

Monday, 18th March, 1940

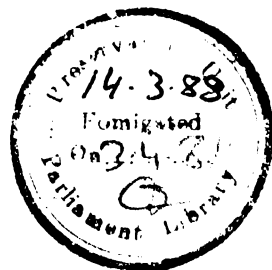
# THE COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1940

*(16th February to 10th April, 1940)*

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## SEVENTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1940



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## COUNCIL OF STATE.

*Monday, 18th March, 1940,*

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

#### TELEPHONE OPERATORS.

57. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SATYENDRA KUMAR DAS :  
(a) Will Government state whether the telephone operators are required to work even on Sundays and other gazetted Post and Telegraph holidays for as many hours as on other working days ?

(b) If the reply be in the affirmative, do Government propose to grant Post and Telegraph holidays to the telephone operators or to grant the telephone operators overtime allowance for working on Sundays and other gazetted Post and Telegraph holidays ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. N. ROY : (a) Yes. Arrangement is, however, made to allow as far as practicable every operator one Sunday off in every four.

(b) No proposal for the grant of Post and Telegraph holidays is under consideration. As an operator is required to put in duty not exceeding 50 hours per week including Sundays and holidays, the question of payment of overtime allowance for working on those days does not arise.

#### SURPLUS REVENUE EARNED BY TELEPHONE BRANCH, POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

58. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SATYENDRA KUMAR DAS :  
(a) Will Government lay on the table a statement showing the surplus revenue earned by the Telephone Branch of the Posts and Telegraphs Department since 1931-32 ?

(b) Do Government propose to create selection grade appointments for telephone operators similar to those in the other branches of the Department, for giving the telephone operators a chance of promotion ?

(c) Does Part II of the Rules for recruitment to the services of telegraphists, telephone operators, clerks, sorters, etc., read with Part IV of Appendix I of the same Rules provide for selection grade appointments of telephone operators in the new scales of pay ? Are there no such appointments in the old scale ?

(d) Do Government propose to do away with the disparity mentioned above by creating selection grade appointments also in the old scales of pay ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. S. N. ROY :** (a) A statement is laid on the table.

(b) No. Selection grade appointments are sanctioned only when justified on administrative grounds.

(c) No. Part IV of Appendix I of the Rules cited by the Honourable Member merely shows the scales of pay of such appointments, if any are sanctioned in respect of any of the services referred to. The reply to the last part is in the negative.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (c) just given.

Statement showing the surplus revenue earned by the Telephone Branch of the Posts and Telegraphs Department since 1931-32, in reply to part (a) of question No. 58.

(The figures are in thousands of rupees.)

Year.	Amount of surplus revenue of the Telephone Branch.	Remarks.
1931-32	1,18	
1932-33	2,28	
1933-34	2,73	
1934-35	23,67	
1935-36	14,98	
1936-37	19,79	
1937-38	28,10	
1938-39	21,05	

#### TELEPHONE OPERATORS.

59. **THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SATYENDRA KUMAR DAS :** Do Government propose to apply, in the case of telephone operators, Rules 53—55 of Vol. IX, Chapter III of the Posts and Telegraphs Manual, applicable to telegraphists and clerks ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. S. N. ROY :** No. Having regard to the nature of duties involved there is no case for giving telephone operators identical treatment in respect of hours of duty.

#### TREATMENT OF ENEMY FIRMS.

60. **THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER :** (i) Are Government aware that there is considerable public dissatisfaction arising out of the fact that certain trading concerns known to have had intimate connections with Germany before the war have been allowed to continue to carry on business ?

(ii) Will Government state the principles which are applied when deciding whether to allow such concerns to carry on business ?

(iii) Will Government state the principles which are applied when deciding whether to allow concerns which carry on business in this country to advertise goods made in a country which is now at war with His Majesty's Government ;

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALAN LLOYD : (i) No, Sir, but I am prepared to take it from the Honourable Member that he has heard such expressions of dissatisfaction.

(ii) The first question to decide is whether concerns which had intimate connections with Germany before the war are in fact " enemy firms " within the definition contained in Defence of India Rule 103, sub-rule (2). It will be noted that in all parts of that sub-rule reference is made to conditions subsisting after the 2nd September, 1939.

When a concern has been found to be an " enemy firm " by definition, it has to be decided whether its property should be vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property. It is the policy of the Government not to pass such a vesting order unless that course is necessary in order to prevent benefits accruing to the enemy during the war or in order to preserve the property pending arrangements to be made at the conclusion of peace. If these necessities do not exist, the enemy firm will normally be allowed to continue to trade, subject to such supervision as it may be thought desirable to impose.

(iii) Government see no reason for objecting to the advertisement of goods of enemy origin which have been lawfully imported into this country. Adequate precautions are taken to secure that unauthorized importations of such goods do not take place.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What arrangement has Government made with the concern known as Schering ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALAN LLOYD : If the Honourable Member will put a question down, I will answer it. I do not carry all these details in my head.

#### RESOLUTION RE BIRTH CONTROL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the Resolution that I desire to commend to this Council runs as follows :—

" This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that in view of the alarming growth of population in India, steps be taken to popularise methods of birth control and to establish birth control clinics in centrally administered areas."

Sir, it is not in a spirit of levity that I have brought this Resolution. It is not for providing amusement or propagating advanced social ideas that I have ventured to bring this Resolution before this Council. I know, Sir, that there is a great divergence of opinion on the issues raised by this Resolution and I should be doing no good to the cause I have at heart if I were to approach my task in the spirit of an iconoclast intent on attacking cherished beliefs. We are, however, a body of intelligent and reasoning men, endeavouring to approach the questions we have to deal with in a spirit of real service to



[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

the community. And even if I cannot convince the Council, I shall not be disappointed if the discussion leads to a frank and dispassionate consideration of the issues involved at the hands of the Members of the Council of State who have often the responsibility as also the privilege of guiding public opinion.

