to share in the duties and the rights of the other communities of this country. I have said that there were three factors producing the present disturbances. The first of those factors is the profound and widespread mistrust of Britain's intentions which exists in large classes of the Indian public. The second factor is the economic one,—the difficulty with regard to the purchase of foodstuffs and other essential commodities, while the third factor is the determination of the Congress party to have its own way at all costs.

Let me take those factors briefly one by one. First, the factor of the very widespread mistrust which exists regarding Britain's intentions with regard to the future of India. To some extent, my community are to be blamed for the prevalence of this mistrust. We have kept silent too long and we ought to have said very much more in the past about our determination to see a free India. To the extent to which we failed to make our sentiments known on that point, we must accept some share of responsibility. The fact remains that there is this widespread suspicion that Britain does not intend to part with power, and this is the real root cause of the trouble. If the people of India believed in Britain's genuineness, if they were convinced that in a short time—immediately after the war—Britain was going to part with power, I do not believe that for the sake of gaining two or three years they would have been willing to plunge this country into disorder and to endanger it more greatly than it is already endangered. We, therefore, have to remove this suspicion, that Britain does not intend to part with power. The argument seems to run like this.

.. [Mr. P. J. Griffiths.]

The August 1940 offer, poor as it was, was only made after Dunkirk: the Cripps offer, however much you dislike it, was only made, it is said, after Britain was in trouble in the Far East. In other words the allegation is that Britain has only acted when circumstances have forced her hands, and the allegation is that, when circumstances improve, Britain will once again wriggle out of what she has promised and will find some excuse for not implementing her promise. That is the suspicion and I want to reply to that suspicion. I want to reply to it, not merely as the Deputy Leader of the European Group, but as an individual Englishman. I trust the nationalist press will give full publicity to this statement so that they can, if necessary, hold it up against me in years to come. I want to make it perfectly clear that I regard myself, as an individual, solemnly and completely bound by the promise of His Majesty's Government. I understand that promise to be, that India is to have full and complete self-determination at the earliest possible moment after the war. When I say 'at the earliest possible moment', I do not mean ten, fifteen or twenty years. I understand that promise to mean that the only time interval which is required will be the time mechanically necessary for the holding and the decisions of the Constituent Assembly. Whether that will take six weeks or six months, I have no idea. It is in the hands of the Assembly.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: We do not agree with that: it won't satisfy us.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: With the limited time at my disposal, I am not prepared to deal with interruptions. I wish to make it abundantly clear that we accept the promise of self-determination as a personal obligation. I said "self-determination". It is for you to say what you want. Our position is that it will be for India to say what India wants. Great Britain will not say what India wants: India will say what India wants. My Leader has told you that the whole of the European community stands behind this promise and he also said that to the best of our ability we will implement that promise, or rather that we will assist in implementing that promise. I go much further than that. Perhaps I am a more truculent person than my Leader and I say that if by any chance any Government, whether here or at home, were to attempt to evade that promise or go back on it, I would be the first Member of this Assembly to lead a movement against that Government, either here or in England. As far as I am concerned, I will stand for no juggling with the promise which Britain has given that India at the earliest moment after the war shall determine her own constitution, her own future.

Who is that you really doubt? Is it the British capitalist? There is some curious suspicion that the British capitalist at all costs will prevent India from attaining freedom. Could you think of a more solemn assurance than has been given you on the floor of the House by three Members of this Group on behalf of the British capitalist? Who is better fitted than my friend, Sir Henry Richardson, to tell you what the British capitalist is prepared to do? As a former President of the Associated Chambers and the head of a great industrial and commercial concern, surely when he tells you that he stands firmly by Britain's promise, you can put aside the

suspicion that the British capitalist is not prepared to play. Then, you have my friend, Mr. Lawson, the President of the European Association. Who is more qualified to give you an assurance on behalf of the British people? If assurances of this kind will not satisfy the Honourable Members of this House, then it is beyond the wit of man to do or say anything which could drive away from them these lingering suspicions. Why, in fact, is it that some Honourable Members are inclined to distrust our sincerity? It seems to me there are two reasons—I cannot deal with either of them in detail, but I will just mention them. The first is our alleged unwillingness to transfer power immediately. To whom are we to transfer power? Are we to transfer it to the Congress? Will my friends over there acclaim that proposal? Are we to transfer it to the Muslim League? Am I expected to believe that just because of the so-called Congress offer, the Hindu Mahasabha or any of my friends sitting here will stand for an arrangement of that kind? Perhaps my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, with his fondness for metaphysical abstraction would say, you should transfer power to the Indian people. You cannot transfer power to an abstraction, you have to transfer power to a set of individuals, to some who is entitled to pass orders. The whole job of a Constituent Assembly, after the war, will be to decide which is the body or bodies of people to whom Britain has to transfer power. That is the very meaning of a Constituent Assembly.

Sardar Sant Singh: Is it beyond your genius to find it out?

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: It is not beyond my genius, if you give me power and the time. But the trouble is that it takes time.

Sardar Sant Singh: It has taken three years.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: It takes time, it involves energy and it also involves facing certain fundamental issues which cannot be dodged. You cannot decide to whom to transfer power without first settling whether there is to be Pakistan or Hindustan. When you summon the Constituent Assembly after the war, that question will have to be settled and it will be for the people of this country to settle it. It will be their decision that the British Government will have to accept.

The second reason why I think we are perhaps suspected is based on vague and unproven allegation, which some Honourable Members have often repeated, that Britain does not keep her promises. I think it is my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, who has said from time to time, "what about the last war, what about the promises that Britain made then and did not keep"? Am I right in my assumption?

Sardar Sant Singh: Quite right.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I have been waiting for many months and I am still waiting to hear what promise given by Britain in the last war has not been kept.

Sardar Sant Singh: The promise of self-determination for all nations. I am referring to the 14 points of Mr. Wilson.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: The only promise given to India in the last war was the promise given by the late Mr. Montagu in the House of Commons in August 1917. That promise related to the increasing association of Indians in all branches of the administration. Have you not had that increasing association? Look at the Treasury Benches. You may say that this front Bench is unsatisfactory. But I am asking you not whether it is satisfactory, but whether it amounts to increasing association of Indians in all branches of the administration. You may say that the Montagu announcement was insufficient, you may say that something better should have been promised. I am not arguing that point at all. What I am telling you is that the only promise which was made by Britain to India in the last war was implemented to the hilt. If you cast your mind back to that promise, you will remember, that rightly or wrongly, that promise referred to the gradual attainment of self-government. You may think that was wrong, you may think the promise should have been for the sudden attainment of self-determination.

Sardar Sant Singh: Our reading is different.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I am merely trying to meet the allegation that the promise which was given was not kept. Therefore, there is no basis for the plea that because a promise made in the last war was broken, the present promise of Britain is not sincere. I do ask my Honourable friends with all the earnestness that I can command to accept this assurance which I give on behalf of my community, as well as on my own behalf, that we are completely sincere and genuine in saying that India is to have full self-determination and can decide what exactly her future is to be, after the war. I have now dealt with the first factor, the factor of mistrust, partly responsible for the present disturbances.

The second factor to which I must refer very briefly is the economic factor. The plain fact is that in all parts of the country, people are finding it hard to get food grains, kerosene and many other essential commodities and if they get them at all, they have to pay very high prices. There is a very widespread feeling in this country, which I think the Government should be aware of, that Government are not tackling this problem with sufficient earnestness. I know there are many difficulties connected with the problem which the public do not realise. But I know too that if this Government want a contented India, if this Government want people to carry on during the transition period, they have to solve the problem of making foodstuffs and essential commodities available in the places where they are required. In some provinces, useful work has been done in this direction but in other provinces little indeed has been done. In my own constituency of Assam, until the last few days, nothing whatsoever has been done. The problem has been left to take care of itself. In dealing with this problem, I feel that Government are too much inclined to sit back and say, it is a very difficult problem, what can we do? I want to tell them here and now, that every Party in this House and every party in the country demands that Government shall apply its mind, with greater vigour in the future than it has done in the past, to settling and solving this problem of providing foodstuffs and essential commodities for the people of this country. It may be that there is no one at present on the Front Bench with sufficient time to attend to that. I understand that the Honourable the Commerce Member deals with many many subjects and probably he has no time to do what is obviously a whole time job. It

may be that there is a case for having a separate Member of Council to deal with this particular problem. I realise there may be constitutional difficulties about that and I am not putting it forward as a definite suggestion but only as a point for consideration. But the thing I am putting forward is that by one means or another, the Central Government of this country, in co-operation with the Provincial Governments has got to solve this problem of making foodgrains available throughout every part of this country except in so far, of course, as they are limited by the purely physical facts of lack of certain commodities in this country at all.

Sir, I have dealt with two of the three factors which have led to the recent disturbances. If time permitted, I should have liked to deal with the third factor, in some detail, namely, the determination of the Congress party to force its will on this country at all costs.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member knows that there are many Honourable Members anxious to take part in the debate.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I will postpone consideration of this topic to some other occasion. I will merely say that though the Congress has done great work in this country in the past, in the last few years it has fallen under bad leadership. The present Congress Working Committee is a committee under the leadership of men tinged with totalitarian point of view, tinged with the idea that a single party is entitled to run the State. This totalitarian view is in fact a fascist view and its existence is responsible for the emergence of the proposal for Pakistan. It is that same totalitarian view which has brought about the present disturbances in the country today. Sir, there is no hope for the future of this country if men holding views of that kind

An Honourable Member: What about you?

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Don't bother about us. We are going—if men holding views of that kind are allowed to dominate and to run the administration of the country. That way lies not freedom, but the hopeless night of tyranny. I do appeal to everybody in this House and through the House to the country at large, to say that however much we are desirous of and determined to secure India's independence, we will not stand for the tyranny which, under the cloak of non-violence, is used by the Congress as an instrument for imposing their will upon their unwilling fellow subjects.

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, my keenness to speak on this occasion is due to the fact that the present situation which was referred to by the Honourable the Home Member has resulted in certain serious consequences, particularly to my community. It is taken for granted that the movement started by the Congress has the acceptance of the masses of the people. Whenever speakers in this House refer to it as a mass movement, I really want to protest against it. Sir, the present situation has got its roots in the past. It is not only the anxiety of the Congress to enforce its demands that is responsible for this situation, but it is also the attitude of the Government in the past. In fact, the Congress, till the other day, was the pet child of the Government and in every respect the Government thought that by satisfying the demands of the

[Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj.]

Congress they would have done everything by India, that they would have satisfied themselves. But the real reason is that the appetite of the Congress grew with what it fed on, which was the policy of surrender which the Government in the past have adopted so far as Congress demands were concerned to the detriment and disappointment of the other important elements in the national life of the country. So, to a large extent, the Government of India are to blame for the situation that exists today. Now, the Congress in its turn having been given to believe that they are the most important and the only telling element in the political life of this country, naturally went one step further and thought that a greater pressure on the Government would make them yield to their demands. That was the view of the Congress. So they took to this extreme step of resorting to violence to enforce their demands and bring pressure upon the Government thereby.

I personally would not have ventured my remarks as to the peculiar relationship that has existed between the Congress and the Government in the past. Well, both of them, according to our view—that is the view of the scheduled castes,—are fast friends so far as their business is concerned. The *bania*, whether he is brown or white, has the same mentality. It is business first with him and it is business last with him, and it is business, as usual, with him even during the time of the war. We have had instances in Bombay where, the *banias* of Bombay, while in public they declared that they would and did close all their shops in pursuance of their decision to observe complete *hartal*, really removed all their stores before the 8th of August to their private godowns and were carrying on the trade there. That is the kind of *hartal* that we are being told is taking place now in Bombay.

As I have said, they were very keen on their business—both the British and the Congress. Now that aspect of it has reached its culmination when Sir Stafford Cripps came. Already in the month of March, before the arrival of Sir Stafford Cripps, I had expressed my doubts as to the success which Sir Stafford will be able to achieve, and also as to the policy that he will adopt towards the scheduled castes in India. My fears were perfectly justified and we found that when Sir Stafford Cripps came, he came,—as was very rightly pointed out by the previous speakers, particularly by my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and also by my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi—he came with the object of pacifying the Congress only. According to him the Congress was everything and the rest were nowhere. That is the attitude of the British Government. The previous speaker—a member of the European Group, my Honourable friend, Mr. P. J. Griffiths, referred to the technique of how the Britishers make their promises and how they try to keep them. So far as my community is concerned, they have not kept their promise and they have definitely committed a breach of assurance. For a long time past and for some years before Sir Stafford Cripps came to India we have been assured both by His Majesty's Government and the representatives of His Majesty's Government—by His Excellency the Viceroy of India and by other spokesmen in the Parliament—that the interests of the Scheduled Classes will be secured under any constitution and that our interests will be safeguarded, but in the Cripps' proposals we were dropped like hot potato and we were left to ourselves to face the constitutional position,

so much so that we now find that the British Parliament and His Majesty's Government are prepared to let down anybody in case they will themselves be profited by such a process and that is what has happened during the time of Sir Stafford Cripps. We immediately entered our protest and we rejected the proposals because those proposals did not contain an assurance of our safeguards. It was, however, pointed out to us that Sir Stafford Cripps will secure our rights by means of a treaty between Britain and India. Well, the suggestion is that, if the Scheduled Classes are not able to get their rights settled under the constitution that might come into existence under the scheme, Britain will treat it as a breach of treaty obligation on the part of India and that the British Navy will come and protect us and that there will be an invasion of India by the British Army to secure the rights of the Scheduled Classes. If that is the proposal it is too far-fetched and one in which we could not have any faith at all, because we have seen that so far as many of the smaller countries of Europe are concerned, most of those countries were disappointed during the time of what is called the Munich Settlement. The Munich mentality has continued to be the basis of the attitude of the British Government towards the interest of the Scheduled Classes in India.