The Resolution, Sir, primarily affects the masses and the lower middle-classes who are not conversant with the evils of unchecked population but who, reflection will show, suffer most from this unchecked population. Sir, the position as I see in regard to population is this. During 1891 and 1921, a period of 30 years, the population of India increased by 32 millions. During 1921 and 1931, a period of 10 years, the actual increase was 34 millions, or two millions more than there was in the previous period of 30 years. Sir, a census is about to take place in 1941 and there are reasons to believe that the increasing rate will be maintained. We have had during this period no serious famine, no serious scourge, no serious epidemic and even the war that we are witnessing today is a war of mechanised armies and men do not die. If we go on at this rate, we shall have at the end of four decades an increase of nearly 150 millions in the population of this most populated country. I say most populated country because, probably, we have a greater population than even China—

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-Official) :  
Not at present.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Well, China's figures are never so accurate as our figures, and I think that if we have not a larger population than that of China, we have very nearly as large a population as that of China. Sir, we had a population in 1901 of 29 crores and 43 lakhs. In 1911 we had 31 crores and 50 lakhs. There was therefore in those 10 years an increase of 64 per cent. 1911 to 1921 was comparatively a better period. We had 31 crores and 81 lakhs, an increase of 1 per cent., and between 1921 to 1931 we had an increase of 10.5 per cent., that is in 1921 we had 31 crores and 81 lakhs and in 1931 we had 35 crores and 29 lakhs. Sir, with famines conquered, disease well under control, with our preventive side of the public health department improving, with diminishing death rate, universal and early marriage maintained and the social habits of the people being what they are, it is not unreasonable to think that this rate of increase will be maintained. We are an essentially agricultural community. More than 100 millions are dependent on agriculture. Since the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms there has no doubt been some industrialisation, but the number employed in industry is comparatively small. In 1933 which was a lean year, the number employed in industry was 2.3 millions. There might have been some increase since 1933 but the increase could not have been very much. Sir, we have a deplorably low standard of living. Our national income, as the House knows, is very low. Vast millions of our people are underfed, undernourished. They go through life without any opportunity to develop the good that is in them. There is a vast amount of unemployment both among the masses and the educated classes, and though the war may have stimulated industrial activity and though prices may have temporarily gone up, yet we must be prepared for the slump that is bound to follow the war. Even England, which is the most highly industrialised country and which has a vast Empire, has large numbers of unemployed people in times of depression. How can we then with our woefully limited resources hope, if this population continues to advance at the rate at which it is doing, to give to our people the employment and the social services that they need. With our present rate of production even a more equitable distribution of wealth—and I am for a more equitable distribution

of wealth—will not enable us to give to our people a standard of living at all comparable with even the less advanced countries of the west. Industrialisation, for which some of us are crying and in which some of us have an almost pathetic belief, will not help to solve all our problems, for we are, we must remember, living in an age of mechanisation and rationalisation. Though we ardently desire it, our funds do not permit us to go in for benevolent or beneficent schemes of social insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance and unemployment doles which have made life tolerable for the poor worker in western countries.

Mr. President, we have inherited, if my friends will permit me to say so, a social organisation which does not make for individual efficiency and the harmonious development of human personality. Marriage with us is universal. We marry while we are yet in our teens, and the only checks to our population are our unfortunate widows. We have been taught to believe that we cannot go to heaven if we do not have a son, and primitive society hugs this belief with a tenacity which is pathetic. How can we expect prudence, and foresight in a society of illiterate men and women with no standard of living to maintain, with a family organisation which degrades women and handicaps effort, with a philosophy which makes us accept with deplorable indifference the social evils around us, as the results of our individual or national *karma*, with little conception of the organic unity of the individual with society. We have a high birth rate and the highest death rate in the world. The rate of mortality among women in confinement is high and there are no adequate or proper facilities for maternity welfare. I have said this all to show that the question of birth control ought to be approached from a broad humanitarian point of view. Selfish man seeking after his own pleasure never thinks of what it is for a woman to go through child-bearing too often and what a drain child-bearing is on her mental and physical resources. It is a harsh view of life which denies to woman the right to determine in the married state whether she shall go on bearing children, and if God made man after his own image, may we not say with truth that man made woman after his own image for the actual physical domination which he exercises over woman has enabled him to impose his own will upon her? And, Sir, as men who claim to determine our own destiny we cannot surely deny to our mothers and sisters and daughters and wives the right to determine their own destiny.

Sir, from what I have said it will be clear that there is a case for birth control. It may be said, assuming that birth control is desirable, the best method of controlling births is continence in the married state. I should be the last person, with my belief in the sanctity of the marriage tie and in the value and importance for the human race of sex purity, to denounce continence. Undoubtedly continence is the best and most ideal method of self-control; but continence in the married state is neither always—and I emphasise the word always—possible nor desirable. Often it destroys the very basis of marriage and leads to dire results both physical and mental. If both partners cannot sublimate their sex instinct they will find satisfaction either in extra-marital relationships which are injurious to society or they will repress their normal sex instincts with dire results for their nervous and mental systems.

Sir, whatever the teachings of religion might be—and I think religion is not antagonistic to science—the morality of the future must be based upon the findings of biology, physiology and psychology and religion which ought to serve as the inspiration for social service is not in opposition to these teachings. I value, Sir,—I may say quite frankly—I value very deeply the institution of the family and I do not wish to see that institution undermined.

[ Mr. P. N. Sapru. ]

It makes man with his egoistic instincts forget himself in the service of others, but I maintain that birth control will purify and refine the institution and not undermine it. It may be said that artificial methods of birth control will encourage immorality. Sir, let us be quite frank with ourselves. Was there no immorality when methods of birth control were unknown? Is there no immorality among classes who are unfamiliar with birth control or who live in rigid orthodox surroundings? Are cases of abortion and miscarriages unknown? Are the standards of sex morality among men as high in this country as among women? Are there equal standards in this country for men and women? Sir, these are questions we should try and answer for ourselves. It may be said that birth control is opposed to the teachings of religion. Can our friends cite any text against birth control? Were methods of birth control known to our wise sages? Do we, Hindus, Sir, believe in a progressive revelation or do we believe in a final revelation? Is the essence of religion not service, and do we not serve by teaching our fellowmen foresight and prudence and would birth control not teach our men and women foresight and prudence?

Sir, I come to another line of argument to which my Resolution is subject to attack. It may be said that birth control propaganda should be conducted by voluntary organisations, by women's organisations, by private doctors, by social service workers, by persons who are interested in this line of work and it may further be said that Government cannot act in advance of public opinion. Sir, both these propositions are, I am free to admit, correct within limitations. I recognise that this question of birth control is primarily a question for voluntary organisations. But, Sir, there are directions in which Government can help and I want Government to help to the extent that it can. Sir, it can offer—and that is a direction in which Government can help us—it can offer facilities in existing hospitals for teaching these methods under proper safeguards. You have got in the centrally administered areas a number of hospitals. You can attach birth control clinics to these hospitals. Men and women can go to these hospitals and if they want to have advice it ought to be possible for them to have advice in these clinics. Clinics, therefore, can be attached to Government hospitals for propagating birth control methods. Then you can have a system of travelling clinics. Then the cinema and magic lantern and the Broadcasting Department can be used for the purpose of propagating ideas about birth control, for the purpose of teaching men and women birth control methods. I do not want to go into these methods. Some of them are not very costly; they are quite cheap. But that after all is a medical question on which as a layman I have no right to offer any opinion. Then, Sir, another direction in which Government can help us is by giving financial help to voluntary organisations which are doing birth control work. By this Government will place itself at the head of the movement for birth control in a country where people are accustomed to look to Government for leadership in these matters.

Sir, I will come to another line of attack to which my Resolution may be open. It may be said that the centrally administered areas after all are very few in number and that the lead in this matter should be taken by the Provincial Governments. Sir, the Provincial Governments today unfortunately are not functioning in seven provinces. In the eighth province provincial autonomy is working creakily. Now, Sir, the Centre is in a position to take an all-India view of the matter and I say that the Centre with the support of the elected element should go ahead. There is, fortunately or unfortunately, no Wardha, High Command to impose its view of morality on us at the Centre.

This is work which is being done by other States also. Sir, in India I find that the progressive State of Mysore is giving a lead in this matter. I find, Sir, at page 32 of the Census Report a reference to what is being done in Mysore and I shall just read that out :—

“Meanwhile it would appear, in view of the present rate of increase, that efforts to reduce the rate of infantile mortality should be preceded by precautions to reduce the birth rate, and that if the luxury of ‘baby weeks’ be permitted they should at least be accompanied by instruction in birth control. A move in this direction has already been made by the Government of Mysore State, which in 1930 sanctioned the establishment of birth control clinics in the four principal hospitals of the State”.

Sir, the State of Mysore has given us a lead which we might follow.

Then, with your permission, Sir, I will just refer to England. In England an Order in Council lays down that wherever it is certified that pregnancy in women is destructive to health and likely to endanger life birth control advice should be available at hospitals that receive a grant. In 1934 there were 1,200 such centres.

I find, Sir, that in Holland the Government encourages birth control propaganda and knowledge and practice of birth control has spread to the lowest strata of society. Who will say, Sir, that the Dutch people are less moral than the other races of mankind ?

Then, Sir, another argument that may be advanced against this Resolution is that there is no demand for such birth control propaganda among the people of this country. Now, Sir, one of the hopeful signs of the times is that our women are taking an increasing part in the public life of this country and I would say that women's organisations are definitely in favour of birth control. In Madras, Sir, I understand there is a league for the purpose of propagating birth control ideas, and I may also say, Sir, that earnest women workers who have had experience of working class women in big cities have told me that women often come to them for advice in regard to methods of birth control. The working woman values this advice. Therefore, Sir, there is an awakening in this matter. There is a body of opinion in this country which is behind the movement for birth control.

Sir, I have tried to answer in the time at my disposal the objections that may be urged against my Resolution. I have tried to show how important this question of birth control is for the future of the race in India. Sir, we want a race of useful citizens. We want a race of healthy, normal, strong citizens, citizens who will be able to supply us with material for building up a mighty future, and we ought to approach this question not from the point of view of sentiment but from the point of view of reason. Sir, there is, as I said in the opening part of my speech, no real antagonism between religion and science and we ought to have a broader conception of religion. You have this controversy in Europe also but you find, Sir, that many eminent Churchmen, leading Bishops and Archbishops, are convinced that birth control is right. Sir, I have tried to place the issues before the House not in the expectation that the House will necessarily agree with me but in order to focus attention on a subject of paramount importance for the future of the Indian race.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You have denounced everything except plurality of wives !

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : I forgot, Sir, that there is unfortunately polygamy and, in certain parts, polyandry in this country.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Mr. President, it is a great pleasure to me to support the Resolution which the Honourable Mr. Sapru has moved. Today is the fifth anniversary of the Resolution which I moved in this House, exactly on the same date, i.e., 18th March, 1935.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU** : I forgot that.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : And I am glad that according to our principles of spacing this has not come forward any earlier. Mr. President, the world has advanced a great deal in this period of five years. Even in India this movement has taken root and we find that there is an annual meeting of scientists to discuss the population question in India. The matter is receiving keen attention from all sides except that block of ice which sits on the Treasury benches. (*An Honourable Member* : "Try to melt it".) Well, the Indian sun is proverbially strong and I hope it will prove hot enough to melt even this.

Sir, the question before the House is a very simple one. It is this, whether the Government considers it its duty to take part in a thing which is to everybody's interest in India or does it propose to sit on the fence and wait and see what happens? Now, Sir, five years ago the then Home Secretary, Sir Maurice Hallett, in opposing this Resolution, brought forward to his aid or I should say he tried to confront us with the five enemies of human life who were always working in a manner, which without controlling birth rate, were yet effective in reducing the population. First of all, Sir, there was the dragon of famine. That has been conquered. He cited to us the instances of two famines which had taken place in the last days of the last century and he made out a case that they are things of which we needs must take account in the future. Secondly, he cited the influenza epidemic of 1919. Fortunately, in the last 19 years we have escaped having a recurrence of this or any other malady anywhere near it in its virulence. Thirdly, Sir, he cited the natural calamity in the shape of the Bihar earthquake of 1934. Fortunately there too, there has been no earthquake of any magnitude except the Quetta one, which unfortunately was responsible for a loss of life of many thousands. Fourthly, Sir, was the danger of war and the carnage consequent upon it. There too, Sir, it is now apparent that, according to the mechanised warfare of the present day and the manner in which it is fought, the loss of life is very small compared with the magnitude of the fight that is carried on. Fifthly, there was the prop that there was a system of compulsory celibacy of widows. That, too, Sir, has disappeared. There is a school of thought which aims at starting the remarriage of widows among the Hindus. Amongst the Muslims it is becoming more prevalent and among the Hindus too it is no longer a rarity. So, all the five props in action have fallen down. As against that, as the Honourable Mover has cited, the activities of the Government health department have improved, with the result that the death rate has fallen. Consequently, there should have been a fall in the birth rate too but as our society is not so fully developed as western society, the result is that the reduction in the birth rate is not so great as that of the fall in the death rate. The result is for increasing the population and not for decreasing it.