Sir, there is another point in the Cripps proposals to which I must refer. There again we entered our protest; it was the manner by which the constitution ought to be settled in India. We are against the method of Constituent Assembly. I do not know whether the Muslim League agrees to that or not, but we have made it definitely clear that we are against the method of Constituent Assembly for the purpose of settling the constitution of India.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: We are not agreeable.

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj: Having made it perfectly clear that we are against that method, we now find that the question of the settlement of demands of the Depressed Classes can go only before a tribunal of the United Nations. Sir, at the Session of the All-India Scheduled Classes Federation held at Nagpur, over which I had the honour to preside, I made this statement with regard to our attitude towards war and the war effort:

"We know and feel that unless the Allies succeed in defeating the Axis, India has no chance of becoming a free country. If we now help the Allies to win the war I assure you that a settlement of our problems will come before the tribunal of the United Nations and will receive consideration which has not hitherto been bestowed on it by the British Government."

Sir this sentiment has been given expression to by all the representatives of the Depressed Classes throughout India including the Honourable Member for Labour—and we have come to that conclusion because of the fact that Britain and the British Government, placed as they are in the present circumstances in India having vested interests in this country cannot do justice so far as our people are concerned, and that with regard to relationship not merely between Britain and India but between Britishers and every other community in India, we sincerely feel that the only tribunal before which we can expect any fair settlement will be the tribunal of the United Nations.

That being so, we feel that we must exert every bit and see that the war effort of India is not tampered with. We have already contributed quite a large number of men to the various branches of the Indian Army and the Indian defence forces. As a matter of fact, we have already got

[Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj.]

two separate regiments of the Scheduled Classes in the Bombay Presidency called the Mahar battalion or the Mahar regiment. Then we have sent a large number of men from the Madras Presidency; out of the record number that the Madras Presidency recruited for the war purposes our community forms a very large part. In addition, we have the Army Technical Training Scheme and the Civil Training Scheme; we have sent a large number of people, particularly from the Madras Presidency to these branches of the Army. We feel that unless the Allies succeed, unless the United Nations achieve victory, we have no chance of getting our grievances remedied. Such being the case, we the Depressed Classes throughout India, as has been very correctly pointed out by the Honourable the Home Member, have kept aloof from this movement, which has been started by the Congress.

The Congress wants to gain two objects at one stroke. One is to achieve the independence of India, as they call it, and the other is to put down the various other elements in the country, viz., the minorities. The violence which is now resorted to against the Government, the violence and the atrocities that they are now committing with a view to bring Government to their knees will be turned on the other unfortunate communities who are not in great numbers, though certainly they command more courage, and, as Mr. Jinnah has pointed out, have greater guts. As a matter of fact, the thing has already shown itself in a very serious aspect. Our people in many places, and particularly in the villages, are subject to the domination, the intimidation, and the coercion of these people, who call themselves the Congressmen, or the Hindus. We have had instances, and I regret to say that no counter-steps have been taken so far, that our people have been intimidated to join this movement, and have suffered casualties in villages. Particularly, I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable the Home Member, in tackling the present situation, to take into consideration cases such as these: In Nagpur (I will just read a statement of a complaint which has been made to me) there were indications of communal trouble because the Mahars refused to come out even when the mills were closed by the Managers. The caste Hindus then pretended to burn down the houses of the Mahars in places such as Sanichari and Mangalwari in Nagpur. The Mahars of these localities were made to run for fear of danger to their lives. The house of Mr. J. T. Meshram, Secretary of the Civil Station Municipal Sub-Committee, Nagpur, was threatened to be burnt down, and in the villages the Mahars were put to trouble and loss, but so far no definite information has been received but we have received reports to show that the Mahar *hustee* of Kuhi village in Umrer Tahsil of Nagpur has been totally burnt down, and so on. In Madras and other places where our labourers wanted to go to the mills, when the mills were closed down on account of strikes, difficulties were put in their way. I approached the authorities and asked them what to do. The authorities felt that unless all the labourers returned it would not be possible for the mills to open. I have known cases like that. So in these ways coercion has been resorted to, particularly to see that our people take part in these disturbances, while the leaders of the community throughout India have definitely declared that our people must keep aloof from these disturbances. So the Government ought to see that in such cases real measure of relief is given to our people,

and wherever houses have been burnt down and other destruction of property has taken place, enough compensation is awarded to our people.

Then I want to refer to the other question, *viz.*, the question of collective fines. It is very unfortunate, Sir, that collective fines should have been imposed in certain places, irrespective of the person on whom the incidence would fall. It is a fact that we, the Scheduled Castes, have kept aloof, and ought also necessarily to keep aloof owing to the system of untouchability and to the fact that we have to reside all the time in what are called the Mahar wards and cheris. But, in spite of that, I should like to mention that the Government, in the matter of collective fines, should see that our people are also exempted and that particular care is taken as regards them. I find that in an announcement made by the Central Provinces Government the Mussalmans have been exempted. I certainly suggest that it will be unfair that my community ought to be excluded from the exemption which has been granted to the Muslim Community with regard to these collective fines.

Finally, stating the position of the Scheduled Castes, we have never said at any time that we stood for the continued slavery of India or that India should be under a foreign domination. We have always made it plain that we shall not interfere with any measure or any agitation that is carried on for the freedom of this country. What we have been all the time claiming is a just and a right share in the administration of the country, not with a view to run the Government ourselves, but with a view to see that the Government is not run against us. It is for that purpose that all our leaders, from whatever platform they have spoken, have mentioned this particular aspect of the question. We are not anxious to run the Government of India. We do not certainly like to become the President of the Indian Republic, or become the Viceroy of India at once.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Member for Indians Overseas): Why not?

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj: If merit counts, it may be but if caste counts, it may not be.

We are not at all afraid of even going into open competition with the rest of the communities in India, provided we are guaranteed the advantages and privileges the other communities enjoy now.

Sir, I wish to conclude my statement by saying that we feel that the question of the Scheduled Castes will be ultimately settled before the tribunal of the United Nations; and secondly, we are interested in the victory of the United Nations. Towards that end we shall do everything to see that we support this war effort. There is a particular point which I wish to mention, *viz.*, that if the Government should let us down in the matter of giving protection in this emergency, we shall be obliged to take our own action which may lead to bloodshed and obstruction of the war effort.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhamnadan): Mr. President, Sir I do not want to indulge in the recital of the stories of the excesses and hooliganism committed either by the Congress members and their supporters or by the authority responsible for maintaining law and order. So far as my province of Bihar is concerned, it was all one-sided, *i.e.*, measures by the Congress and their supporters.

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

At least in my province, I do not know of any excesses which were committed by the police. Honourable Members have cited stories of some excesses by the military and the police in Karachi and in Delhi. Of course, those Members may have verified the truth in the stories and the Government should redress them at once and so far as my province is concerned, no report ever came to me that there were any measures as a retaliation by those in charge of law and order.

Sir, as soon as hooliganism started on the 11th, we noticed that the police was made absolutely powerless, or was temporarily demoralized by the wild demonstrations of all kinds of violence. The Honourable the Home Member has averred that in Bihar a good number of police officers and their staff were killed, injured and even burnt alive. That is the story of this movement and only a year ago in a small locality of Bihar, in Patna District within about 50 square miles area, this very Hindu group or at least the supporters of this group, measured their strength in a communal fight with the Mussalmans and the result was that Muslim children of four years and five years along with Muslim adults men and women were butchered down: and for what reason? Because they belonged to some other nationality. Hindus thought that they had every justification to slaughter those innocent human beings who called themselves "Muslims".

At Fatwa station, a few Europeans were dragged out of the Railway 1st M. compartment and were butchered down and their dead bodies were taken in procession by the Hindu Congress mob and their supporters; and what was the crime of those European officers? The crime was that they belonged to a nationality other than Hindus. I have not got the time to recite all those atrocities committed by the mob but this is enough to suggest the magnitude of the crimes committed in that area. About 360 wagons were looted in Mokameh, Bhita and Railway Station buildings of Patna city and Gulzarbagh with few others were burnt; municipal buildings were burnt; of course, it was a planned affair. So far as the general public were concerned nothing was done against them; no provocation was given even to the Muslims in spite of their neutrality which they maintained strongly. That goes to the credit of the mob; they had sense enough even in that state of mental frenzy.

The point is whether the police was capable of meeting the situation or not. I believe in a majority of cases they were not in a position to meet the situation; with about half a dozen or ten unarmed constables and a sub-inspector they could not defend the police stations and meet the fury of the mob which consisted sometimes of five thousand or six thousand persons. My concrete suggestion on this point is that the Government of India in consultation with Provincial Governments should immediately try to arm the police stations with an adequate number of armed constables and give weapons sufficient to cope with situations like this. My modest suggestion would be to have at least ten armed constables in every police station.

An Honourable Member: What would be the cost?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Whatever the cost may be, I am not concerned; because if £12 million which is equivalent to about eighteen crores of rupees a day can be spent for the war at least another £12 million

or 18 crores per year can be spent for maintaining law and order in this country, which is equally essential, and that money can be found from the budget. Another factor which has got to be seriously considered is why the police was so demoralised. During the Congress Ministries, the police was practically at the dictates of the Congress camp followers, and the Ministries were such as would follow everything which their camp followers said; with the result that the officialdom and the police deteriorated in prestige and in action as well during that time, and became so demoralised, the results of which are becoming apparent in communal clashes and now

An Honourable Member: Where is the Congress Ministry? They are not functioning now.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I said it was during those two years Ministry, the consequence of which we find now that the police has deteriorated in prestige and are not capable of meeting any situation now.

There were certain suggestions that in some cases the Hindu police was in sympathy with the mob. There may have been isolated cases here and there; and in those cases my suggestion would be, as I told His Excellency the Governor of Bihar, that such cases may be examined individually; but I cannot make any sweeping remark on the general Hindu police with any sense of responsibility as many of them were as loyal and faithful as could have been expected. I can only say that they were demoralised because they had not enough force to meet the fury of the mob; and I have, therefore, suggested that they should be sufficiently armed to meet such situations if they are repeated in future.

Now, I come to the movement itself. Congress does not want to accept responsibility. It seems to me really surprising that Congressmen and their supporters should not be ready to own this movement; they are now shy of accepting the responsibility. If they have the courage of their conviction and if they feel that "Quit India" is the right slogan, they should certainly say that this is the justification of the slogan. They should have better courage and come forward and say that they were justifying their resolution of the All India Congress Committee by the actions of disturbing and paralysing the Government. Why should they be shy of saying that?

An Honourable Member: The Congress is in prison.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Then who were the people who acted like this? . . . (interruption). It is clear to me—it may be a riddle to my friend who interrupted; but it is clear to many other people also. I feel that the purpose of this "Quit India" slogan was to coerce the British Government to accept the fascist dictation of the Congress. Their programme shows that all their talk of non-violence as their creed was only a veil of hypocrisy; violence was the real purpose behind it and it was resorted to with full force. They thought that the time for a trial of strength had come and after the sanction received in the meeting of the All India Congress Committee they wanted that trial of strength with the present government should begin. Sir Cowasji Jehangir speaking just before I got up read out a few lines of Vallabhai Patel's speech which in a few words gave the entire programme of destruction and devastation. Honourable Members will understand that the same kind of bulletin was

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

distributed in Delhi, in Calcutta, in Patna, in Madras, in Nagpur and all other places simultaneously. That shows it was well planned and organised and a concerted action. I am prepared to give Congress group credit for that, but why are they shy of accepting responsibility? They should have the courage to say "We have done it and we will do it again." Why are you shy of it? You should go to prison, you should face bullets if you think you are honest about your resolution; and if you have got the courage of your conviction you should own this movement as yours and yours only. That is my contention and nothing more.

Another purpose behind the launching of this civil disobedience movement was to overawe the Muslims in such parts of the country where they are in a minority. The Muslims remained neutral and the reason is obvious. Muslim League maintains the position that as our co-operation was not asked for by the Government we had no alternative but to remain neutral. At the same time we said to the Congress that as Congressmen are not prepared to accept our proposition, we have nothing to say except that we should remain neutral. The ideology of independence which the Congress claims has probably got its own meaning. The right of self-determination which they think is their birth-right for themselves has probably no place for the other nations in this country or in the world of their own making. Congress claim for the independence of India means that they should be accepted in partnership with the Allied Nations who are fighting against the Fascist Powers and they say they are prepared to fight the Fascist nations with all possible force at their command provided they are taken in partnership by the British and Allied Nations. But the same is not offered to us, the Muslims. When we say that we should have the same partnership with Hindu brethren, the Congress says, "nothing doing". The cry of self-determination which the Congress and its supporters indulge in—it cannot be claimed by the Mussalmans who also exclaim that, we exist where others exist, as the proverb goes:

"Ham bhi baste hain jahan khulq Khuda basti hai"