Then, Sir, another appeal of the Honourable Mover which deserves great consideration from the House is the right of women to refuse to bear children. That should be given. Man-made law denied this right to women, although there is no legal sanctity for withholding this right now that we are trying to bring women up to the same level as men in all walks of life. Mr. President,

there is no denying the fact that at the moment we require a lead from the Government. Government has been lavish in its grants to bodies which carry on public work like the Red Cross, Lady Dufferin Fund and other institutions with the object of giving welfare and care to the population of India. The reason why the mention of birth control brings forward a fire from its opponents—from the non-officials—is that they do not unfortunately understand the implication of birth control. I am very glad, Sir, that today's discussion has been carried on in a much milder atmosphere than five years ago when there were running fusilades and fires from all sides. But this year we have found "All quiet on the Western Front". That has been a marked improvement and I welcome it and I hope that if we do not succeed now, the time is not far off when we will succeed and will be able to get even this irresponsible Government to do something for us. Mr. President, in order not to give offence to those who are very susceptible and very keen on taking offence, the International Association for Birth Control has changed its name and we are now called the Family Planning Association, because birth control never asks that there should be a stoppage of birth. It only wants that there should be a proper spacing and a proper economic strata to which the birth should be correlated. The efforts of the pruders and those who are afraid of facing the situation are quite ineffective. There is a strong march and I am glad to find that India is advancing towards her betterment. My only trouble is that as education is so very limited, the ideas do not percolate to those who are really in need of this help. When we ask the Government, it is not that we wish that these ideas which are already prevalent among the educated classes should be further taught to them and that these classes require any help. They know what they want and no amount of hiding your head beneath the sand like the ostrich will withhold the knowledge from those who demand it and are literate enough to read it. It is only to those who are illiterate, who live in dire poverty, that this knowledge does not percolate, and it is there you have the greatest amount of chastity and good living. The dangers which are brought before our eyes that it will lead to immorality does not apply to the villages and among the masses.

A very good suggestion has been made by the Mover which I hope will be accepted, though not in so many words, at least in action. I have long experience of this Government. If you sow a seed even in this lateritic soil, it sometimes does give fruit, in the shape of actions taken long after the demand has been made and without any acknowledgment of the parentage. I hope, Sir, that the All-India Radio will at least allow people who wish to propagate this idea a hearing on the All-India Radio. This will help a great deal in bringing these ideas before the masses.

Mr. President, my time is about to expire and I only echo the sentiments of my Honourable friend that it is not advantageous to India to have men who are ineffective, who are diseased, who are idiots and incapable of taking part in the advancement of the country. I want that there should be healthy, normal, intelligent and vigorous children born in India. It is not only quantity which is required but quality also must count, and in order to have quality, you must have restriction, because that is the natural law of selection.

Sir, I support this Resolution.

\* THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SOBHA SINGH (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I had no intention of speaking on this Resolution, but

[Sardar Bahadur Sobha Singh.]

as the Honourable Mr. Sapru has put his case so eloquently and has mentioned the centrally administered areas, I thought I should say something about one part of the centrally administered areas, namely, New Delhi. Sir, in New Delhi, not officially but unofficially the Chief Medical Officer for Health has directed all the lady doctors in charge of the hospitals and clinics in New Delhi to give free advice in birth control and they are doing it for the last three years feeling there is a necessity for it. But, in the course of this experiment, I should say that we have noticed that there are strong prejudices. You may call it on grounds of religion or on any other ground—but there are prejudices. But a great deal of these prejudices are being removed. Another thing that I felt is this. Instead of having any Resolution of this kind from this House, all these areas, whether they are centrally administered or by the provinces, have local bodies. A majority of these local bodies are elected bodies and they have got control over their funds, over their hospitals and over their clinics. If they think that there is a necessity for it—and I am sure there is a necessity for it—they can do so without any orders from the Government.

Another thing. I personally feel that passing resolutions will not take us very far. The speech that the Honourable Member has made—a very eloquent one—will be very useful.

Another suggestion that my Honourable friend has made is about the All-India Radio. I entirely disagree with that suggestion. The radio is not the place, at least at this stage, to have any propaganda of this kind. The only propaganda needed is a quiet and slow one, if you want to succeed in this.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I rise to oppose the Resolution on the following grounds. This matter is, in my opinion, against the religion of the Mussalmans.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: No.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR: Yes, it is. In Hazrat Umar's time, the child may be put in a family and receive *Baith-ul-mâl*. This proposition should receive public support and it should be circulated for public opinion as to what the Mussalmans think about it.

Sir, I oppose the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE KUNWAR SIR JAGDISH PRASAD (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, I think I must congratulate the House on the great control it has shown in bringing forward this Resolution. My Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam told us that it was exactly five years ago today that this question was last discussed. It was open to the House to have discussed it every year. They have waited for five years, and I congratulate them on the control that they have shown about this Resolution. My Honourable friend Mr. Sapru described this House with becoming modesty as composed of intelligent and responsible persons. I should like to add to those qualifications, mature years and ripe judgment. I quite agree that we are a body who can discuss this question without emotion and in a calm atmosphere. My Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam could not help making a few flings at the Government Benches. He described us in picturesque language as a block of ice. I think he then changed the metaphor and called us an irresponsible element, and so on.

Well, Sir, I do not propose to deal with this question in a spirit of levity. I should first like to take up the wording of the Resolution. My Honourable friend's Resolution as drafted implies that we should go in for birth control in order to reduce the population. He is alarmed at the rapid growth of the population in India. He has gone on to describe what this rapid increase implies, the deterioration of physical standards, of standards of living, of the increase in the death rate, and so on. He has gone on to suggest that we should start these clinics in the centrally administered areas. I should like first to examine the question, whether there has been an alarming increase in the population of the centrally administered areas? I have had figures extracted and I find that the density of population in Baluchistan, which is one of the centrally administered areas, is nine to the square mile, as against a density of population throughout British India of 248 to the square mile. Then one of the other centrally administered areas is the Andamans and Nicobar Islands. There also I am glad to say there has been no alarming increase of the population, which also remains at the figure of about nine to the square mile. Then I come to Ajmer-Merwara. The density of population there is 207 to the square mile as against 248 for the whole of India. Then in Coorg, another of these centrally administered areas, the density of population is only 103. Of course I do not wish to mention the figures relating to Panth Piploda, which I think has only a population of about 4,000 and I have not been able to ascertain whether there has been any alarming increase in this small population. As regards Delhi, the circumstances are quite different. It is a Capital City. There has been a great migration of population and the increase has been due to causes other than want of restraint on the part of its population. Therefore, as far as the centrally administered areas are concerned, I do not accept the proposition that there has been an alarming increase, and yet my Honourable friend suggests that it is in these areas that this experiment should be tried.