We have got as much rightful claim on this country as others have. Let us have the right of self-determination. It is quite possible that in some parts of the country the Mussalmans may decide to join the same unit of federation which Hindu India may join, but give us the right, give us that partnership. Why should you fight shy and refuse us that right and that liberty which you want for yourselves? That is our point of view. We have a very modest demand on the British Cabinet or the Government of India. We say, we are prepared to co-operate with you within the framework of the constitution. We are prepared to render all possible help that we may be capable of provided you give us an opportunity to do so. Provided you part with some real power and at the same time make a declaration in unequivocal terms about Pakistan which you have accepted during the Cripps mission by implication.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Why did you reject it then?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: It is too late to answer you. About the latest statement of Mr. Churchill I do not want to say many things, I do not want to express my views at length, but I will say this much. He has

also accepted our contention that India is a land where more divergent elements and races exist than in the whole of Europe. If small countries like Belgium, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and other countries have a right to be independent, naturally the Mussalmans of India have got a better right to claim independence and Pakistan. That position is accepted by Mr. Churchill in the latter part of his statement, but to our surprise, he did not go further than to say that the divergent races are there more than they are in Europe. He accepted that the Mussalmans were not for this movement, and still he was shy of saying that the Mussalmans' demand for self-determination or Pakistan is absolutely correct and rightful. This is the reason why we have not been able to do anything and neutrality has been thrust upon us by this Government and by our partners, the Congress Hindus, who are not prepared to concede to the point of view that we have placed before them. What I want to impress is that there was no alternative left to the Mussalmans except to remain neutral under the conditions which exist in the country and at the moment. I am thankful to my Hindu friends in my province that our neutrality has not been violated this time. We were not provoked to any feelings of any communal riot there, and I hope that the same good sense will prevail in those who are in charge of law and order.

I will place the point of the Mussalmans regarding the question of collective fines. The Mussalmans have remained out of this movement to a man, and as a community, and they can rightfully claim that they should be exempted from the purview of these collective fines. His Excellency the Governor of Bihar was not in a position to give any definite promise to me at that time when I placed this before him but he was very sympathetic all through. Although no notification has been issued so far in my province, I am glad that notifications have been issued in other provinces, exempting Mussalmans. What I want to impress on the Government and the Treasury Benches is that the fact having been made abundantly clear that the Mussalmans were neutral and had nothing to do with this movement, they ought to instruct all Provincial Governments to exempt the Mussalmans and notify that fact as soon as possible. I do not know if any taxes have been actually realised anywhere in India from the Mussalmans.

An Honourable Member: There have been.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I am told by an Honourable friend that there have been instances but I should think that Government should not give any provocation in that respect to the Mussalmans. We are neutral as against the Government and also as against the Congress movement and both must respect our neutrality.

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

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: However, I hope that Government of India will consider this issue and relieve the Mussalmans from any burden of collective fines, and any taxes that have been realised should be refunded to them. With these few words, I take my seat.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Sir, in asking the House to consider the situation in the country, the Honourable the Home Member confined himself to a narration of the deplorable incidents that happened during these few weeks. To my mind, an adequate appreciation of the position is not possible unless we remember two dominating factors that go to contribute to the general political atmosphere in the country. The first is that there is installed today in the seat of power as British Premier one who has been an inveterate enemy of India all his life. He has excelled himself in his latest utterance which has done more mischief, and alienated more Indians, than any other single speech of any British politician has ever done. The other equally tragic factor is that in India itself, authority is actually monopolised by a set of reactionary die-hards, not overburdened with conscientious scruples, buttressed as they are by the moral support of Indians of the type of Sir Cowasji Jehangir whose number luckily for us is not large. The Honourable the Home Member confined himself to the incidents since the arrest of the Congress leaders and laid the whole blame on them. Like the proverbial ostrich burying its head in the sand, he has ignored the widespread prevalence of anti-Government feeling in the country that had been steadily growing in volume and intensity long before the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad. Indeed, anti-Government feeling was never stronger in India than at present, and much of the responsibility for it belongs to the Government itself. The recent disturbances are to be ascribed to many complex factors, all of which are not directly political in character, and in ignoring the seething discontent prevailing for a long time in the country, the Government were unwittingly helping to set the stage for the violent outburst which we have witnessed. The general economic distress which is associated with British rule in India has been rapidly increasing of late. The people, a large proportion of whom normally live in a chronic state of semi-starvation, are now faced with a shortage of food due to various factors some of which are connected with the War. Other commodities which are required to meet their frugal needs are getting scarcer and scarcer, and the prices of all articles are steadily soaring higher and higher. Medical help, inadequate in the best of times, is already beyond the means of the vast majority of the people. While the very physical existence of the people is thus threatened, the thoughtless and heartless actions of a callous bureaucracy, while carrying out measures of evacuation involving thousands of poor and ignorant people, have not certainly helped to create a feeling of loyalty to the Government. Complaints on this score have been heard for months past, and I myself, in my own humble way, have been drawing the attention of the Department concerned to the vagaries characterising the orders of evacuation of the civil population ever since April last. The Government of India could not, however, make up their mind on the subject earlier than last month when they issued a Communiqué laying down certain principles which should be followed in such matters. Meanwhile, the mischief had already been done, and untold hardships had been caused to a silent but resentful population whose economic life was seriously disturbed and who were bodily uprooted from the homes of their ancestors without adequate provision being made beforehand for settling them elsewhere. As an instance of the policy so far followed by the Government in this matter, I would briefly recall the salient features of a typical case which I brought to the notice of the Government.

On the 4th April last, as many as 35 villages in the district of Noakhali in Bengal were simultaneously evacuated at the shortest possible notice, and I find that the Government officer concerned made his report recommending scales of compensation on the 9th, that is, five days after the actual evacuation had taken place; and in making this report he says that "the people were not allowed to take away their standing huts from their villages. There was a smart shower of rain yesterday, adding considerably to their difficulties. It is essential that we should give them some money quickly for helping them in building new huts in sites in which they choose to live." Imagine the distress of the large population affected by this order who were expected to look for alternative sites for rebuilding their huts after they had been turned out of their hearth and home in pouring rain. The scale of compensation proposed in the report is so poor and arbitrary that no civilised Government can possibly support it. But I have no time to go into the details. Many more instances of this kind are known to me and other Members of this House. I can assure Honourable Members that these instances are supported by documents, some of which I brought to the notice of the Department concerned in April last, and are not based upon rumours, which His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, in addressing the joint session of the Bengal Legislature on Monday last, said "*were almost entirely baseless*".

Coming next to the actual operation of the policy of denial in some parts of Bengal, with which I am familiar, I should like to point out that perhaps Sir Edward Benthall's statement that boat traffic was encouraged rather than discouraged, requires modification. Even the Governor of Bengal in his speech referred to the denial to the enemy of all forms of transport as one of the most pressing needs, and to the control over boats in coastal areas that it has led to. From the complaints received by me, some of which I duly forwarded to the Government a few months ago, it appears that normal internal trade in certain parts of Bengal, where the boat constitutes the only method of transport, was seriously interfered with, to the detriment of the economic life of the people at large. Another action in carrying out the policy of denial consisted of shifting so-called surplus stocks of foodstuffs from places exposed to the threat of invasion, without due regard to the interests of the people concerned. In arriving at an estimate as to what actually constituted such surplus, the officers concerned adopted most arbitrary methods, and apart from removal of such surplus stocks they were in many instances kept under lock and key by the police and the owners themselves had on occasions to resort to bribery for the purpose of drawing upon such stocks for meeting their needs.

I now come, though most reluctantly, to a few other painful episodes that have happened as a result of the location of troops in different rural areas of Bengal. I drew the attention of Government in May last to two specific cases, in one of which a few persons, in an area within ten miles of Calcutta, lost their lives at the hands of the soldiers, while many others were wounded, as a result of a protest which these persons had made against pilferings of garden products in which the soldiers were discovered, and abuse of their women-folk in which they indulged. In the Departmental reply dated the 8th June last, I was assured that the matter had already been the subject of careful investigation and that the Government were awaiting its result. I have not heard anything further in the

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

matter. The next case to which I will refer was also brought to the notice of the Department by me and it relates to "atrocities of a revolting nature" committed on innocent villagers by a number of soldiers. In making this characterisation, I am merely quoting a few words of a resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League on the 19th of April last. I have no desire to shock the House by entering into the horrible details of this incident. Briefly put, it was a case of indiscriminate and wholesale rape by soldiers on a large number of women-folk inhabiting certain Muslim villages in the district of Noakhali, the gravity of which can be judged from the report that a number of them were discovered later in a half-dead condition and some of them actually died. The resolutions adopted by the Muslim League in this connection do not appear to have led to any tangible result, except that their publication in the Muslim League Journal, *Star of India*, was followed by the suspension of that newspaper for a few days under orders of the Government of Bengal. I wrote to the Department on the 9th May last drawing attention to the reports that I had received in this connection, and which had not been permitted to be published in the Press, and I pointed out in my letter that the stoppage of the publication of the news in the Press had not prevented its circulation from mouth to mouth, possibly in an ever-increasingly exaggerated manner, throughout the eastern districts of Bengal. I tried to impress upon the Department the incalculable harm that was done by the circulation of such reports, unless they were followed by prompt enquiry and publication of an authorised version at an early date. The reply to my letter is dated the 11th May, 1942, in which I was told that the Government had already received intimation of the occurrence, and that the matter was under examination, firstly, by a Military Court of Enquiry, and secondly, by an enquiry by a Magistrate. Nothing further is known.

Promptitude and frankness have never been characteristics of this Government even in matters of such gravity. Reports of other incidents also occasionally reach us where unfortunate clashes have taken place between the civilian population and the military, and women-folk have been subjected to molestation. Is it, therefore, to be wondered that bitterness of feeling between the Government and the people, which is not merely most deplorable but dangerous in the present circumstances, has been increasing by leaps and bounds in the country, even without the assistance of any political agitation? We had the amusing spectacle the other day of the British Premier hugging the census report as a armoured breast-plate that made him invincible. May I ask the Home Member to go down to the rural areas in Eastern Bengal, particularly in the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Barisal, fully armed with the census report, if necessary, and truthfully describe to the House on his return the degree of loyal support which Government can count upon from the people at large, belonging as they do either to the Muslim Community or the so-called Depressed Classes?

While the popular feeling has thus been deeply embittered, the influx of Indian evacuees from Burma carrying tales of heartless treatment and racial humiliation on an unprecedented scale, has set the whole country ringing with denunciation of the present Government. I have just received a printed message from our Honourable colleague, Shaikh Rafiuddin

Ahmad Siddique, of Chittagong, whose ill-health prevents his attendance here today, in the course of which he states that "the Government are doing absolutely nothing for the Indian evacuees who have no hearth and home, no food and no clothes. These poor people are wandering in Chittagong with their children and wives just like nomad tribes and begging from door to door. Many of them are still daily coming to Chittagong on foot from Burma. Their pitiable plight, if you could be shown, must have moved you to pity and tears. The differential treatment meted out to the Indian evacuees and the apathy of the Government towards their cause are highly deplorable".

Sir, it is against this background of mass discontent and disaffection that the decision taken by the All-India Congress Committee in sheer desperation, and the untoward repercussions that followed the arrest of Congress leaders, can be properly examined.

During those anxious days when hooliganism was rampant in the Imperial City, fearful accounts trickled through despite censorship, not merely with reference to the position in Delhi but also in the provinces, and there could be no doubt in the mind of any impartial observer that the spiritual successors of O'Dwyer and Dyer, who rule the roost at New Delhi, had initiated a reign of terror. In the name of combating violence and sabotage, which no one in his senses can exonerate or fail to condemn, they had resorted to methods reminiscent of some of the worst brutalities ascribed to the Axis powers. Hooliganism on the part of the goondas has been answered by equally, if not more, reprehensible terrorism on the pretext of restoring law and order which cannot find support from any live, *zubberdast* Dewan of any Indian State—not to speak of any *ex-Dewan*. Society at large has been penalised for the offence of the few. Collective or, to be more accurate, communal, fines on the principle of the *jusia* have been imposed, and masses of innocent people have thus virtually been treated and punished as hostages for the misdeeds of the guilty, in correct Nazi style. Insult, indignity, injury, assault or even death, has been meted out to the innocent along with the guilty with a degree of impartiality. Inoffensive Indians, irrespective of their position in society, such as Sir Madhorao Deshpande of Nagpur, have in places been made to remove litter from the streets in order to impress on the public at large the might of the British authority in whose eyes all Indians are equal. And Sir Cowasji Jehangir should not flatter himself that he is immune from such experiences. Heroic attempts have been made to promote the interest of truthful statistics of the dead and wounded. It is alleged that the wounded could not always count upon proper medical attention in certain Government hospitals because they were 'rebels'. These are among the reports that reached us from different affected areas, but I shall not dwell further on this infamous chapter of British history in India which has just opened, because there may be another opportunity of dealing with it during this Session in greater detail.

Today, frightfulness is the measure and expression of British might in India, but the moral cowardice of a despotic Government dictates the necessity for stifling publicity of legitimate information inside the country. Moreover, control and manipulation of public opinion in friendly countries abroad necessitate the landing out of information with the help of the official spoon. The Press has been gagged so successfully that nothing but officially approved news can be published either in India or abroad. The Press in

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

India, according to Government, should either behave as a subordinate branch of the Home Department, or it must be scotched. A former Member of this House and ex-colleague of mine, Mr. Arthur Moore, is understood to have been jockeyed out of the editorship of the Statesman through wire-pulling from New Delhi as a punishment for his occasional expressions of pro-Indian feelings, and the British editor of Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore may share the same fate unless he becomes sufficiently careful in time.