My Honourable friend Mr. Sapru and my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam said that famines had entirely disappeared. Unfortunately Ajmer-Merwara at the present moment is undergoing the worst famine it has had for the last 50 years. Three-fifths of the rural population at present is on relief works. Now there are two ways of looking at this question, one from the point of view of public health and the other, the much more controversial question which my Honourable friend has raised, of the alarming increase in the population. As regards the first question I quite recognise that in England there has been a movement that women suffering from certain diseases should avoid bearing children, for instance those suffering from tuberculosis, from heart affections, from diabetes and certain gynaecological diseases. That is quite a different proposition. If my Honourable friend had said that a time comes when repeated pregnancies cause grave injury to the mother and she should have an opportunity of being able to consult a doctor to help her to avoid this, I could understand it. But my Honourable friend is basing his Resolution on the rapid increase of population, and there I must say that we are treading on a very controversial point. Am I to assume that the Sikh community will be prepared to admit that their growth has been so rapid that steps should be taken to check their population? When in India the whole question of the numbers of the different communities is so much to the fore it is easy to understand the criticism to which Government—even a popular Government—would expose itself if it took steps to stabilise or check the growth of population. I can quite understand the misrepresentation and criticism to which even a popular Government would be liable. It would be said that they were deliberately trying to keep down the numbers of a



[Sir Jagdish Prasad.]

certain community or class. These are not merely theoretic dangers. I mean the whole question of the increase of population involves the question of the representation of the different communities which is based on their numbers. It is not merely a fanciful question which I am putting forward.

Then there is the religious difficulty. My Honourable friend has just seen this morning in this very House one Honourable Member get up and

12 NOON. say that according to his understanding of the tenets of his religion such a thing is not permissible. There are even Christians, for instance, the Roman Catholics, who have religious objections to this. You cannot ignore ideas of that kind. And my Honourable friend called it a primitive belief of a primitive community in regard to the injunctions laid down that the Hindu should have a son in order to perform certain religious ceremonies. My Honourable friend was treading on very dangerous ground when he described such a belief as that of a primitive community or that it was a primitive belief. I am only pointing these out to show that to say that there are no religious objections is to ignore the facts. There is also a great deal of difference of opinion amongst scientists in regard to a general system of birth control. It is liable to great abuse if it is not properly safeguarded and properly checked. Perhaps if our fathers had exercised birth control some of us might not be here. Apart from that, are we sure that some of the great generals and poets and some of the great geniuses of the world would have been born if this birth control had been practised in the past. Is it certain that some of the greatest men have only belonged to small families? If my Honourable friend will look through the biography of the greatest men some of the greatest men who were born were members of large families. In regard to the question of physique in the part of the country from which my Honourable friend Sir Hissamuddin comes, where I am sure no such heresy as birth control is prevalent, the men are as healthy as in any other part of the country. I think, Sir, that my Honourable friend is going about the business in the wrong way. The emphasis should be rather on the health point of view and there the way to proceed is to educate public opinion. Local bodies and women's associations should inspire confidence and be able to convince the masses that what is being done is for their good. If you take up the question in regard to the very controversial point whether the population of India is increasing at an alarming pace and whether birth control is the only effective remedy, others might answer that the real remedies are to improve agriculture, to industrialise the country, to give education on a much vaster scale. Many people may say that the problem at present is to educate the people. That is the first thing and that after they have been educated these ideas will come naturally to them. If you start with a mass of illiterate people without any effort to educate them and try to teach them birth control it may lead to the stiffening, to the hardening, of prejudice and your efforts may fail. While I recognise that my Honourable friend views the problem more from the public health point of view than from that of population—at least I hope so—I think in the centrally administered areas from my experience of the last five years confining myself to the terms of the Resolution, the great need is to increase the facilities for education, to improve the methods of agriculture and even to improve the public health services. As regards Delhi itself, my Honourable friend Sardar Sobha Singh has pointed out to Honourable Members the way in which the New Delhi Municipality is proceeding with the business. They have instructed their women doctors to give advice to those who seek it.

I should just like to say one more word before I sit down. Perhaps Honourable Members are aware that there are only 700 women practitioners in India, so that the great need is first to increase the number of women doctors before you can make any effective impression in spreading a correct knowledge in regard to contraceptive methods. We have to go a long way first in obtaining competent Indian medical women before we can start giving instruction on a large scale in regard to birth control. Well, Sir, even this very irresponsible Government has advanced to this stage during the last five years. That while the Member for Government, who is now the Governor of the United Provinces, representing the Home Department, opposed the Resolution, I on behalf of Government wish to announce that we shall remain neutral. I think I have said enough to show with what interest we have listened to the views expressed by Honourable Members. I have tried to point out the considerations that Members must have in view before deciding on this very difficult and somewhat controversial subject.

THE HONOURABLE SAYYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, even though the Honourable the Leader of the House has ultimately decided to remain neutral, he has made it perfectly plain how on various considerations that should weigh in deciding upon this matter the only rational course for this House would be not to accept the Resolution. The Honourable the Leader in the able and exhaustive speech which he has just made has succeeded not only in refuting all the arguments that have been just advanced on the floor of the House in support of the proposition that has been made but he has also succeeded in demolishing every argument that has been adduced at any time in favour of the measures that have been recommended in this direction. I feel, Sir, that when we have an opinion from one like the Honourable Member who could be expected to know more about the various aspects of this question than most of us, we will be well advised in taking his advice. Sir, Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad is not only in charge of public health and medical portfolios, but he is also in charge of the lands; he is also in charge of the activities that go to make up for the welfare of the people in the country. Therefore I feel that he is in the best position to judge as to whether the limit has been reached in the capacity of the land in the matter of production; he is in a position to know whether production in the country has kept pace with the increase in the population, whether the increase in the population has reached such a limit that it would be impossible with any kind of effort that might be made in the direction of improving the resources of the country that it would be impossible to meet the needs of the increasing population. As has been said by Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad there are a number of places in India where the population is too small, not to say that it has reached its limit. There are tracts where there are only nine persons to every square mile and it is difficult to imagine how nine persons could be considered to be a sufficient number for an area of a square mile. (*An Honourable Member* : "What kind of land? Hilly land?") Well, Sir, I will deal with that also. After all, the only object in inducing our friends to make this proposal is the alarming increase in the population but, as I have said, there does not seem to be any justification for us to take alarm at the pace at which the population has increased in the country.

Again, Sir, we cannot postulate that every effort that is necessary has been made to improve the resources of the country. Unless we find that it is impossible for us, with any kind of endeavour that we might make in the direction of improving the production in the country, we need not, I suppose, Sir, allow ourselves to be unduly alarmed by the increase in the population.

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

If there is increase, it is just possible that it is only normal increase, and this in spite of the fact that there are a number of things which go to decimate the population and to reduce the number of people in the country. My Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam said that now the chances of those five scourges which he said are the enemies of mankind are less, but I cannot understand, Sir, how we can guarantee that the chances are less. There are people who think that the chances are more.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Substantiate that.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : Well, that because with the improvement of communications, a number of new diseases are being imported into places where they did not exist before. The airways are bringing here new diseases, from Africa and from many other parts of the world which were not known to this country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : That has been checked.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : And what guarantee is there that the earthquake which shook the province from where my Honourable friend comes will not occur again ? Therefore, Sir, the factors that go to bring about reduction in the number of mankind are not at any rate reduced. They are as they were before and they will continue as such until the end of this world.