The magnificent achievement of the Press censoring policy is indicated by the fact that for some time 96 Indian newspapers, including some of the most leading and influential dailies, voluntarily ceased publication. Out of this number, about 22 have later resumed publication. The rest continue their voluntary suspension as a protest against the illogical and dictatorial control exercised over the publication of news which does not, even according to foreign journalists present at New Delhi, permit a balanced picture of the situation to be given. I do not for a moment contend that under conditions of war, the Press should function regardless of any untoward consequences which undesirable publicity may lead to. There should be a system under which a responsible institution like the Press, which is considered to be an essential limb of any civilised administration, may be put in touch with the executive authorities for the purpose of mutual appreciation of their respective view points and voluntary regulation of the conduct of the Press. I understand that a system of what is called Press Advising started some time in 1940, and was originally intended to assist newspapermen by giving them guidance when they wanted it. This voluntary system has now gradually been transformed into compulsory pre-censorship. It appears that for some months past, particularly after the breakdown of the Cripps negotiations, censorship of messages became increasingly stringent. Press advising has now assumed the form of actual authoritative official censorship, and there are today so many different authorities exercising powers of censorship that the Press is altogether bewildered, and the reading public cannot be sure of getting any reliable or even rational presentation of facts relating to the political situation in the country. Apart from the so-called Press Advising, there are authorities who are responsible for censorship on behalf of the Military Department. Under cover of Military censorship, the Government have succeeded to a large extent in preventing pro-nationalist political materials, devoid of any military significance, from being published in this country or in the friendly countries overseas. Press comments from Britain, America and China of a pro-Indian character were either discouraged, or sometimes, even suppressed, in India, in the name of Military censorship. Prominence was given, on the other hand, to adverse comments appearing in the overseas Press, particularly those critical of the Congress. A significant example of that policy is to be found in the omission of President Roosevelt's reference to the Atlantic Charter being applicable to all the countries of the world, in his speech at Washington on the 23rd February last, from the version published in this country at the time, and this reference was not published in India until the text of the speech reached here through the American Press. While India was flooded with adverse American comments on the Wardha resolution of the Congress, the favourable comments of the overseas Press were not allowed to appear in India. The news agencies were not

allowed by the Chief Press Adviser to send Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek for publication in the various Indian newspapers, these news agencies being particularly under obligation to refer all matters to the Chief Press Adviser or the Provincial Press Adviser.

I hold in my hand a notification signed by the Chief Press Adviser in which he grimly reminds newspapermen that 'while speeches made on the floor of the Assembly are privileged, no privilege attaches to press reports of the proceedings which are subject to the usual censorship'.

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

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I will finish my speech within that time. Not content with this message, he obligingly informs them that 'for the convenience of correspondents wishing to obtain guidance, an officer of Chief Press Adviser's office will be in the Press Gallery on September 15th and 16th between 12 noon and 2 P.M. This officer will only give general guidance on points in the debate which may be referred to him and copy for press advice will be dealt with as usual in Chief Press Adviser's office'. This is how the Geobblers of India regulate and regiment reports of India's Parliament.

Is the Honourable Member sure that he is not over-reaching himself in the pursuit of this policy? Already we hear that certain foreign journalists have flown over to Chungking to outwit the censor and send un mutilated accounts of the Indian situation. And the credit of newspapers in India is now a minus quantity, as few are prepared to accept their censored reports to be anything but misleading. For a parallel of the situation one has perhaps to turn to Nazi Germany.

Sir, I have attempted to give the House a picture of the situation as it strikes me. The Honourable the Home Member has delivered a speech worthy of the Chief Constable of India. It dealt only with crime and ended with the rattling of the sabre. He is obviously a believer in the doctrine that India was conquered by the sword and by the sword it must be held. Conciliation is not in his line.

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

Mr. K. C. Neogy: He may repeat formulas about agreement, but he will do his best to make any agreement impossible. And for proof of this one need only refer to the refusal of permission to the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha to interview Mahatma Gandhi. With his eye on the large force of white soldiers, referred to by his master in Parliament, he is sure of waging a successful war on as many fronts as may be necessary.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, during this debate some of the Honourable Members have traced the history of the present discontent and conditions from the time of Sir Stafford Cripps' visit. In a sense, I consider Sir Stafford Cripps' visit to be very fortunate, for I find that the very persons who were ignored by him are not tired of praising the proposals that he brought with him. Sir Cowasji Jehangir has entered into great details as to the

[Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi.]

merits of those proposals and has also touched the point that the Congress had agreed to these proposals, but something happened between the 8th and 9th and the proposals were rejected on the morning of the 9th. I quite appreciate that the night of the 9th was a very fateful one, but I am surprised to hear that the proposals were such as were not acceptable to the Muslim League, meaning thereby that probably the proposals of the 8th were acceptable to the Muslim League. I consider it to be a strange argument that Sir Stafford Cripps was not able to accept the proposals of the Congress because they were not acceptable to the Muslim League.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I never said that.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: What Sir Cowasji Jehangir said was that the proposals of the Congress on the 9th would not be acceptable to the Muslim League. That was exactly what he said.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: That is correct.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: In other words, whatever proposals were there on the 8th, if the Congress had accepted them, they would have been acceptable to the Muslim League.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: That is your interpretation.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: That is the only logical conclusion that one can draw from what he said. If the proposals of the 8th were not acceptable to the Muslim League, then the question of the Muslim League does not come in for the rejection of those proposals. You bring in the Muslim League only on the 9th because you want to show that it was on account of the Muslim League that the proposals were rejected. While it is not a fact.

Either, we have to assume, that every party was ignored and probably the Muslim League was included in that, or if Muslim League was consulted then it was consulted up till the 9th. Now, Sir, I was personally not a party to these negotiations, probably my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, is in a better position to understand it. Still, I say and I maintain that the question as to who is responsible for resiling from the position that was taken on the 8th cannot be decided in the absence of the parties themselves. It is useless for any one of us to pass any resolution or to give any opinion in respect of people who are not present today. Unfortunately, I find that the practice is getting in vogue in this House that we are at liberty to condemn and abuse persons who are not present in the House. Is it proper for Government to condemn people without hearing them?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: What about the Prime Minister?

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: I think the Prime Minister has got some representatives here in this House. Other persons are behind the bars of prison. I may at the outset make my position clear because it is no use repeating catchwords, it is no use trying to condemn people or your opponents who are not here. We all know, we have heard Government say it again and again that in India nobody wants either Japanese or the

Germans to come. This is a proposition which nobody is going to dispute. I think if the Government say that India is behind the war efforts, they also mean to say that no political parties in India are prepared to invite Japan or Germany to this place. You condemn your opponent by dubbing him as a fifth columnist or that he wants to invite Germany or Japan to invade India. That is not the proper way of arguing things. Which of the political-parties is not intelligent enough to understand that the people of India who have got nothing but moral force behind their back are not in a position to fight against material forces? Can we not understand that Germany and Japan, the one in Europe and the other in Asia has overcome moral force by their material power? Can we, at this stage, and after understanding that, ever think that we, who desire independence even during the progress of the war, would get it from people who are devastating countries and which we are not being given by the Britishers today? So, it is absurd for any one to argue that any political party, any recognised political party, any party that has any following in India has got that motive behind it. It is useless to condemn people on that account.