Well, Sir, there was another ground mentioned as a justification for the recommendation made by the Honourable Mover of this Resolution. It was said that, owing to the large increase in the population, owing to the enormous birth rate, the health of the people could not be looked after as it ought to have been. But, Sir, the opinion of medical men is to the effect that, if only the people improve in their health, if there is an improvement in the standard of life, then what actually happens is not an increase in the birth rate but quite the reverse of it, that is to say the moment people are able to have a better standard of life and have a better sort of nutrition, then there would be a reduction in the production of children. It looks as though the rise in the standard of life works in inverse ratio to the birth rate. Therefore, Sir, I feel that those of my friends who are alarmed at the undesirable state of health of the people of this country should try to see that steps are taken to improve public health, that steps are taken to provide medical relief, and this by itself would go to reduce the number of children that are born in this country. I feel, Sir, as has been said by some of the previous speakers, that there is some objection on the ground of religion also. I feel, Sir, that in a matter like this with which religion is intimately connected, not only a few but almost all the religions of the world are intimately connected, it is very undesirable that anything should be done by legislation. If at all, people who are of this opinion should go about educating public opinion, but I feel, Sir, that even that sort of thing—I mean an effort to educate public opinion—would not go to produce the desired result. The desired result would only be produced if people would go about advising their countrymen to follow better methods of sanitation and try to live a better sort of life. In this way, they would be able to do better service to the country than by postulating any methods of birth control.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadian) : Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution ; but I would like to take this opportunity to ask a few questions. I am personally very

much in favour of birth control and I would like to see its methods popularised. But I would like to take this opportunity to ask as to how far, from the reports that Government have been receiving from scientific experts and research scholars, these methods are found to be effective and conducive to health. I think information like that would be very useful for public knowledge. I am reminded, Sir, of a story about a man who had 17 children and went to an adviser. He was asked why, after all, did he have so many children. The fellow pathetically wailed: "They come like rain". "Why don't you use a mackintosh?" urged his adviser. "I do" was his reply, "but most of them are leaky". Therefore, I think, Sir, if Government have some information on this point, it would be of great public importance to know how far these methods have been reported to be efficient and how far they have also been reported to be conducive to the general health of the people. Of course, I do support the Resolution wholeheartedly and I would like to see some of the methods that have been really found to be effective and good, popularised.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the speech of my Honourable friend Sir Jagdish Prasad, throughout ingenious was in several places almost poetic. Not content with raising the ordinary objections against the Resolution of my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru, he went so far as to say or to imply that, if this Resolution were given effect to, it might result in a serious loss of ability to the country. We might lose the many geniuses that are being born in the country every year now. Well, if my Honourable friend's view is correct, the New Delhi Municipality, which is allowing instruction in birth control to be given in its hospitals, is one of the greatest enemies of this country. It ought to be taken immediately to task by my Honourable friend who is directly in charge of the department of medical relief and public health. But I am sure he will not go so far as to take such a step, thus showing that he does not believe in the argument that he has himself used. My Honourable friend referred to the old families in England which were large, and the children born in some of which made a great name for themselves. If really my Honourable friend's argument has any substance, we ought to inquire whether the more limited families that have become the rule in England now are producing less geniuses than England did 100 or 200 or 300 years ago.

Another difficulty, which was in part fanciful, to which my Honourable friend referred was that of religion. If birth control were being made compulsory I could understand its being objected to on religious grounds. But no one is being compelled to go to a doctor and learn contraceptive methods in order to limit his or her family.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR: We do not want it to be limited.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: In the North-West Frontier Province from which my Honourable friend comes it may be all right.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR: Everywhere.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: He may, when he runs short of food, join the men on the other side of the border and raid the settled districts. But those of us who have no such recourse open to them cannot take the same view of the matter that my Honourable friend Col. Sir.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

Hissamuddin does. No one can seriously suppose that if instruction is given in hospitals in birth control, it would be regarded as a violation of any religion. The Delhi Municipality, as pointed out by my Honourable friend Sardar Sobha Singh, is already allowing instruction in birth control to be given in its hospitals. Have the Hindus or the Mussalmans or those sects among the Christians for whom my Honourable friend Sir Jagdish Prasad seemed to have a great solicitude, object? I am sure no one has, for the simple reason that the desire for and knowledge of birth control is spreading amongst the educated women. Is it not desirable in these circumstances that there should be certain centres where they should receive proper instruction in regard to it? At present they have to depend entirely on themselves and they may make mistakes which may seriously affect their health or which may even endanger their lives. Surely it is not merely desirable but necessary in these circumstances that Government should either provide clinics themselves or should help in the establishment of clinics where instruction of the kind asked for in the Resolution of my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru could be given.

Another objection raised by my Honourable friend Sir Jagdish Prasad was that in the centrally administered areas there was no over-population. He quoted figures to show that in Baluchistan and the Andamans and Nicobar Islands, the number of persons per square mile was much less than in British India. He might, so far as the Andamans and Nicobar Islands are concerned, have gone further and said that owing to the removal of a pretty large number of life convicts from there, the population of the Andamans at least has gone down and that Government, so far from restricting the growth of population, should take steps to increase it, so that people who are unable to make a living in other territories might desire to go to the Andamans. But, happily, both his common sense and his sense of humour have prevented him from going so far.

A more serious argument used by my Honourable friend was that in Delhi and Ajmer-Merwara, which are the main territories under the control of the Government of India, the density of population per square mile was 207 as against 248 in the whole of British India. Now, so far as the whole of British India is concerned, it is acknowledged that the population is pressing heavily on the soil. The large increase that took place in the population between 1921 and 1931 is well known. I think it increased by about 35 millions, and it is feared that at the end of the current decade it will have increased by 50 millions more.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: This Resolution is limited to centrally administered areas only.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: It is, Sir. We see, taking the whole of British India, what the results from the economic and health points of view of over-population are. Does Sir Jagdish Prasad still want to wait till the density of population in Delhi and Ajmer-Merwara has become as great as it is in the rest of India? Is it not his duty as a prudent man to take steps to prevent such an undesirable situation from arising in those territories which are directly controlled by the Government of India where happily the situation is better than in the rest of the country?

I felt, Sir, when the Honourable Member was speaking that his sympathies were with my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru but that, being a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he had perforce to be cautious, perhaps ultra-cautious, so that no one might accuse the Government of which he is a part of

being revolutionary in their desire to push forward social reform. My Honourable friend, however, when exercising so much caution and perhaps some self-restraint forgot that the British Government have, during the last three-quarters of a century, made themselves responsible for many measures of social reform which have led to acute religious controversies. Very recently they supported a measure for raising the marriageable age of boys and girls. There was undoubtedly a great deal of opposition to it. It has not yet subsided. Nevertheless, I do not think that Government have lost any prestige because of the action that they took in connection with that measure—

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** But the Sarda Act is practically a dead letter.

**THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU :** But there is this difference between the Sarda Act and the proposal made by Mr. Sapru. The Sarda Act is compulsory ; Mr. Sapru's Resolution asks for the establishment of clinics the use of which will not be obligatory on any section of the population. It will merely help those who go to it voluntarily. Consequently the objection, Sir, that you had in mind does not apply to this Resolution. What I wanted to emphasise in referring to the action of Government in regard to the Sarda Act was that, having taken action in regard to a matter which was undoubtedly religious and which was meant to impose compulsion on the whole country, Government could not with any justification remain neutral in a measure of the kind suggested by my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru, which is already finding favour with women who have received education. Within a very short time I am sure that the desire for birth control will become general in urban areas. It is therefore the duty of the Government to recognise how things are moving and to take such measures as would give that education to women which is necessary in the interests of their health and safety.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU :** Sir, my friend the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam reminded me that five years ago he had moved a Resolution which was similar in principle to the one which I had the honour of moving in the House today. I did not know that that previous Resolution had been moved on the 18th of March also. I am glad that I selected this 18th of March, perhaps subconsciously. Mr. Hossain Imam supported the Resolution and I have nothing to say so far as his speech is concerned. He reinforced the arguments I had put forward and therefore I do not think I should be justified in detaining the House by examining his speech in detail. The second speaker on the Resolution was the Honourable Sardar Sobha Singh. Well, I think he was sympathetic to the Resolution and I think I am right in interpreting his attitude. He pointed out that the Delhi Municipality was doing some work in this connection and that the Chief Medical Officer of Delhi in his private capacity had been taking interest in the question of giving advice to women who wanted advice in regard to birth control. I think a word of appreciation is due so far as this officer is concerned. I wish more officers took an interest in the question of birth control. Then we had a very interesting speech from the Honourable Mr. Padshah. I really could not understand all that he said. He pointed out that the increase in India was normal and that really we were not over-populated. Well, why is it that Australia, Canada and other European countries are able to maintain a high standard of living ? One basic reason for their high standard of living is that their population is comparatively less than that of India. I know that the size of India is enormous, it is a sub-continent. But

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

even so the problem of raising the standard of living of the people would have been simpler if our population had been much less than it is today. We have shrinking markets. The war may stimulate industry for the time being, but we have to face shrinking markets. Our exports have to compete in open markets and it is doubtful if we can compete on equal terms with advanced countries. Sir, it is a fact that if you have too many children your standard of living goes down. We all see that in actual life. A man with two children is much better off than a man with six or seven or eight children. He can give those two children a better start in life. Therefore I think if we look at the question rationally we shall agree that the limitation of families enables us to give our children a better start in life.

I shall now come to the speech of the Honourable Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad. First, let me say that I am thankful even for small mercies, and the speech which he made today does represent an advance over the attitude taken up by Sir Maurice Hallett five years ago. Sir Maurice Hallett's attitude was one of frank opposition. Sir Jagdish Prasad says that Government will be neutral on this question. Of course we know that even though they are neutral on this question the Resolution will be defeated. But in any case the attitude represents an advance over the position taken up before and I am grateful for this change of attitude. Now the Honourable Mr. Kunzru has subjected his speech to detailed criticism and he has anticipated many of the arguments that I had intended to advance against the position taken by Sir Jagdish Prasad. He says the health point of view should be paramount. I agree, but it has also to be looked at from the economic point of view; that is also important. If you look at the question from the point of view of the community as a whole, the social point of view, you cannot ignore the economic point of view. So far as the individual is concerned certainly the health point of view is very important, and that concerns the nation of course. But the economic point of view is also very important. Then he said that the centrally administered areas were not too thickly populated. I did not say they were too thickly populated. I introduced the centrally administered areas into my Resolution for two reasons. First of all, I was not sure in my mind that it would be possible for me to discuss this Resolution if I did not introduce the words "centrally administered areas". It might have been ruled out as a Resolution affecting Provincial Governments. Secondly, frankly I would like the Government of India to take a lead in this matter. We are today in a better position than the provinces to take a lead and therefore should anticipate the future developments in Delhi and Ajmer-Merwara. It is quite true that the density of population in Delhi is only 217, but it might be much more in the next decade —

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It is 217 in Ajmer-Merwara.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: It is Ajmer-Merwara—it is quite true. Anticipating increase we should take steps to check this increase. I think the Honourable Sir Jagdish Prasad will agree with me that prevention is better than cure. He is a Minister of Health and his medical advisers will tell him that preventive medicine is more important than curative medicine today and therefore before Ajmer-Merwara and Delhi get over-populated we should take steps to check population in these areas.

Then, Sir, religion was also urged as an argument against birth control. Frankly, Sir, I cannot see any connection between religion and birth control. Religion determines our attitude towards our Maker. Why should it enter into the minutest detail of a man's life? I think the point of view for which the

Honourable Mr. Padshah and the Honourable Sir Hissamuddin stood is an obscurantist point of view. If your religion tells you that you must not practise birth control, that you must go on multiplying as fast as you can—

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR : Yes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU—that you must have unlimited and large families, you are quite at liberty to do so. I do not compel you to do otherwise.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR : Then this Resolution is not required.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : I do not compel you to go to a birth control clinic and take advice. There may be other individuals who may have a different conception of life. A man may think that 15 or 18 children are a nuisance; that he can give to his children a better start in life if he has only three or four children and he may wish to practise birth control. You have a large number of educated young girls who have a different conception of life from what Sir Hissamuddin has; they will practise birth control in any case and if they cannot get proper advice they will read some literature which is not perhaps very good and they will go in for methods of birth control which are not scientifically good and healthy. I think, Sir, that there is a difference between the Sarda Act and the principle embodied in my Resolution. That difference was pointed out by the Honourable Mr. Kunzru. The Sarda Act applies to everybody; here I do not compel everybody to go and take advice in regard to birth control. All that I have asked for is that advice in regard to the methods of birth control should be available in Government hospitals and in Government clinics. That I think is not a very unreasonable proposition and I think religion has got nothing to do with this proposition. If you think that religion tells you to have 12 or 13 or 14 children, do please that religion by all means and we shall wish you joy of that religion of yours.