The question is, what is the reason for the present disturbances that have taken place. Again, I say nobody deplores more than we do the disturbances that have taken place. If you are told today of injury to person and property, I must say that the public have received greater injury, they have died in greater numbers and they have suffered materially more than persons belonging to the Government Departments. I do not say that it was not the duty of Government Departments to suppress hooliganism. I say and I maintain that in almost every case greater force was used than was necessary by the Government and the Government utilised this opportunity of hooliganism for the show of their power and for striking terror in the minds of the people. That is the point on which we fight. That is the point which we want to bring to the notice of the Government.

Then, Sir, it is said that the programme of sabotage or the programme of cutting communications is the act of the Congress. This is a serious charge that is levelled against the Congress, but the Congress have not been allowed the opportunity to contradict that charge. As an ordinary observer of events, I want to draw the attention of the House to the statements of responsible British statesmen and public men, who long before the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay gave out that in the present days, the Congress had changed its policy from non-violence to violence, and that this time the programme of the Congress would be sabotage and cutting of communications and destruction of property. These were the things which were given out definitely before the All India Congress Committee meeting. Today, spokesman after spokesman stands up and says that this can be inferred from the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi. Of course, it cannot be inferred from the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi as they are being read out today. But, Sir, look at the background in which Mahatma Gandhi has been working all his life and even before. Could any word of violence be read into those declarations? Then, what I say is this. Supposing for a minute the All India Congress Committee passed a Resolution of that type, was it then in the interest of the Government to broadcast it and proclaim it to everybody that the programme of the Congress this time would be sabotage and cutting of communications, and destruction of property? Was it a wise act on the part of the Government that even before the meeting of the

[Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi.]

All India Congress Committee they started interpreting civil disobedience movement to mean that it is one of violence and not non-violence? I say it was the duty of the Government that even if the Congress were to pass a resolution regarding violent activities, they ought to have suppressed it. But the Government did not do that. The Government put some interpretations and broadcast them not only throughout India, but almost everywhere. I fail to see the reason for that. That was an extremely bad statesmanship. Probably, to my mind, it seems they wanted to suppress the Congress itself and they wanted to bring the Congress into disrepute throughout the world and in India. I maintain that it was on account of that impression created in the public mind that since the Congress leaders were arrested after the passing of the resolution in Bombay, a section of the public understood that the programme of the Congress was the one which had been propagated mostly by Government agencies.

Now, Sir, that having taken place the Government have resorted to force. As I have said, it was the duty of the Government to do that, but the fault of the Government lies in having committed excesses in every case. I maintain that even if the Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution as alleged by the Government and if the Government had allowed it to be propagated throughout India the condition would not have been much different than it is today. In my opinion it would have been much better, because if the Congress had been allowed to make that declaration then the Congress itself would have come in the eyes of the public in the reality in which it is alleged to be by the Government, and we would have stood up today and supported the Government in having dealt with the Congress in that fashion. But what has the Government done? They have sent them to prison and ask from us a vote that they were guilty of that on circumstantial evidence. Were the Government with all their powerful machinery ignorant of any propaganda which was being carried out by the Congress Working Committee that they had come there for violence? Just as one of the Honourable Members has accused the Government that if they knew that the Congress was carrying on its propaganda in regard to violence, why did they not say so earlier? I say that that was not the reason. It is with the intention of condemning the Congress, of bringing it into disrepute that these things were alleged to have been propagated by the Congress. The result was that they were sent to the prison, they were given no opportunity to explain their position, and they are being condemned today without having been given an opportunity to explain. This treatment should not be accorded even to the worst type of criminal. Even he is asked an explanation. But have you given any opportunity to the leaders of the Congress to say why they have changed their activities and taken up violence as their creed? Have you given them a chance for meeting the charges that are levelled against them? Therefore, Sir, I moved this amendment. The object of this amendment is not to pray for any privileges, any concessions, for the Congress leaders who are carrying on the Congress propaganda, but what has prompted me to move this amendment is the fact that this Government cannot condemn any person without giving him a chance to explain his position. What I suggest is that they must ascertain the views of the Congress leaders and see whether as a matter of fact they had the intention of carrying on these undesirable activities and whether they had propagated that throughout India. If they deny, then the Government should release them and give them an opportunity to tell to the

masses in India that these acts of violence can never be approved of by them. That will be one of the means of restoring peace and tranquility in this country.

Major Nawab Sir Ahmad Nawaz Khan (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, on this motion the Honourable the Home Member has very well explained the case of the Government to the House. Many other speakers on behalf of their Parties have proved Innocence so far as their Parties are concerned, and they hold others responsible for that. Many other speakers have expressed their personal views, but we, the Members here, have to solve the most important question and that is what are the causes of the present disturbance and unrest and what is its remedy. That is the chief point to which we have assembled here to give our full consideration. Mr. Griffiths has touched on that point but he has dealt with it largely from the point of view of his Party. It is the same thing on which I am going to speak, that is to find out what are the real root causes of the present troublesome situation and how to remove or reduce them.

So far as I know, the Congress and the Muslim League and all other political parties rightly or wrongly—that question I am not going to discuss here—believe that the British Government in India or at Home do not like or intend to part with real power, and are not prepared to give effect to their promises which they have made from time to time in reply to the various demands of Hindus and Muslims of India for independence. This seems to be the real cause of the present trouble as I understand it. Knowing this to be the real trouble in India—and I stand corrected if I am wrong—we have now to find what is the real remedy for this trouble, if not cent per cent., say 80 per cent. In my opinion it is in the hands of we Indians—the political parties in India and the elected Members of this House—and we should sit together and put forward a united demand. Though the Government have given the same reply very often that we should present a united demand, I would like to support that by giving a simile. The Viceroy of India has an apple in his hand and many Indians—A, B, C, D—representing the political parties, come to take that apple

from him. One demands the whole of it; another demands half of it, the third says do not cut it, the fourth says do not give it to anybody as a whole. So, I say, what will the Government or the Viceroy do? This is the real position and we should calmly and coolly think over that. Congress wants to take the apple—the whole of it in their hands, the Muslim League wants to cut it, other parties come to take one share or another. Then what is really the sane method of action for a man who possesses the apple in his hand?

Mr. M. Ghiasuddin (Punjab: Landholders): To eat it.

Major Nawab Sir Ahmad Nawaz Khan: I will put a simple question. If any major community can say what it should get when this is the situation, then the remedy lies entirely in our Indian hands and not with the British Government here or in England.

Mr. President, I would like to continue tomorrow morning for a few more minutes.

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

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 19th September, 1942.