Now, Sir, Sir Jagdish Prasad said that if there had been limitation of families one does not know whether some of the men who have distinguished themselves in life would have ever seen the light of day, whether they would have been in this world of ours. We have got no statistics in regard to these matters. I do not know whether geniuses are produced in large families or in small families. The science of eugenics is yet in its infancy and it would be interesting to find out what the proportion of geniuses is to large families. I know this, Sir, that England and France are culturally, educationally, economically advanced countries, and their cultural standards, their educational standards, and their economic standards have not suffered as a result of increasing birth control propaganda. I know, Sir, that the Dutch are an enterprising people; they are a great maritime nation; they have built a big Empire for themselves and I do not find that the Dutch suffers in efficiency as compared with us—the most ancient civilisation on God's earth; that is our claim. Now, Sir, we should profit by experience and the religion that we stand for, the social philosophy that we work for, should have some relation to the facts of modern life. I ask my friends to judge this question on the merits, not to be guided by sentiments. I do not know what our ancient scriptures have got to say about birth control. I have never cared or bothered to read those scriptures for this purpose; but I see misery and poverty and distress around me and I want to tackle these problems of misery and poverty and under-nourishment and ill-health in a serious manner, in a manner befitting a social worker, and I would ask, Sir, the support of the House on these humanitarian grounds. Sir, I would like



[Mr. P. N. Saprú.]

to press this Resolution to a division. I think we have an opportunity today of obtaining the real mind of the Council and I would not like this opportunity to be lost.

THE HONOURABLE KUNWAR SIR JAGDISH PRASAD : Sir, I wish only to add a few words to what I said before. I am glad of the confession that my Honourable friend has made that the reason why he concentrated on the centrally administered areas was that he might escape your critical eye, and that otherwise his desire to limit the population of India through this method might not be fulfilled. The Resolution being worded as it was, I tried to show to the House that the centrally administered areas were the areas which were least liable to the dangers which my Honourable friend was trying to find a remedy against. I tried to show that the density of population in the whole of India was 248 per square mile and that the centrally administered areas were in many parts very sparsely populated.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What about Delhi ?

THE HONOURABLE KUNWAR SIR JAGDISH PRASAD : I gave the reasons about Delhi ; it is an exceptional case due to the growth of the Imperial capital. My Honourable friend Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, who does not happen to be here now, accused me of having strayed into poetry in dealing with this question. I thought I was extremely prosaic and I was trying to state the facts in as cold and as unsentimental a way as I possibly could. All that I say is that it is an interesting speculation that, if birth control had been strictly enforced in the past, some of the great men who have altered the history of the world might not have seen the light of day. The difficulty, Sir, in dealing with this Resolution is that my Honourable friend opposite says he has never read the scriptures, he does not wish to bother about them, he does not care what they say. But the Governments not only of India but of the provinces, have to deal with the masses who profoundly believe in these religious scriptures and they have to take into account what are the beliefs of these people. If one was dealing with men like my Honourable friend there would be no need for this discussion. He ignores the profound influence that religion exercises on the vast masses of people. But I do not think the Government can plunge into a religious controversy, if the question is going to arouse religious controversy, especially an irresponsible Government. I can understand my Honourable friend or somebody raising this issue where there are popularly elected Ministers. Any action which they took would not be liable to that misinterpretation and that prejudiced criticism that an irresponsible Government is likely to encounter. Therefore there is good reason for a certain degree of caution in dealing with this highly controversial subject because my Honourable friend has worded it in a controversial manner. He has not said that these clinics are required for the health of the mother. He says that he wants these clinics in order to reduce the population. That is the whole objective and he has made certain statements which in the abstract cannot be accepted. He went on to say that a family of three is less of a burden than a family of six. Ask the Government of France at the present moment. What has been the effect, from the military point of view, of their deliberate policy of limiting population ? I think the main effect has been that the increasing population of their neighbour in the east has become a tremendous military problem. The whole of their civilisation, their very existence, has been severely handicapped and seriously jeopardised by the fact that their population has not increased in the

past. Therefore, you cannot lay down an abstract proposition that the limitation of population is desirable in all circumstances. I can quite understand your saying that we have reached the margin of subsistence but that is a proposition which has to be discussed on its merits. But to lay down a proposition that in all circumstances every nation should make it a deliberate policy to limit its population while its neighbours whom it may have to deal with in war should be allowed to increase their population, those are not such simple questions as my Honourable friend seems to think. The whole confusion has arisen because my Honourable friend and the Honourable Pandit Kunzru in supporting him did not say that they were interested in the health and safety of the mother. My Honourable friend urged his proposition in the interests of economics and sociology, and I think biology and psychology and many otherologies—I don't know which. I thought, Sir, that I had discharged my functions of a neutral in a very creditable manner because my Honourable friend Mr. Padshah thought that my arguments entirely supported his proposition while my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru thinks that I am in deep sympathy with the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution. I shall maintain myself in that happy position, leaving it to the Honourable Members to interpret my neutrality in the most favourable light that they can.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Resolution moved :

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that in view of the alarming growth of the population in India, steps be taken to popularise methods of birth control and to establish birth control clinics in centrally administered areas".

Question put : the Council divided :

AYES—9.

Askuran, Hon. Mr. Shantidas.  
Buta Singh, Hon. Sardar.  
Chettiyar, Hon. Mr. Chidambaram.  
Hossain Imam, Hon. Mr.

Sobha Singh, Hon. Sardar Bahadur.

Kunzru, Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath.  
Mahtha, Hon. Rai Bahadur Sri Narain.  
Menon, Hon. Sir Ramunni.  
Sapru, Hon. Mr. P. N.

NOES—8.

Abdul Sattar, Hon. Mr. Abdul Razak  
Hajee.  
Haider, Hon. Khan Bahadur Shams-ud-  
Din.  
Hissamuddin Bahadur, Hon. Lt.-Col. Sir.  
Kalikar, Hon. Mr. V. V.

Muhammad Hussain, Hon. Khan Bahadur  
Mian Ali Baksh.  
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, Hon. Saiyed  
Mohamed.  
Patro, Hon. Sir. A. P.  
Sinha, Hon. Kumar Nripendra Narayan.

The Motion was adopted.

## DELHI MASAJID BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to move for leave to introduce—

"A Bill to make better provision for the administration of Masjid and the Endowment of the Jama Masjid, Fatehpuri Masjid and Kalan Masjid of Delhi."

Sir, it is not customary to make any speech at the introduction stage. I would ask the House to look into the Statement of Objects and Reasons as

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

embodied in the Bill itself. I would simply like to remind the House that although technically it is a new Bill, it is in reality the old Bill which was introduced last year and circulated for eliciting public opinion. Unfortunately, the Mover of that Bill has been degraded to the lower House with the result that his Bill has lapsed and I have to father his child.

Sir, I ask for leave to introduce the Bill.

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

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The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 21st March, 1940.

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